

THE POETRY OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF:
ITS INDIAN AND PERSIAN ASPECTS

by

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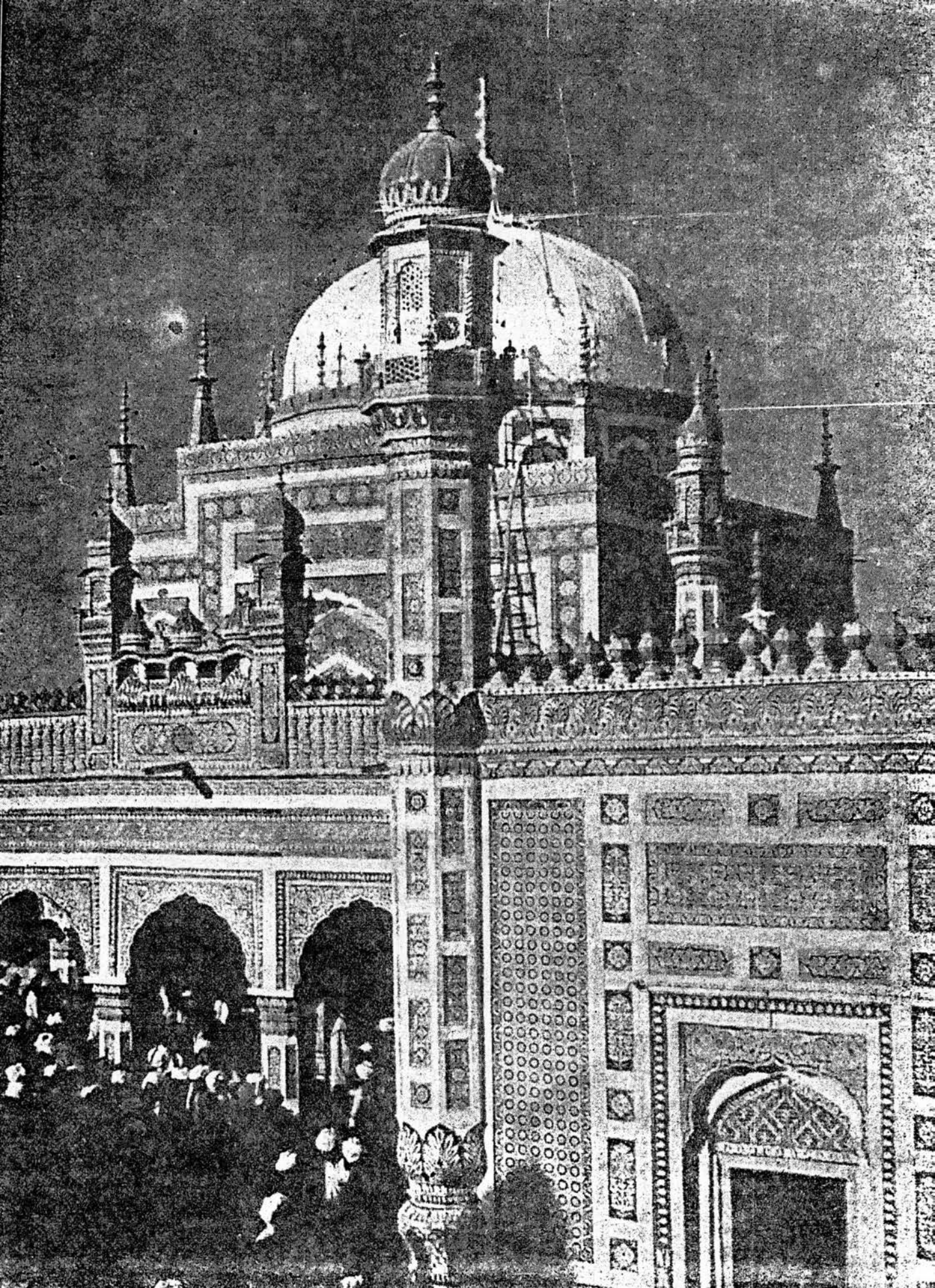
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Dedicated to

my father, Ghulam Murtiza Sayyid, with love and gratitude,
and also to the memory of my mother, Bībī Mariam.

سُو سَرِنِ پائي جي تندُ بر ابرُ توريان

آتل اوڏاهم ٿئي، جيڏانهن پيڄل پرائي

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me (undersigned) and does not represent the work of any other person.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis treats hitherto neglected aspects of the work of the well-known poet of Sind, Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf (1689-1753). The first chapter sets the poet in his historical and literary background and provides details of his life and work. The second chapter analyses in detail the role of women in the poetry of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, discussing this topic from a Sūfī and social viewpoint.

There has been considerable controversy amongst Hindu and Muslim scholars as to the debt owed by Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf to Hinduism and Islam, with both sides on occasion adopting extreme attitudes. The third chapter of this thesis attempts therefore to present a balanced view of the local religious and cultural milieu in which Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf lived and to show the influence that yoga and association with yogis exerted on the poet. The remaining two chapters of the thesis, on the other hand, compare and contrast the work of two great masters of Persian poetry, Farīd al-Dīn ^c Attār and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and the Risālo of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf. These chapters reveal that the Sindhī poet stands firmly within the great tradition of Persian Sūfī literature, whilst at the same time drawing on local Sindhi culture and folklore for his inspiration.

Extensive use has been made of English translation of the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. All the translations quoted in this thesis from the Risālo have been made by the author herself.

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I am grateful to the following institutions: the SOAS Library, University of London, the British Library (British Museum), the India Office Library, as well as the University of Edinburgh Library.

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and great debt I owe to the encouragement and constant moral and financial support of my father. Coming from a traditional background where there are a number of prejudices and hindrances on the path of a female person who wishes to go abroad and study, it is due to his inspiration and preferential treatment that this work became possible.

I am deeply grieved that my dear mother who died while I was in Britain cannot also receive the thanks which I would like to give her. I hope she would be pleased with my efforts.

I also wish to thank my brothers and sisters for their cooperation and patience while I stayed abroad. I am especially grateful to my eldest sister Zarintaj for her encouragement and regularly writing me to inform me of every event that took place in my absence.

Last but not least I am indebted to all my friends, wherever they may be, and especially to Mr. Khan and his wife, Dr. Akhtar. Friends are always a valuable asset, but they become a necessity, and take the place of family when one is away from home. It is not possible to write all the names; nevertheless I am most grateful to them all, who come from various countries and have been with me, and especially Dr. Widad Laradī, Soraya and her husband, Dr. Jasīm Husain. I also thank my compatriot friends, especially Mrs. Mumtaz

Shaikh, Abida Awan and others, who have sent me material for my research, as well as those who have written me letters of encouragement. I am obliged to all those friends too, who telephoned me regularly to encourage me.

TRANSLITERATION

Any system of transliteration which hopes to embrace Arabic, Persian and Sindhi is inevitably fraught with problems and inconsistencies. The system used in this thesis is a combination of that adopted in the Cambridge History of Iran for Arabic and Persian, together with a system for Sindhi kindly suggested by Dr. C. Shackle, head of the Department of Indology (S.O.A.S.), University of London.

Well-known place-names such as Delhi and Hyderabad have not been given diacritical points.

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Consonants

ب = b	پ = <u>b</u>	پ = bh	ت = t	ٹ = <u>ṭ</u>
ث = th	ث = <u>ṭ</u>	ث = th	پ = p	ف = ph
ج = j	ج = <u>j</u>	جھ = jh	چ = ch	چھ = chh
ح = h	خ = <u>kh</u>	د = d	ڈ = dh	ڈھ = <u>d</u>
ڊ = d	ڙ = <u>ḍh</u>	ر = r	ڑ = <u>ṛ</u>	ز = z
س = s	ش = sh	ص = <u>s</u>	ض = <u>z</u>	ط = <u>ṭ</u>
ظ = <u>z</u>	ع = <u>c</u>	غ = <u>gh</u>	ف = f	ق = q
ک = k	ک = kh	گ = g	گ = <u>g</u>	گھ = gh
ل = l	م = m	ن = n	ڻ = <u>ṇ</u>	و = v
ه = h	ء = <u>ʾ</u>	ی = y		

Vowels and Diphthongs:

ا	a
آ	i
و	u
آ	ā
آی	ā
ی	e
و	o
او	ū

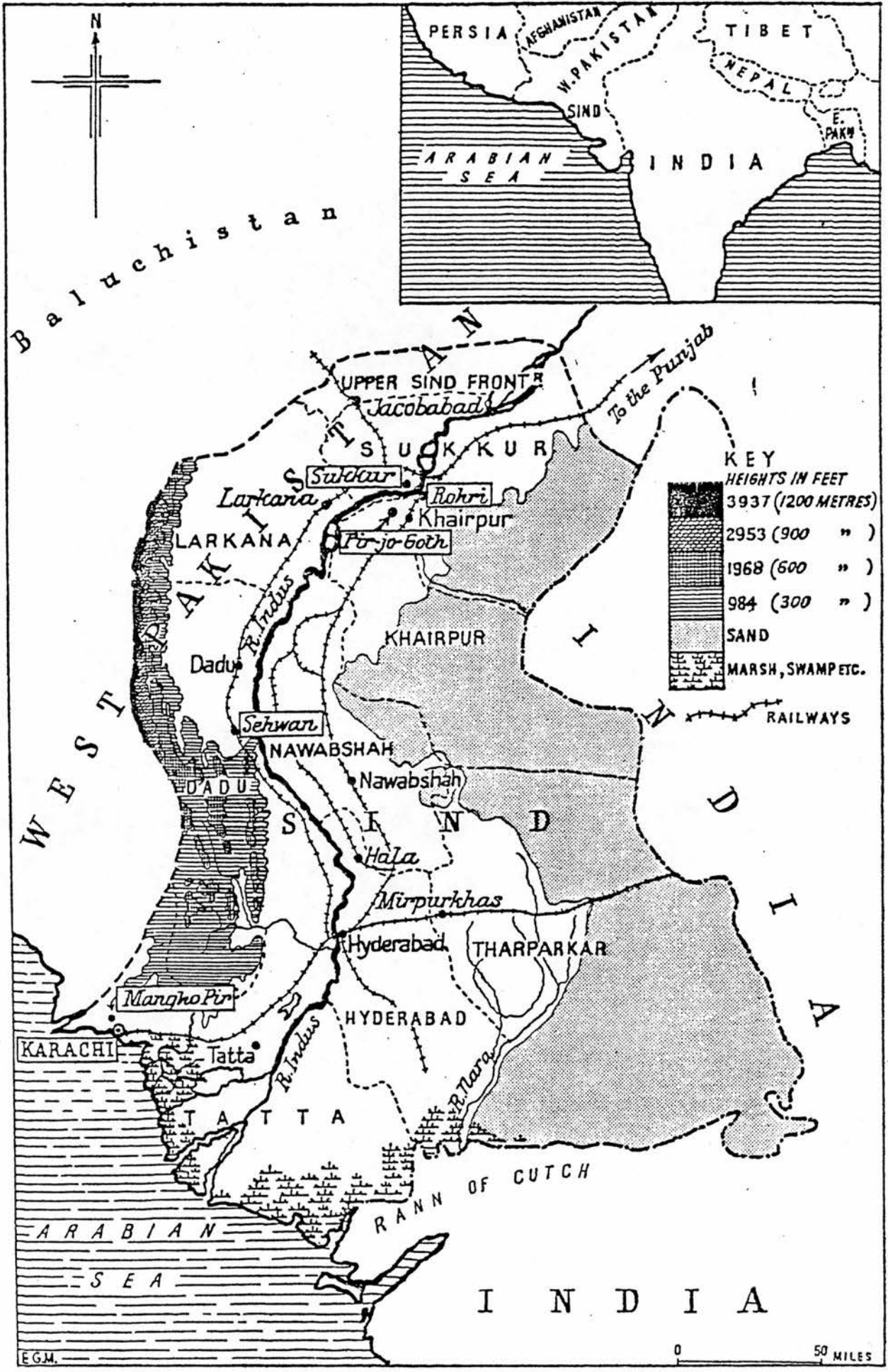
Vowels and Diphthongs (cont'd):

ي	— /	ī
او	— /	au
اي	— /	ai

Symbols:

اين	—	ain
مين	—	men

CHAPTER I



PART 1

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND IN SIND
IN THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE LIFETIME OF
SHĀH ^CABD AL-LATĪF

a) The historical background

At the time of the Muslim conquest of Sind, the area was governed by Rājā Dāhir, a Brahman ruler. As is well-known, it was Muhammad b. Qāsim who at the behest of Hajjāj b. Yūsuf was sent on a campaign to conquer Sind and the lands of the Indus valley.¹ Muhammad b. Qāsim reached first the port of Debal (^{near} the present-day city of Thatta) and then captured important forts in Sind, such as Nerunkot (modern Hyderabad Sind) and Sehwan. Having crossed the Indus river, he pursued and killed Rājā Dāhir at the fort of Rāwar. Later, his son was also defeated and put to death. Thus began Arab Muslim government in Sind, an area in which under Brahman rule Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and other faiths had flourished alongside Hinduism.

1. From time immemorial, Sind had been divided into three districts, Lār (to the south), Wicholo (central Sind) and Siro (to the north).

With the accession of the ^CAbbāsids in 750 A.D., Sind continued to be ruled by governors sent from the central Islamic world. As in other peripheral areas, however, ^CAbbāsīd control in Sind had already slackened by the middle of the ninth century. Two independent states were established in Sind, one centred on Multān and the other at Mansūrā, stretching from there to the sea, an area which broadly coincides with the present-day province of Sind. Sind remained at least nominally under the suzerainty of the ^CAbbāsīd caliphate at Baghdad but the administration of the area was in the hands of local people, many of whom had already, for a variety of motives, embraced Islam.¹ Regular trade links were established overland to Persia by way of Qandahār and Ghazna, whilst by sea Sind had commercial relations with Ceylon, China and other points east.²

In the early eleventh century Sind was plundered and conquered by Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghaznā³ who used the area to prosecute jihād and to find booty to finance his expensive military campaigns in eastern Persia. He felt, however, little loyalty to Sind itself, which was not the centre of his

1. Haig, W., The Cambridge History of India, Cambridge, 1928, Vol.III, pp.9-10.

2. Hughes, A.W., Gazeteer of the Province of Sind, London, 1976, p.26.

3. For a bibliography on the Ghaznavids, cf. C.E. Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, Edinburgh, 1963.

operations.

Ghaznavid authority in Sind was overthrown in 1032 by a local chieftain, Ibn Sūmār, whose descendants were to rule lower Sind for more than three centuries. Sūmrā authority did not extend to upper Sind and Multān, an area which was under the control of ~~some~~ dynasties such as the Ghūrīds, the Khiljīs and the Tughluqs.¹

Sūmrā rule in Sind was replaced by that of the Sammās, another local family, who governed from Thaṭṭa whilst recognising the overall authority of the Tughluq sultāns of Delhi to whom they paid an annual tribute.²

After the collapse of Sammā rule, Sind was destined to be governed briefly by small dynasties such as the Arghūns (1521-54) and the Tarkhāns (1554-91) before being subsumed into the Mughal empire.³

The Kalhōrās were religious mendicants who had been prominent in Sind since the Sammā period. They ruled Sind,

1. Lane-Poole, S., Medieval India, London, 1917, p.49; Ma^c sūmī, M.M., Tārīkh-i Ma^c sūmī, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp.41-4.
2. Hughes, op. cit., pp.27-8.
3. Haig, op. cit., pp.501-3; Hughes, op. cit., p.30.

whilst usually acknowledging the overall authority of the Mughals, although they were at times disobedient to their overlords and punished for it. The two Kalhōrā rulers who were in power during the life-time of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf were Yār Muḥammad and his son Nūr Muḥammad. The latter gained full control of Sind before the advent of the Persian ruler, Nādir Shāh whom he vigorously opposed. Nādir Shāh imprisoned the Kalhōrō ruler in the fort of ʿUmarkot and was released upon payment of a tribute and on condition that the three sons of Nūr Muḥammad should be taken away as hostages. After the assassination of Nādir Shāh in 1747 the three Kalhōrā princes returned to Sind. When Nūr Muḥammad died there was fraternal civil war between his three sons from 1756-8, resulting in the eventual triumph of Ghulām Shāh who ruled Sind until 1772.

The great Sindhī poet, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf who forms the subject of this study, was destined to experience the impact of internal political weakness within the sub-continent, as well as the effect of attacks from Muslim neighbours from Iran and Afghanistan. Mughal power was in full decline during his lifetime, although how this affected the poet personally is not clear.

b) The literary background

As far as written records are concerned it would appear

that poetry in the Sindhī language was composed as early as the Sūmrā period (1032-1350).¹ According to Schimmel, from the accounts of Arab travellers and geographers of the 9th and 10th centuries, it appears that Arabic was spoken in Sind side by side with the regional language, Sindhī. A single 'Sindhī' verse which was recited by a visitor at the ^CAbbāsīd court has been preserved, but it is in such a distorted form that a grammatical analysis cannot be made of it.²

L.H. Ājvānī argues that prior to Sūmrā rule no specimen of Sindhī poetry has survived. The 'Sindhī verse' which is said to belong to the ^CAbbāsīd period is not in the Sindhī language at all. According to him "the Sindhī literature of the Hindū period and pre-Sūmrā period has perished beyond recall".³

According to the reports of al-Bīrūnī who visited Sind and Hind between 1017 and 1030 there were three scripts in use in Sind - Ardhanāgrī, Saindhū and Mālwarī.⁴

1. Jūnejo ^C Abd al-Jabbār, Qadīm Shāirī-te hik Nazar, Hyderabad Sind, 1967, p.24.
2. Schimmel, A.M., "Sindhī Literature", in Jan Gonda, ed., History of Indian Literature, Wiesbaden, 1974, Vol.III, Part 2, p.3.
3. Ājvānī, L.H., History of Sindhī Literature, New Delhi, 1970, p.17.
4. Ibid.

From the time of the Arab conquest of Sind in 711, Arabic was the language of the court and of literature. During the Ghaznavid and Ghūrid period the Persian language began to prosper for literary purposes and had the patronage of the ruling class.¹ Nevertheless the Arabic language was always encouraged, for it had religious significance, even for non-Arab rulers.

During the Sūmrā and Sammā periods (1032-1520), the use of the Sindhī language was encouraged, although Persian also continued to prosper. The literary history of this period remains, according to Badavī, shrouded in obscurity. Certain folk-strains, such as those associated with Sasūī, Punhū, Umar, Māruī and Mūmal Rāṇo, have, however, been traced to this period.²

In the Mughal period, Persian was considered the literary language par excellence. Sindhī was of course the language of communication but as a literary medium its use was not encouraged by the ruling class.³

1. Badavī, Lutf Allāh, Tazkīrah Luṭfī, Hyderabad Sind, 1954-55, pp.37 and 74.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

According to Jūnejo, the first poetry in Sindhī is said to have been epic. The first extant example would appear to be Dodo and Chanesar, written by an anonymous author. This is dated to some time in the Sūmrā period in Sind (1032-1350). The poem describes a fraternal power struggle in Sind and reflects a keen political awareness on the part of the poet.¹

The Sūmrā period is important in the literary history of Sind because of the gināns (or jñāns) (verses) of Pīr Nūr al-Dīn (also known as Satgūrū Nūr) who came to Sind in 1079 and of pīrs such as Shams Multānī (1201-67) and Sadr al-Dīn (1290-1409). Their gināns were written in Khojkī Sindhī, Multānī, Gujarātī and Punjābī and are religious and philosophical in nature, containing a blend of mystical ideas from Sūfī and Vedantic thought.² These gināns were written in lyrical form, like the later kāfiyūn of Sindhī poetry, which were meant to be recited or sung. The Ismā^cīlī pīrs of Sind, such as these, converted a large number of Hindūs to Islam through their preaching, calling their new converts khojās.³

1. This epic narrates the heroic deeds of Dodo, who though younger than Chanesar was made ruler of Sind by the people. Chanesar resented this, and invited Alā' al-Dīn Khiljī the ruler of India and after joining his forces, attacked Dodo. Dodo fought bravely with all his people and Chanesar's son, who was his son-in-law, but died on the battle field. His sister Bhāgul Bāī and other women of the family burnt themselves alive to save their honour and that of Sind. Jūnejo, op. cit., p.24. *This story is associated with Sumra's who were Muslims.*
2. Jotvāñī, M., Sindhī Literature and Society, New Delhi, 1979, p.4.
3. Baloch, N.A., Sind Through the Centuries, Karachi, 1975, pp.13-18.

Later, during the Sammā rule in Sind (1350-1520) various poets wrote on subjects such as Sūfism and philosophy. In fact, the foundations of Sūfī poetry in Sind were laid in this period by poets such as Shaikh Hammad, Qāzī Qāzan, Ishāq Ahāngar (the blacksmith), Mamūī Faqīr, Alī Shīrāzī, Pīr Murād and others. Few of their verses are extant but by reading those that have survived, one has the distinct impression that they form part of a much more extensive corpus of poetry, which was, moreover, mature. Among these poets Qāzī Qāzan (d.1551) is the most prominent.¹ He was a man of learning, well-versed in the religious sciences and Sūfism.² He played a prominent role in the politics of Sind. In his time the Arghūns defeated the last Sammā ruler near Thatta in 1520, and Qāzī Qāzan was made Qāzī of Thatta.³

In his poetry, one comes across two distinct strands. On the one hand, like most Sindhī poets, he was a believer in waḥdat-al-wujūd. On the other, he was greatly inspired by the Mahdavi movement of Sayyid Muhammad Jaunpūrī (India). When the latter visited Sind in 1489 to propagate his message, Qāzī

1. Baloch, N.A., Sindhī ḥolī-jī Mukhtaṣir Tārīkh, Hyderabad Sind, 1980, vol.1, pp.206-7.
2. Daudpot, U.M., "Qāzī Qāzan Sehwanī", Mehrānjūn Maujūn, ed. Rāshidī Pīr Husām al-Dīn, Karachi, 1956, pp.171-175.
3. Sayyid, G.M., Paighām Laṭīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp.18-19.

Qāzan became his murīd.¹ Only seven of his verses have survived; nevertheless they give some indication of the subtlety of his thoughts and his skill as a poet. Some complicated philosophical and Ṣūfī ideas are hinted at with the help of similes and metaphors. One of his most popular verses is the following:

گنزرِ قدوري، کافيو، پرورين سپ
تہر مندي ماکوڙي کوہ م پي کچي آپ

(Even) after reading all (the books) like kanz,² qadūrī³ and kāfiyo,⁴ one will be like a lame ant in a well, measuring the sky.⁵

It is clear from the above verse that the poet considered bookish or worldly knowledge to be unimportant and inadequate. Though few of his verses have survived, Schimmel commenting on his work writes

“Qadī Qadan's name shows for the first time all the features which were to become so common in later

1. Cf. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.18-19; also Daudpoto, op. cit., pp.171-175.
2. A collection of the prophetic traditions.
3. A handbook of the Hanafī law.
4. A grammatical poem by Ibn Hajib.
5. Daudpoto, op. cit., p.175.

Sindhī mystical poetry; they combine extreme density with a joy in puns, word-plays and alliterations. Since every word in Sindhī ends in a vowel, the sound is very musical. Sindhī grammar with its amazing wealth of grammatical forms and its rich verbal structure allows the poet to put the words together in a most intricate form.¹”

Other important poets include Makhdūm Nūh of Halā (d.1590) of the Suhrawardīyya order, whose malfūzāt (collection of sayings) is in Persian, with only two of his verses in the Sindhī language. He translated the Qur'an into Persian and was on good terms with rulers and high officials.²

Mention should also be made of Sayyid ^ᶜAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1538-1623), the great grandfather of Shāh ^ᶜAbd al-Latīf. He was born in Muta^ᶜalvī and later settled in Bulrī. His work in Persian entitled Bayān al-^ᶜĀrifīn includes 93 baits in Sindhī. In these couplets the poet draws on Sindhī folk tales, such as the themes of Sasuī and Punhū, ^ᶜUmar and Māruī, Lila and Chanesar, Suhnī and Mehar, ~~and~~ and Moriṛo. The

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.12.

2. Badavī, op. cit., pp.74-76.

inspiration of the poetry is Ṣūfī.¹ He was an Uwaisī Ṣūfī² who learned much from the company of great Ṣūfīs such as Makhdūm Nūh and Yūsuf Bakharī. According to Badavī, the poet composed his work and expressed similar Ṣūfī views to those of Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī and Junaid Baghdādī. His poetry is in the form of dohā couplets in Hindi style.³

It would appear appropriate to refer to some of the immediate literary predecessors and contemporaries of Shāh Abd al-Latīf so as to draw a picture of the cultural environment in Sind in which the poet grew up and from which he drew his inspiration. The names of many learned Ṣūfīs, makhdūms, pīrs and ulamā' are known but only the most significant of them will be mentioned in this short survey. Many of the great literary figures of Sind were of course linked to one or more of the four Ṣūfī tariqas which had become popular in Sind, like Suhrawardiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qādiriyya and Chishtiyya.⁴

1. Mirza Qalech Beg, Qadīm Sind jā Sitāra, Shikapur Sind, 1923, p.13. Also Baloch, N.A., Miyen Shāh Karīm jo Kalam, Hyderabad Sind, 1963, p.80.
2. Daudpot U.M., Shāh Karīm Bulṛī Warī jo Kalām, **Shīr Shāh**, 1977, pp.31-32. Some scholars believe him to have belonged to the Qādiriyya.
3. Badavī, op. cit., pp.92-94.
4. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.50-51; Subhan, A.J., Ṣufism, its saints and shrines, New York, 1370. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1974, pp.20-24.

Mention should be made first of Shāh Lutf Allāh Qādirī (c.1611-79). According to these approximate dates Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was born ten years after his death. This important figure belonged to the Qādiriyya order and he attained the status of murshid. For the guidance of his followers he wrote books about his ṭarīqa, three of which are known by name: Tuḥfat al-Sālikīn and Minhaj al-Ma^crifat, which were written in Persian and Sindhī Risālō. Only the two latter have survived.¹

There are various areas of similarity with the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. Minhaj al-Ma^crifat is written in Persian and contains only twenty Sindhī verses. In this work the writer uses the image of sailors embarking on a journey to symbolise the journey of the sālik and the dangers he has to face in his quest for spirituality. He also uses yogi names such as Adesī, Sāmī and Kāparī, referring to their habits and way of life, but in a Ṣūfī context. Baloch sees a possible link with Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf here and raises the suggestion that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf had read the works of Shāh Lutf Allāh. Certainly the latter uses the same image of sailors in Sur Srī-Rāg and Samunḍhi and he writes about yogis in Sur Khāhorī and

1. Baloch, Nabī Bukhsh, Shāh Lutf Allāh Qādirī jo Kalām, Hyderabad Sind, 1968, pp.9-12.

Rāmkalī.¹

Shāh Lutf Allāh Qādirī is also significant in that he may well have been the first person who wrote a whole book (his Risālo) in Sindhī, whereas his contemporaries generally wrote in Arabic or Persian. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf seems to have followed the same tradition, but to have gone even further in that he composed his verses in no other language except Sindhī.


Unlike Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Qādirī does not draw on the wealth of Sindhī folk-tales for his inspiration.

Turning now to Shāh ^CInāyat Rizvī of Nasarpūr (1622-1712) it is sufficient to point out that he was a prominent Ṣūfī poet of the Qādiriyya whom Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf used to visit and with whom the latter would discuss poetry and Ṣūfism.² Shāh ^CInāyat Rizvī is an interesting contact for Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. The former uses local Sindhī folk stories in his poetry, following on the tradition of Shāh ^CAbd al-Karīm and he also employs evocative yogi names such as Kāparī, Ādesī, Sannyāsī as Lutf Allāh Qādirī had done before him.³

1. Baloch, N.A., op. cit., pp.22-3.

2. Baloch, N.A., Mi'ān Shāh ^CInāyat jō Kalām, Hyderabad Sind, 1963, pp.22, 34, 38, 40; cf. also Maimun ^CAbd al-Majīd, Jotiyūn Jawāhiran jūn, Lārkanā, 1971, p.36.

3. Baloch, op. cit., p.41.

A very important influence was exerted on Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf by Shāh ^cInāyat Sūfī of Jhoke (d.1721 A.D.). He was murīd to Makhdūm ^cAbd al-Malik Burhanpūrī of the Qādiriyya, who was a descendant of  Shaikh ^cAbd al-Qādir Gīlānī. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf used to visit him, and was greatly impressed by him.¹ Thousands flocked to him and the religious authorities considering him a threat, trumped up charges of heresy against him. He was eventually branded as a heretic and put to death in 1718.²

This event had a profound effect on the life and thought of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. To commemorate this man's death, he composed some melancholy verses.³ Although the name of Shāh ^cInāyat Sūfī is not explicitly mentioned, it has been suggested that he is referring to that event:-

آج نہ اوطاقنِ میں ، طالبِ توارین
آدبِ سی اُتی ونا ، مڑھیوں مُون مارین ،
ہو جی جیے چیارین ، سی لاهوتی لڈی ونا ۔

The voice of the God-seekers is heard no more in
the sittingroom,

The Ādesīs have left, and the emptiness of the
place is killing me.

2. Mīrāz Qalech Beg, Qadīm Sind jā Sitāra, Hyderabad Sind, 1923, pp.14-5. Cf. also

Schimmel A, Shāh Inayat of Jhoke, Liber Amicorum, Leiden 1963.

1. There is still some controversy on this. cont'd:...

According to some scholars Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf used to visit him. Others argue that this was not possible because some close relatives of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, the Sayyids of Bulrī were responsible for Shāh Inayat's death.

Those who used to give bliss to life have departed.¹

Seven verses in Sur Rāmkalī are said to have been written commemorating the death of Shāh ^cInāyat Sūfī.

The latter also apparently wrote poetry in Persian and Sindhī but very little of his work has survived. A part of a Persian couplet of his was used by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. The Persian original is as follows:-²

سر در قدم یار فدا شد چه بجا شد
این بار گران بود ادا شد چه بجا شد .

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses this line with reference to Suhñī:-

گهڑی گهڑو هت کري، بھون نہاري ہنگ
سر در قدم یار فدا شد چه بجا شد،
وصل اھوني ونگ
رات جنين جو رنگ، آلا اوا آھارين.

With the jar in hand, after looking at the curves
(of the river) she entered

Cont'd: Wafāi Dīn Muhammad, Lutf al-Latīf, Karachi, 1951, pp.70-1.

3. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.59-63.

1. Shāh Vāñī, op. cit., pp.1159

Cont'd:...

"The life sacrificed at the feet of the beloved is
in order,"

This is the custom of union

For whom night is the blessing,

O God! help them to cross.¹

Ṣūfī ^CInāyat's death was mourned not only by Muslims but by Hindus as well, and elegies on him were written by both Muslim and Hindu poets.²

Makhdūm Muḥammad Mu^Cīn Ṭhaṭṭavī was also an important figure in the lifetime of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. His exact dates are not known but he was born in the late seventeenth century. He was a Naqshbandī Ṣūfī who became a close friend of Shāh ^CAbd Latīf, on whose advice he wrote a work in Persian entitled Risāla-yi Uwaisiyya. In this work, the writer gives guidance on the Ṣūfī path for those Ṣūfīs who are not attached to a Ṣūfī master. Muḥammad Mu^Cīn Ṭhaṭṭavī was criticised for his liking for music and also for his Shī^Cite beliefs.³

Cont'd: 2. Badavī, op. cit., p.268.

1. Shāhwānī, op. cit., p.287.

2. Schimmel, Pain and Grace, pp.21-22.

3. ^CAlavī, Shafī^Cī Ahmad, "Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf jā ba Ham^Casr al-^CĀrif", in Nāin Zindagī, December 1951, p.17; Schimmel, op. cit., p.22; Wafāī, op. cit., p.76.

Another significant contemporary of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf was Makhdūm Muḥammad Hāshim Ṭhaṭṭavī (1692-1761). He was a strong upholder of orthodox Islam and enjoyed a good relationship with the Kalhōrō ruler, Ghulām Shāh. He became chief qāzī of Ṭhaṭṭa. He was a prolific writer of works on religion and law, in Arabic, Persian and Sindhī. It seems that Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf met Muḥammad Hāshim on a few occasions but with their widely diverging views a friendship did not develop.¹

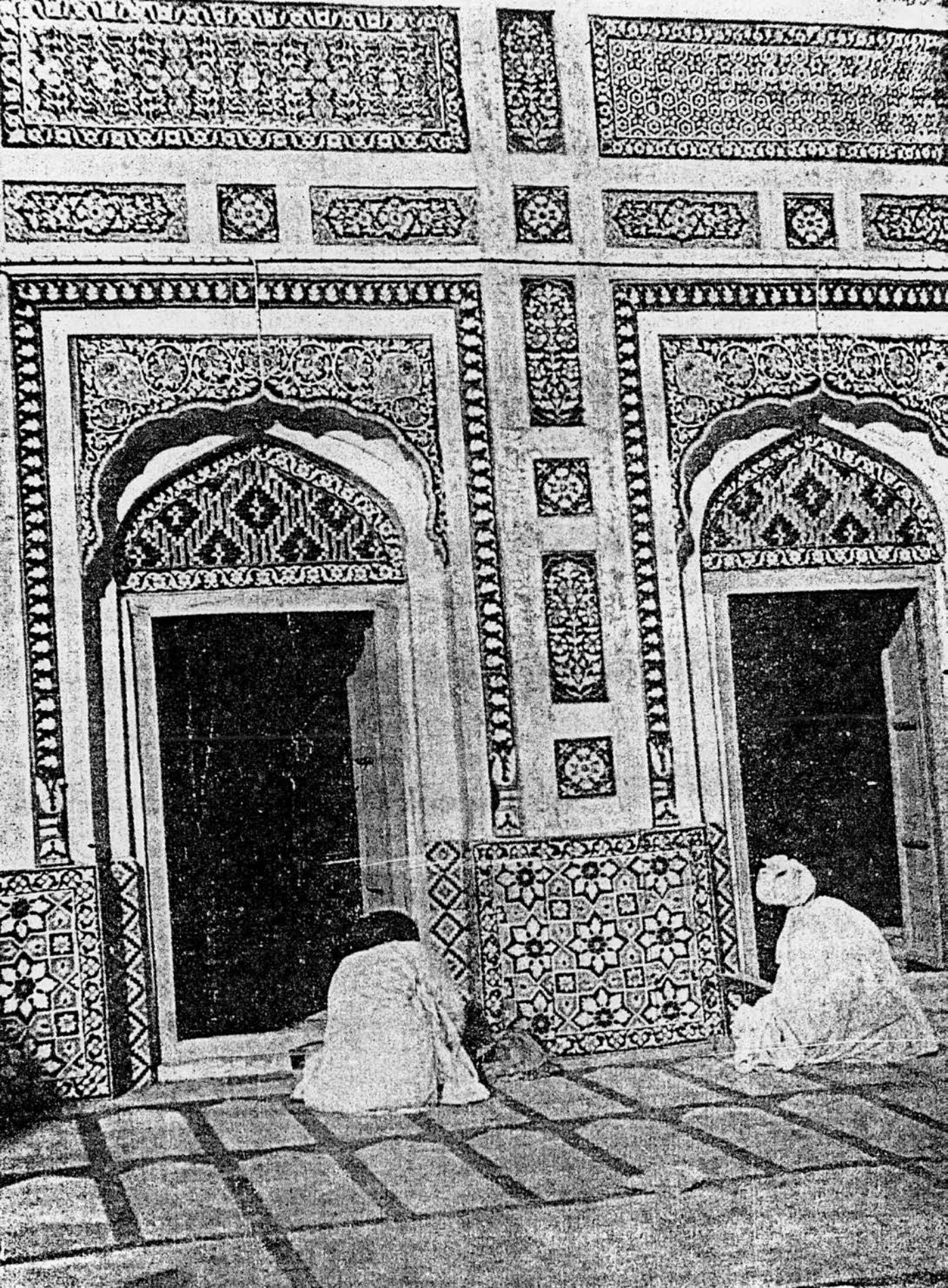
Of much less rigid beliefs was Makhdūm Muḥammad Zamān of Lanwārī (1713-1774), a follower of the Naqshbandiyya. Although a learned man who strictly observed the Sharī^ca, he was not narrow-minded. His 84 verses in Sindhī which have survived reveal great depths of religious feeling.² Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf visited him and was immensely impressed by his knowledge.³

Lastly in this brief survey of important literary figures in the time of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, mention should be made of

1. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, p.22; Sayyid, op. cit., pp.71-3; Badavī, op. cit., pp.253-5.
2. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.73-5.
3. Schimmel, A.M., Sindhi Literature, Wiesbaden, 1974, p.20; Ādvānī, op. cit., p.66.

Ṣāhib dīno Fārūqī(1697-1788). A member of the Suhrawardiyya, he was a poet in his own right, as well as being famous as the grandfather of Sachal Sarmast. His poetry deals mostly with Ṣūfī themes and draws on Sindhī folk stories as Shāh Ḥabd al-Latīf was to do a little later.¹

1. Maimun, Ḥabd al-Majīd, Jotiyūn Jawāhīran jūn, Laṛkānā, 1971, p.36.



PART 2

THE LIFE OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf was born in 1102/1689-1690 in the village of Hallā Hawailī in the Hyderabad district of Sind. Soon after his birth Shāh Habīb, his father, left Hallā Hawailī for unknown reasons and settled in another village Kotrī (now in ruins) near present Bhit Shāh.¹

His family traced their origin to the prophet Muḥammad. His ancestors lived in Herat, and in 1398, when Tīmūr conquered Herat, the conqueror employed Sayyid Mīr ʿAlī, one of the ancestors of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, as well as his six sons, in his service, making all save one of them rulers of different states of India, ^{or so the legend has it.} The last son, Sayyid Haidar Shāh, stayed with his father in the service of Tīmūr. When they came to India Sayyid Haidar Shāh sought his father's permission and went to see his brothers. He visited different parts of India and during his travels he came to the town of Hallā in Sind and became the guest of a well-known person, Shāh Muḥammad of Hallā, who provided the traditional hospitality of Sind. In return, Sayyid Haidar Shāh helped his host in various ways. As a result of this friendship, Shāh Muḥammad offered him

1. Gurbukshānī, H.M., Shāh jo-Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, Vol.I, p.9.

the hand of his daughter in marriage.¹

Thus Sayyid Ḥaidar Shāh married and settled in Halkendī, now called Hallā (Sind). Three years and eight months later, he received the news of his father's death. Therefore he left for Herat and soon after died there. His wife, who was pregnant when he left, gave birth to a boy, whom she named after his grandfather Mīr ^CAlī; the boy settled permanently in Sind.² His descendants became known as the ~~the~~ Muta^C alvī - or Matyārī^s sayyids. These Sayyids traced their ancestry to Imām Mūsā Kāzīm's son, Ja^Cfar Sānī al-Ḥujwīrī. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf belonged to this family, which has produced a number of learned and religious people, and who were greatly respected in Sind.

Mention has already been made of his great grandfather, Shāh ^CAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1537-1620 AD), the great Sūfī poet whose tomb is still visited with reverence by his followers and devotees at Bulrī.³

1. Ibid., p.7.

2. Shāh Wānī, G.M., Shāh jo-Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1950, p.2.

3. Sayyid, G.M., Paighām Latīf, Hyderābād Sind, 1953, p.3.

4. Sayyid, op. cit., p.5. Cf. p. II, of this thesis. Cf. Daudpota, U.M., Shāh Karīm Bulrī Warī jo Kalām, Bhit Shah, 1977, p.32.

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf's father, Habīb Shāh, was also a religious person and poet in his own right. He had many disciples or murīds. His genealogical table given below will show the line of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf ascending to the prophet Muḥammad. The source of this Shajar nāma or family tree is the well-known scholar of Sind, Mīrzā Qalech Beg, in his book, Aḥwāl Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf Bhiṭāi.¹

About the childhood of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf very little is known. The biographies written in the east about saints, Sūfīs, poets and great personalities are mostly so confused and intermingled with legends that they create great problems for the researcher in selecting facts from fiction or legends.

According to his biographers and commentators like Gurbukhshānī, Hotchand and others, Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf used to be mostly quiet and very sober as a child. Unlike most others of his age, he loved solitude, and would wander alone in the forest. Thus nature became his companion and a great teacher. He enjoyed the beautiful sights and objects of nature. He loved to listen to the sweet songs of birds and took inspiration from their selfless devotion to their kind. His deep appreciation of the beauty of nature may of course be glimpsed in his classical work, Risālo, which he composed later in life.²

1. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Aḥwāl Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf Bhiṭāi, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, Appendix Alif, p.177.

Abū Hāshim

Abd al-Muttalib

Abd Allāh

Prophet Muḥammad

Ḥazarat Fāṭima

Abū Ṭālib

Alī Murtiza

Imām Husain

Imām Zain al-Ābidīn

Imām Muhammad Bāqir

Imām Jaʿfar Ṣādiq

Imām Mūsā Kāzim

Imām Zāda ʿIrāqī

Sayyid Jaʿfar Shāh

Sayyid Husain al-Akbarī Shīrāzī

Sayyid ʿAlī Javarī (Ḥavarī)

Sayyid Ibrāhīm Shāh

Sayyid Husain Shāh Shīrāzī

Sayyid Yūsuf Shāh

Sayyid ʿAlī

Sayyid Husain Shāh Tirmizī

Sayyid Muḥammad Shāh Shīrāzī

Sayyid Mīr ʿAlī Shāh Herātī

Sayyid Haidar Shāh

Sayyid Mīr ʿAlī Shāh

Sayyid Sharaf al-dīn

Sayyid Jalāl Muḥammad Shāh

Sayyid Hājji Shāh

Sayyid Hāshim Shāh

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Mu'min Shāh

Sayyid Laʿl Shāh

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Karīm Shāh

Sayyid Jamāl Shāh

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Qudūs Shāh

Sayyid Habīb Shāh

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Latīf Shāh¹

1. This Shajar nāma (family tree) is based on the appendix of Mīrza Qalech Beg. cf. Mīrza Qalech Beg, Aḥwāl Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, p.177.

Gurbukhshānī¹ cites stories which grew up around the childhood of the poet and which suggest that he possessed or was guided by a supernatural power from an early age. Instead of playing, he used to preach and explain to other children some religious and Sūfī maxims or truths. At times he was overcome by ecstasy or ḥāl. He also used to perform miracles and show them to his friends.

There is no proof that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf had regular academic training, nor has his handwriting been found anywhere. But it would appear that he did receive some education, as Ākhūnd Nūr Muḥammad Bhattī is mentioned as his tutor by scholars like Shāhvānī, Gurbukhshānī, Ādvānī, and others.² These scholars assert that when Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was about five or six years old, his father Shāh Ḥabīb sent him to Ākhūnd Nūr Muḥammad Bhattī for tuition. When the latter asked the child to say Alif - A - the first letter of the alphabet, he repeated it. But he refused to say Be - or B

Cont'd: 2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.9. Cf. also Tirathdas Hotchand, Shah ^CAbd al-Latīf, Hyderabad, 1962, p.16.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.16-17.

2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.4-5. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.16-17. Ādvānī, K., Shāh Jo-Risālo, Karachi, 1976, p.3.

- the second letter, saying that there is no Be. His teacher took him to his father, who understood what his son meant, and was very pleased with him. (Alif stood for Allāh, which meant that as a child he was well aware that there was only one God.)^{*} Shāh Ḥabīb told him that he was right, but that for worldly affairs one had to attain a practical education as well.

Argument has been waged as to whether Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf could even read and write. The historian and scholar, Mīr^c Alī Shīr Qānī^c Ṭaḥṭavī, in his book Tuḥfat al-Kirām,¹ calls him ummī, meaning illiterate. He writes that, in spite of the fact that the poet was ummī, all knowledge had been inscribed on his chest by God.

The German scholar, Ernest Trumpp,² who published Shāh jo-Risālo in 1866, says in his introduction that the accusation that Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf was uneducated may be rejected immediately by one proof, namely his Risālo. In his Risālo he uses Arabic, Persian and Sindhi proverbs, phrases and sayings of intricate and deep meanings, which only a learned person could use so artistically. Shāhvāṇī affirms Ernest Trumpp's

1. Qānī Mīr, ^cAlī Shīr, Tuḥfat al-Kirām, trans. Aḥmad Mīr Maḥdūm, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, p.388. (This is again a topos.)

2. Trumpp, Ernest, Shāh jo-Risālo, Leipzig, 1866, p.vii.

* This is ofcourse a quality attributed to many sufis all over the Islamic world.

view about Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's education. He says that his Risālo proves that he knew Arabic well and he even quotes phrases from the Quran and Tradition in his poetry. He seems to have been inspired by the Maṣnavī of Maulānā Rūmī, Vedantic philosophy and the Risālo of Shāh Karīm, who was his great grandfather. If he had not been educated, he would not have taken these books with him on his travels. Shāhvānī refers to the incident in which Nūr Muḥammad Kalhōro, the ruler of Sind, once presented a manuscript of Maṣnavī (written in golden letters) to Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. If he had been ummī - illiterate - such a valuable gift would not have been given to him.¹

Trumpp's views are shared by Gurbukhshānī.² Jotvānī also comments on Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's education. He writes that Ahmad Nūr Muḥammad Bhattī of Vai village taught Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf "who rose to be a learned man of his times - a man having complete mastery over his mother tongue Sindhī and a good knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Hindi and other languages of his time and clime. The Risālo unmistakably shows that he had studied the Qur'ān and the Traditions, Sūfism and Vedantism, partly due to his academic training befitting a scion of the Sayyids and partly due to his personal observation

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.4.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.10.

of life in the company of Jogis and Sanyāsīs in his young age".¹

The same writer explains that Mīr ^cAlī Shīr Qānī ^cThattavī was an admirer of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, and that he called the latter ummī out of devotion in order to bring him closer to the prophet Muḥammad, and also to show that he was a divinely-guided saint who received revelation from God.

In any case, the word ummī, according to M. Ajmal Khān,² has been wrongly interpreted as 'illiterate' by almost all the commentators of the Qurān. This word is the opposite of ahl al-kitāb - namely, people who possess the Law given by God. The Prophet did not know the Law of God before the revelation of the Qurān. Moreover, the Jews referred to him as ummī, meaning that he was not conversant with the Old Testament and the Bible. There are several instances where the Prophet is referred to as ummī.

Few details are known about the youth of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. What appears certain is that at the age of twenty, he fell in love with a beautiful girl, who was the daughter of Mīrzā Mughal Beg. This man happened to be an influential

1. Jotvānī, M., Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Delhi 1975, p.21.

2. Khān, M. Ajmal, "An enquiry into earliest collection of the Quran", Studies in Islam, 1964, Vol.I, pp.175-212.

person, belonging to an aristocratic family of Arghuns, who traced their ancestry back to Chengīz Khān.¹

Mīrzā Mughal Beg was a disciple or murīd of Ḥabīb Shāh, the father of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. From generation to generation their family had been reputed for saintly persons and Ṣūfīs and supernatural powers were ascribed to them. On one occasion the daughter of Mīrzā Mughal Beg fell ill, and according to custom, the family invited Ḥabīb Shāh to their ladies' apartment to bless the girl. As Shāh Ḥabīb himself was ill, he sent his son Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf to perform the blessing. As soon as he saw the girl, he became aware of her apparent and inner beauty, and fell in love with her. To bless her he held the girl's little finger and exclaimed: "One whose finger is clasped by the Sayyid's hand shall witness no harm".² This infuriated the parents of the girl, who took it as an insult, and they made life difficult for Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and his family. Finally, the Sayyid family had to leave Koṭrī and settle somewhere else away from the Arghuns.

From the time Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf saw the girl, he was

1. One of his ancestors, Shāh Beg of the Arghun dynasty of Afghanistan, had attacked Sind under the rule of the last Sammā ruler, Jām Fīrūz, in the year 926/1519 AD, defeated the Jām and become ruler of Sind. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.11.
2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.14.

quietly suffering the pangs of separation. When he could no longer conceal his emotions for the girl, his thoughts and feelings of agony took the form of verses which he uttered everywhere and all the time. These verses which were full of pathos, tribulation and sorrow, further enraged the Arghuns, who became his enemies.

It is said that once, while Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf was sitting on a sand dune immersed in deep thoughts, he lost consciousness and lay there for three days, becoming almost buried in the sand, with only a small corner of his clothes visible. A shepherd saw him and reported it to his father who was desperately worried about his son's absence. Shāh Habīb came to the spot, thinking that his son must have died by then, and he uttered a verse, "The wind has blown and buried the limbs". Suddenly, Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf gained his senses and replied in a melancholy tone: "I still survive in the hope of meeting the beloved".¹ This story is mentioned by well-known scholars such as Gurbukhshānī, Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Ādvānī and others. Such anecdotes as these must have become exaggerated in the course of time. But there is no doubt about the fact that Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf suffered enormous torments in separation from his beloved, who later became his wife.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.12-13.

All the good advice of his family and friends could not make him forget the girl.¹ Nor could the hostile attitude of the girl's family stop his flow of thoughts, resulting in heart-breaking poetry, either on separation or in praise of the beloved. As he says:

چیتاریان چُطکن ، سنیاریان سہی
آندرُوح رُہی ، مُنکی صورتُ سِپَرینِ جی .

Whenever I recall their memory, the wounds
re-open and bleed.

I have been thinking about them continually.

The features of my sweetheart are ever present in
my heart.²

When he was under pressure either to forget the girl, or not to mention his love, he expressed his feelings in poetry:

پل پل مہ پلبانس ، پل نہ رُہی پَرینِ رِی
جِنھن جہورِیہ کان جہلبانس ، جہچو تنہ جہورِیہ پُوی .

Every moment I have been prohibiting it (heart).

But it cannot stop thinking about the beloved,
even for a single second.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.12.

2. Shāhwanī, op. cit., pp.1039-40.

The more restrictions I impose, the more heartache
is tearing the wounds apart.¹

All his efforts and those of his family failed to influence
the opinion of the girl's parents. Moreover, the Arghuns made
life difficult for him and his family. He realised that the
man-made laws of the society were so strong and rigid that
he could neither alter them nor break them. As a frustrated
lover he had no choice but to leave the place.

Though he abandoned everything and left, he was
determined that sooner or later he would succeed in winning
over his lady love. The following verse seems to express his
feelings of that time. He says:

أَوَّلِ آخِرِ أَهٍ ، هَلْ لِي مِنْهُنَّجُو هَوْتِ دِي
پورهئو سندر پورهيتن والي! كيم وچاء
سو مون تورور لاء، جنء ججري ملان جت كلي .

Whether it is now, or after, my striving is for
and towards the beloved.

O my God! Do not undo the toil of the labourer.
Do me one favour, to see the beloved in my
lifetime.²

1. Shāh-wānī, op. cit., p.1037.

2. Ibid., p.377.

While Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was travelling alone, he never felt kithless or lonely. The love and sorrows of the beloved occupied the emptiness of the environment and his thoughts. He says:

سُورُن لَدُو سَجْهُ، پَا طَه پِيهِي اَكْبَا
كِه كِي تَبَان مَنجَه؟ مُرْتَان چِيكِن چِتَا مِر !

Sorrows took their opportunity and came (to me)
by themselves

To whom could I disclose the secret?

Let the wounds (of sorrow) bleed within.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not discourage sorrows; indeed, he considers them as his friends and requests them to stay with him. He says:

سُورُ ! مَه وَجِيحَاهُ، سَجْطُ جِينَه سَانِكِ وَيَا
پَرِيَه پَجَاهَا، اَتُون اَوَان سِين اوريَان !

(Pain) Sorrows! pray do not leave me as the
beloved has done.

After the beloved I may converse with you.²

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.362.

2. Ibid., p.362.

After some time had elapsed, it seems that he felt his sorrows might leave him too.

In the Risālo one finds the poet pleading with his sorrows not to desert him until he is united with his beloved.

سور! مَ متج ساء، آتون نه وكني آهيان
وچج به ويل كهين، وره ! مون وٽاء
تون پڻ تڏهن جاء، جڏه تيان هڪاندي هوت سين !

O sorrows! do not deprive me of your savour.

For I am not yet satisfied.

Pray, do not leave me, o anguish! even for a moment.

You can withdraw when I am unified with my beloved.¹

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf seems to have enjoyed the company of sorrows; he expresses it in the following words:

رُمان، تان راند، کلان تان کامي هيون
اکڙيون ويساند، پريءَ گڏجي ڪنديون !

The (act of) crying gives me recreation (solace)

Laughter burns my heart

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.362.

My eyes will only rest by meeting the beloved.¹

During his wanderings he must have passed through the lonely places among woods and deserts. But these things do not deter him from giving up his objective. He seems prepared for every obstacle on the way. Nevertheless, his description of the environment indicates his feelings.

وَذَا وَوَلِّهِ وَطَعَارُ جَا ، جِت نَانِكْت سُجْهِن نِيلا
أُتِي عَبْد الطيفِ بِي ، كُنَّا هِيَعْلِينِ حِيلا
جِت كُتْمُ مَ قَبِيلا ، أْتِ رَسَجِ ، رَهْبِرِ رَاهِ مِ !

Where there are huge trees in the forest, poisonous blue snakes are bound to be found there.

There, says ^c Abd al-Latīf, in the solitude one is searching.

Where no assistance is sought from kinsmen or community.

Help me, o guide! and direct me to the path.²

From the poetry of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf one can trace the places he visited and the type of people he met. His observations of his surroundings and the lessons he learns from a study of nature, and the hardships of the journey

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.368.

2. Ibid., p.287.

provide him with abundant raw material for his poetry. All the experiences he has during his travels, and the lasting impressions they leave on his mind, he expresses through various surs of the Risālo.

According to Shāh^vānī,¹ after leaving home Shāh^cAbd al-Latīf must have passed by on the Hallā road (Shāhī Sarak), travelling towards Hyderabad. Here he seems to have met yogīs of various kinds, who used to meet there near Ganjo Takkar, at the temple of the goddess Kālī.² Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf joined the company of the yogis. He spent three years in their company and visited several places of pilgrimage, sacred to the Hindus.

During his travels he must have suffered a great deal in the rough, tiring mountainous regions and long stretches of dry desert. All these experiences he later expresses in his poetry.

While travelling from Las Belo he must have thought about Sapaṛ Sammā, ruler of Sind, who was well-known for his generosity. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf pays tribute to him in the following words:

1. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., p.8.

2. For further information, cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis.

پاجھاٹون بیلے تہی، بجهان باجد تہی،
سپر ما سہی، جیکا چارٹ چت م

The benevolent Lord of the Bela, from his sympathetic nature understood the matter.

Sapar attentively comprehended the intentions of the minstrel.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf never wrote in praise of kings, or to gain court patronage. In this case he appreciated the quality of generosity in a ruler who had died long before.

On the way he must have come across the Hellaya hills and Kinghar Lake, and the ruins of a palace overlooking the lake. This palace had associations with a love story of Nūrī and Jām Tamachī,² a Sammā ruler of Sind. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf refers to them in the following words:

ہیت جر، متی مجر، پامی پرین سندام۔
گوڑبین کاج ستام، اٹ ستو کو نہ رہیو۔

Below is the water, on it the blossom of an acacia tree

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.1229/13.

2. Refer to Appendix for the folk story of Nūrī and Jām Tamachī.

By my side is my beloved
Numerous wishes of mine have been fulfilled
None is left unfulfilled.¹

هَيْثُ جُرْمَتِي مَجْر، حُكْنَدِيءُ كُونَرُ تَرْنِ
وَرْتِي وَاھُونْدِنِ، كَنْجَرُ كَثُورِي تَتِي •

Below is the water, above is the blossom of an
acacia tree

On the bank float waterlilies

At the time of spring, Kinghar is full of sweet
fragrance.²

On his way towards Karachi, he seems to have visited the city of Bhambhore. The city, which is in ruins now, was associated with a romantic folk-story of Sasuī and Punhū.³ Five surs (out of thirty) are devoted to this story in the Risālo. One may assume that it is because this story has points of similarity with the life of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf himself that he composed a large number of verses on it. The poet, like Sasuī, the heroine of the story, was frustrated and searching for the beloved. Both had to face the hardships of

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p. 867.

2. Ibid.

3. Wafāi, op. cit., pp. 56-57. For a detailed account of this Sindhī folk story,

cf. Appendix.

the long, tiring journey through the mountains and deserts, but never gave up. In one of the verses he addresses Sasuī saying:

وَهُ هَهُ مُنْتَدَا بِنِيْهُورِ ۞ ، كَرِكُو وَاخُو وِسْ
لِيْزَنُ جُو لَطِيْفُ چِي ، دَنگَرُ دَبِنْدَهُ دَسْ
بُنْهُو اَتِي بَسْ ، سِرِ پِرِ اَهْلِي سُسِي !

Never sit, woman, in Bhambhore, call out and embark on the task.

The mountains, says Latīf, will inform you about the camels. Sasuī go and seek Punhū, even if you have to walk on your head.¹

The poet passed by Karachi, which at that time was only a small fishing village called Kalachi. One folk-story is still associated with Kalachi - the whirl-pool which drowned the six brothers of Moriro. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is not unaware of this incident, and composes a sur, Ghātū, about it.²

كَا لَ كَلَاچِيءَ وَا ، چَتِيُونِ كَلِي چَكْبِرْ
پَاثِرِنِ پِيرو نَمِ كِنُو ، اَدِنِ كِنِي اَوِيْرُ
اَهْزِي خَاصِي كَبِرْ ، كُنْ وَاثِي جَهْلِي .

1. Shāh wānī, op. cit., p.382/14.

2. Cf. the Appendix for the details of this story.

Yesterday, the brave ones went to Kalachi, carrying spears and spikes. The brothers did not return alas! the kinsmen have been delayed. The whole group have been caught up in the whirl pool.¹

Then Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf seems to have crossed the Hab river. In order to reach the valley of Windur, he had to cross the dry, rocky deserted areas, before he could reach the Hāro mountains. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf may well be referring to these mountains when he puts the following words into the mouth of Sasuī. He says:

رائی کی رنجور، تنگرتو تاکبو چڑھی
لانچی لک، لطیف چنی، ہلی ڈانہن حضور
رہیا سب رجن مہ، سمٹی جا سالور
ساچن میترے سور سک نہ میترے سپرین

She has been tortured and hurt by the journey through the mountains

In spite of that, says Latīf, she is proceeding towards "the Presence"²

The deserts have deprived Sasuī of her adornment and silken dresses.

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.876/1.

2. An honorific title of the beloved.

Through sorrows and not through an easy life has she attained her beloved.¹

After crossing the Hārō mountains the poet, along with his yogi companions, reached Hinglaj. Then he visited Lahūt which is in the vicinity of the Pab mountain: he went there by way of Vaṅkār. Thereafter he crossed the river Indus at Thaṭṭa and visited Mughal-bin, then Lakhpat in Kacch, Duwārkā and Pūrab-Bandar.² In remembrance of these places Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf composed Sur Samūdhī and Sur Sri Rāg.

His visit to Jhunagarah and Girnār Hill reminded him of the folk story of Sorath Rai Diyāch² and his unbelievable love of music, and generosity in paying the minstrel with his own head. The poet pays him tribute in the following words:

کي جو بيجل بولنو ، پني ويهي پان
راجا رتولن م ، سيباڻو سلطان
آءُ مشاهون ، مگڻا! مقابل ميدان
گهوريان لک لطيف چي ، تنهنجي قدم تان قربان
مٿو هيءُ ، مزمان! هلي آءُ ته هت ڏينءُ .

At the break of the dawn, the minstrel Bījal started singing.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.143.

His song fascinated the Rājā to such an extent,
that he called the minstrel.

Saying, come in front of me so that I can
sacrifice thousands of thousands (money) at
your feet said Latīf.

O my guest! (said Rājā), come so that I may
present you my head.¹

From Sur Mārūī,² it is clear that Shāh Abd al-Latīf not only visited Thar and Malīr himself but he also uses numerous Tharī words. He also mentions the food people ate there and the kind of life they lived. Mārūī's love for Malīr and Mārū is proverbial in Sind. This sur is one of the longest in the Risālo. The poet writes:

واجھائي وطن کي ، ساري ڏيان ساهُ
هيءُ سرُ ساڙيھ سامھون ، منھنجو نچ ، ميان !
مقامياھي مارئين ، وڃي ٿر ميان !
ميائي جيان ، جي وڃي مڙھ ملير ٿي .

If I die here, longing for my country

Cont'd: 2. Ādvānī, K.B., Shāh Latīf, New Delhi, 1970, pp.15-17.

1. Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.899-900.

2. Refer to the folk story in the Appendix.

O sir! take my body to my homeland

So that at least my dead body may rest in Thar,
in the same graveyard.

I will live again, if only my corpse is taken to
Malīr.¹

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf also went to Jaisalmer and
neighbouring places. He even saw Landāno, where another
heroine, Mūmal,² had her palace overlooking the river Kāk.
Here he must have visualised, Mūmal waiting for Rāno, and
requesting him for forgiveness. As he says:³

رِسْ مِ رُسْ گھورئو ، چَدِ ، رانھا ! رینڈائی
منھنجی میت، مینڈرا ! عاقل ! اگلائی
لپیتج ، لطیف چي ، کامل کچھائی
کر معاف مدائی ، تہ سویدا ! سکياھي تيان

⁴
O Rānā! do not be annoyed with me, do give up
anger.

⁵
O Maindrā! and wise one! overlook my foolishness

O perfect! says Latīf, conceal my faults.

⁶
Forgive my vices, o Sodhā! so that I can be at
peace.

1. . . Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.801.

2. Cf. the Appendix for the story.

3. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.734.

4. Name of Mūmal's husband

5. Rana's caste a

6. Name of Rana's tribe

It was Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's great wish to visit Karbala in Iraq and accordingly he set out as an old man to go there. On the way some of his disciples reminded him of his advice to them, "to live and die in Bhiṭ Shāh". Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was moved by it, and not wanting to disappoint his followers, he went back to Bhiṭ Shāh. After giving up the idea of going to Karbala, he composed Sur Kedāro, in memory of the tragedy of Karbala.¹ In that sur he mourns the death of Imām Husain, his family and friends. He praises their endurance and bravery in fighting with determination against very powerful and well-equipped forces. Though they were only a handful of people, they decide to fight against injustice, so as to leave an example for the rest of the world of how never to submit in the face of a cruel ruler and unfair government.

Turning now to individuals who may have exerted a spiritual influence on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, it would appear that in none of his works does he mention his murshid or guide, nor do any subsequent scholars mention any name. But his poetry reveals that he was inspired by certain Ṣūfīs, 'ulamā' and yogis. He also mentions on a couple of occasions the name of Maulānā Rūmī, whose works had a great effect on him.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.24.

In particular, it would appear that Madan Bhagat, and Tamar Faqīr, who were Hindus, were his friends and it has been suggested that the friendship of Madan Bhagat caused Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf to be attracted to yogis.¹ Apart from Hindu companions, the poet had many Muslim friends, especially amongst the ^culamā'.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was inspired by the works of certain saints whose tombs he would visit from time to time to gain spiritual enrichment. The most prominent among these were: Makhdūm Nūḥ (1506-1593), Makhdūm Bilāwal (flourished in the sixteenth century) and Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1538-1635), the poet's own great grandfather.

There were also many living holy men whom Shāh^cAbd al-Latīf visited and with whom he exchanged ideas. These included Shāh ^cInāyat Sūfī of Jhok (died 1718), Makhdūm Muḥammad Mu^cīn Thattavī (died 1747), Makhdūm Muḥammad of Khuhṛā (died 1757), Makhdūm Muḥammad Zamān Lanvārī (died 1770).

After three years' travelling, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf returned home and was offered in marriage the same girl, Sa^cīda Begum, whose parents had formerly rejected him. By now most

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.11.

of the male members of her family had been killed by robbers, including her father. Since the rest of the family believed that a curse had been put on them for ill-treating the poet's family who were Sayyids, the women of the Arghun family were only too willing to give the hand of the girl to Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. The marriage took place and the poet found that his wife possessed all the good qualities he had attributed to her in his poetry, though he had hardly known her before marriage. The relationship seems to have been a harmonious one, although some scholars have refuted this.¹ According to Mirza Qalech Beg, for example, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf never liked any women, even his wife and he married merely in order to follow the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad.² It is traditional to attribute a dislike of women to a great Ṣūfī figure.³

Mirzā Qalech Beg writes that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf used to say:

The ṭālib (seeker) should live a bachelor's life. When he marries, his condition becomes like a fly stuck in honey which cannot set itself free and fly. He (the seeker) will be stuck in the worldly

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.16.

2. Mirza Qalech Beg, Life of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf of Bhit, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, p.61.

3. It is the view of Jotvani as well.

life and all hopes of his spiritual flight will be hindered due to his involvement in family life.¹

Such a statement sounds reasonable in a Ṣūfī context but as will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis it does not adequately reflect the attitude of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf to women.

After his marriage, the poet chose a sandhill (bhiṭ) near the present town of Hallā, far from habitation, in which to settle. Characteristically, he helped to build a village with his own hands along with his followers and then moved there. The popularity of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf as a Ṣūfī and a poet attracted numerous devotees, Hindus and Muslims alike, to the isolated bhiṭ.²

Much has been written about the religious views of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. Like his forefathers, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was a Sunnī Muslim who observed all the obligatory duties of the Sharī^Ca. Nevertheless, he appears to have been sympathetic towards certain Shī^Cite practices and beliefs. He had a great regard and love for Sayyids, especially the Prophet Muḥammad, Ḥazrat ^CAlī and the Imāms Ḥasan and Ḥusain. As already mentioned, one chapter of the Risālo is devoted to the tragedy of Kābala. In the month of Muḥarram, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf used

1. Mirzā Qalech Beg, op. cit., p.61.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.19.

to wear the traditional black clothes of mourning in accordance with Shī^cīte custom. On the other hand, he never abused or accused the first three Caliphs as the Shī^cītes do. One possible reason for his partiality to the family of the Prophet could be that his own ancestors came from that line. Moreover, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf always supported the oppressed classes. In this case, Yazīd was the oppressor who tortured and massacred a handful of Sayyids and it would be natural for Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf to observe Muharram as a reminder to the people of injustice against which they should rise without fear.¹

Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf was once asked if he was a Sunnī or Shī^cīte? He answered 'in between'. When his questioner told him that there was nothing 'in between', Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf replied that he was that 'nothing'. In Ṣūfī terms this refers to fanā' (nothingness or self-annihilation). Whether or not he was more Sunnī or Shī^cīte, what is clear is that his thoughts were inclined towards Ṣūfism.

According to Wāfāī Dīn Muḥammad, Sayyid and Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf belonged to the Qādiriyya Ṣūfī Order, founded by Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī (1077-1166 AD), one of poet's own ancestors. Like many adherents of the Qādiriyya,

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.26.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was greatly inspired by wahdat-al-wujūd,¹ the doctrine propounded by Ibn ^cArabī which spread throughout the Muslim world and which had gained great popularity in the sub-continent.

Although the majority view would appear to hold that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf belonged to the Qādiriyya order, Ādvānī argues that he was an Uwaisī Sūfī.² Whatever the truth may have been, it appears that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was open to influences from the three other Sūfī orders which were popular in Sind; the Chishtiyya, the Suhrawardiyya and the Naqshbandiyya.

Music, which was very important in the ritual of the Chishtiyya order, also played a great part in the life of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.

Although Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf had a very broad outlook on religion, he did not refrain from performing formal religious acts. This he believed to be essential for the self-discipline of the individual believer. Moreover, as he had

1. Wafāī Dīn Muḥammad, Lutf al-Latīf, Karachi, 1951, p.142.

2. Op. cit., p.11.

a large number of followers, who were mostly illiterate, he wished to show them how to conduct themselves from his own example.¹

Fundamentally, however, for Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf religion was a personal matter, which unless a man felt from within his heart, no matter how much he prostrated himself and held fasts in Ramadān, would be of little value. He expresses such views in his verses, saying:²

ان پر نہ ایمان ، جن کلمی گو خوفائین
دغا تہنجی دل میں شرک و شیطان ،
مہم مسلمان ، اندر اندر آہین .

It is not the true faith when you recite the name of God. In your heart is deceit and Satan. In appearance only you look Muslim. Inside you is Azar.³

He puts great emphasis on purity of heart and right conduct, rather than outward performances. He says:

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.27-28.

2. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., p.1015/14.

3. This is probably a pun آذر / آزار , Azar being the name of Abraham's father (i.e. an infidel.)

جان جان پَسِين پالِ کي ، تان تان ناهِ سُجود
وجائي وُجود ، تِهان پورِ نَکبِيرِ چوہ

As long as you are conscious of your self

Prostration is of no use

First of all give up your existence

Then only can you voice the takbīr.¹

An integral part of the religious life of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf was his love of music and singing. He used to play the yaktāro and sing his own poetry. At times he used to spend several days in samāʿ. During that time he was unaware of his surroundings, and tears used to flow from his eyes. Many people used to come to listen to his divine message of love, unity and peace, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.²

His Muslim contemporaries did not approve of his practice of music.³ Once a group of mullas and learned men, including Makhdūm Muḥammad Ḥāshim Ṭhaṭṭavī, came to Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf and accused him of singing and playing music, which was an un-Islamic act. They argued that music was not

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.992.

2. Mīrza Qalech Beg, op. cit., pp.66-8. Also cf. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.25.

3. Throughout the centuries, 'ulamā' objected to the Samāʿ practised by the Sufis.

permissible in any circumstances to a Muslim. Instead of arguing, he narrated a brief story to them. He said,

There is a tree, which is very useful for the well-being of the people, but there is a scarcity of water. Unless it receives water, it will wither away, causing great harm. But there is no water except a filthy pool: now would you suggest that we should let the tree wither away or pour some filthy water onto it to save it?

All of them agreed that they should save the tree with filthy water. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf told them that in his heart was a tree of Divine Love, which was watered by listening to music. When the music stopped, it started to wither away. The delegation could not find any other point of argument, so they left disappointed.¹

Later Life and Death

After building the small village at Bhit, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf left Ketrī for ever and retired to that secluded place along with his family and faqīrs (followers). Several masters of music and singers from different parts of India, including the well-known singers of Delhi, Chanchal and Aṭṭal, frequently visited him. Most of his time was spent in music and samā^{-C}.

1. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, op. cit., p.67.



His fame as a holy man and great poet spread far and wide, numerous people from different parts of Sind and India flocked around him, either to obtain blessing or inspiration in spirituality.¹ His songs of love and peace for everyone irrespective of caste, colour or creed make him the unchallenged spiritual ^{guide of} Muslims and Hindus alike.

As mentioned already,² he intended to go to Karbala but was deflected from this by his followers. It is said that he spent 21 days in seclusion, after which he emerged, performed his ablutions, covered himself with a white sheet and asked the faqīrs to play music. The music continued for three days. When his followers stopped it, they found him dead. This was 14th Šafar 1167/Tuesday, 11th December, 1753.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.20.

2. Cf. p.43.

The Work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf

Introduction:

Many influential figures in Sindhī literature wrote in the Kalhōrō period (1658-1739) which was the most productive and truly decisive time for the development of Sindhī literature in all its branches. Towering, however, above dozens of well-known poets is the figure of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf (1689-1752). His "Risālo is a sacred book for the Sindhīs, admired and memorised by Muslims and Hindūs equally."¹

According to Sorley "He is incomparably the greatest man whom Sind has yet produced in the field of imaginative art". Sorley goes on in similar laudatory tone:

He is the real jewel of the Kalhōrō age. He has written poetry that deserves a wider public than it has yet attracted. His life is an epitome of the age in which he lived.²

I. Manuscripts

There are thirty-one versions of Shāh jo-Risālo in

1. Schimmel, Sindhi Literature, pp.13-14.

2. Sorley, H.T., Shāh Abdul Latīf of Bhit, London, 1940, p.169.

manuscript form, either in public or private libraries. There is considerable variation between the manuscripts. The number of surs, for instance, varies from a maximum number of 40 in one manuscript to a minimum of 17 surs in another. Moreover, the number of sections which each sur contains is also not uniform, nor is the order of the surs the same in all the manuscripts.¹

It is not the aim of the ensuing discussion to deal at length with the complicated question of the manuscripts of the Risālo. Discussion will be limited merely to the two oldest manuscripts which are of particular interest and to the two manuscripts in Britain which have been seen by the writer of this thesis.

The manuscript generally regarded as the earliest is in the Institute of Sindology, University of Sind, Jamshoro. The second earliest manuscript, the so-called Ganj, is in Bhit Shāh and is supposed to be more authentic. Of the other two mentioned below, one is kept in the British Museum² and the other one is in the India Office Library.³

1. Jūnejo jō ^c Abd Jabbār, Latīfiyyāt, Hyderabad Sind, 1977, pp.1-13.

2. Shāh jō Risālo, BM. Or.2987.

3. Shāh jō Risālo, India Office, Sindhi ms., 3.145 FF.

The oldest manuscript, which dates from 1852, has 34 surs and 150 pages. It is named after Ākhūnd Fazl^c Alī. According to this manuscript, the surs of the Risālo are as follows:

- (1) Kalyān (2) Jaman (Yaman (3) Sarāg (Srī Rāg)
- (4) Samūndhī (5) Sahnī (Suhnī) (6) Sārang
- (7) Kedāro (8) Ābrī (9) Ma^c zūrī (10) Daisī
- (11) Kohiyārī (12) Ḥusainī (13) Sōraṭh (14) Berāg
- Hindī (15) Berag Sindhī (16) Rānan (Rāno) Mūmal
- (17) Khāhorī (18) Rāmkalī (19) Ripp (10) Līlā
- (21) Bilāwal (22) Dahar (23) Kāpāitī (24) Āsā
- (25) Māru'ī (26) Dhanāsirī (27) Kāmod
- (28) Kārāyal (29) Pirbhātī (30) Ghātū
- (31) Sheinh Kedāro (32) Hīr Rānjho (33) Pūrab
- (34) Dhōl Māru'ī

This manuscript has four more surs than the now officially accepted number which is 30. Out of these 34 surs, six surs have names which are different from the ones used in the published editions of the Risālo, i.e. (1) Berāg Hindī, (2) Berāg Sindhī, (3) Dhanāsirī, (4) Sheinh Kedāro, (5) Hīr Rānjho, (6) Dhōl Māru'ī. As well as this difference, it is noteworthy that two surs of the Risālo are absent from the

1. Jūnejo, op. cit., p.1.

published version, i.e. Khambhāt and Brāvo Sindhī.

The second manuscript, the so-called Ganj, which dates from 1853, has 29 surs and 340 pages. In this manuscript 24 surs are the same as those found in present-day published editions, but Sur Kalyān and Yaman are, however, combined and called Kalyān and Jaman. Out of the five usual surs on Sasuī, there is only one in this MS. Apart from four surs about Sasuī, Brāvo Sindhī and Sur Pirbhātī, which usually appear in published editions, are also missing. Instead, there are six other surs, i.e. Sheinh Kedāro, Berāg Hindī, Mānj, Ḍhol Māruī, Jājkānī and Dhanāsari.

There is one manuscript of the Risālo in the British Museum.¹ It has twenty-eight surs and consists of 284 pages. Nabī Bukhsh Baloch edited and published this manuscript² in 1969.

One of the manuscripts of the Risālo is in the India Office Library;³ it has 26 surs and in addition a sur of Mutafarriq, i.e. variant verses. This manuscript consists of 146 pages. Three surs are different from the edited Risālo, i.e.

1. Op. cit.

2. Baloch, Nabī Bukhsh, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1969.

3. Op. Cit.

Dhanāsirī, Sheinh Kedāro and Basant. Sur Yaman Kalyān is not included in it. Instead of five surs on Sasuī i.e. Ābrī, Mazūrī, Desī, Kōhiyārī and Husaini, there is only one sur under the name of Sasuī. Sur Līlā Chanasar is also not found in this ms., while the rest of the surs are the same as in the published Risālo.

The other two manuscripts under discussion, the one in the British Museum and the other in the India Office Library, have been personally consulted. On the other hand, information on the other two manuscripts has been obtained from Laṭīfiyyāt, a bibliography on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's work compiled by Jūnejo.¹

Apart from these manuscripts, there are 14 definitive published editions of the Risālo, which purport to be complete.

Editions

The 14 different editions of the Risālo are as follows:

1. Ādvānī, Kalyan, Shāh jo Risālo, Bombay, 1958.²

1. Jūnejo, ^CAbd al-Jabbār, Laṭīfiyyāt, Hyderabad Sind, 1977, pp.1-13.

Cont'd:...

2. Bakhtiyārpūrī, M. Ibrāhīm, Shāh jo Risālo, Sukhar, 1931.¹
3. Baloch, Nabī Bukhsh, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1969.²
4. Baloch, Nabī Bukhsh, Shāh jo Risālo, Bhitshah, 1974.³
5. Daiplāi Muḥammad ^c Uṣmān, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1951.⁴
6. Gurbukhshānī, Hotchand Molchand, Shāh jo Risālo, Volumes I, II and III, Karachi, 1923-31.⁵
7. Maimun Muḥammad Siddīq, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1951.⁶
8. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Shāh jo Risālo, Sukhar, 1913.⁷
9. Qāsimī Ghulām Mustafā, Shāh jo Risālo, Volumes I and II, Karachi, 1951.⁸

Cont'd: 2. This Risālo contains text, commentary or explanation of each verse, having an introduction to each sur. The assumed unauthentic poetry has been excluded. There is an abridged edition of the same Risālo, with the same number of surs, with an explanation and introduction to each sur. Ādvānī, Shāh jo Risālo (selection), Bombay, 1961.

1. Further information on this edition was not accessible to the author of this thesis.
2. This edition is based on the manuscript kept in the British Museum
3. This is based on three manuscripts written in 1269 and 1270 A.H. X
4. It contains only the text, which includes also material generally regarded as unauthentic.
5. It has a long introduction and unauthentic material has been excluded. Each sur is prefaced by an introduction to the content, and interpretations of difficult words or phrases are given.

Cont'd:...

10. Qāzī Imdād ^ḤAlī, Shāh jō Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.¹
11. Qāzī Ibrāhīm, Shāh jō Risālo, Bombay, 1867.²
12. Shāhvānī, Ghulām Muḥammad, Shāh jō Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1950.³
13. Tārāchand Shoqīrām, Shāh jō Risālo, Bombay, 1900.⁴
14. Trumpp, Ernest, Shāh jō Risālo, Leipzig, 1866.⁵

Cont'd: 6. No further information appears available on this edition and it was not accessible to the present author.

7. It was reprinted in Hyderabad in 1923.
8. It includes authentic as well as unauthentic material, and gives the meaning of difficult words.
1. This is the first edition of the Risālo which does not contain Sur Kedāro. It contains the meanings of difficult words. The order of surs is also different from the usual Risālo; Sur Suḥnī is the last sur. There is no introduction to it.
2. After this first edition, seven more reprints came out in 1876, 1886, 1889, 1893, 1899, 1911 and 1921. This is called the Bombay print (edition).
3. It has an introduction, and the meaning of difficult words are given in the footnotes. Another print came out in 1961.
4. This is called the "official" edition. A reprint came out in 1923.
5. This was the first edition of the Risālo. It has 22 surs, and an introduction in English. Trumpp uses his own modifications to the Arabic alphabet to indicate Sindhī sounds.

One of the reasons for the existence of so many editions of the Risālo was that different manuscripts were found in the possession of various people. Each differed from the other in certain aspects. Each scholar would consult one, two, three or more manuscripts and chose from them the material he thought was genuine. By judging the language and style, each one edited the Risālo in his own way.

The works of all the above-mentioned editors are in Sindhī. These works contain the original poetry of Shāh^C Abd al-Latīf in the form of baits and vāyūn, with an introduction, commentary and notes about the work.

Shāh jo Risālo in its published form usually consists of thirty surs. These are:¹

- (1) Sur Kalyān̄
- (2) Sur Yaman Kalyān̄
- (3) Sur Khambhāt
- (4) Sur Srī Rāg
- (5) Sur Samūndhī
- (6) Sur Suhñī
- (7) Sur Sasuī Ābrī
- (8) Sur Ma^Czūrī
- (9) Sur Desī
- (10) Sur Kohiyārī
- (11) Sur Husainī
- (12) Sur Līlā Chanesar
- (13) Sur Mūmal Rāno
- (14) Sur Māruī
- (15) Sur Kāmōd
- (16) Sur Ghātū
- (17) Sur Sorath
- (18) Sur Kedāro
- (19) Sur Sārang
- (20) Sur Āsā
- (21) Sur Ripp
- (22) Sur Khāhorī

- (23) Sur Brāvō Sindhī (24) Sur Rāmkalī
(25) Sur Kāpāitī (26) Sur Pūrab (27) Sur Kārāyal
(28) Sur Pirbhātī (29) Sur Dahar (30) Sur Bilāwal

This list, taken from the edition of Ādvānī¹ is broadly speaking the same in most of the other editions of the Risālo, even if the order of the surs may vary.

The division of surs into sections and the order of surs is not uniform in all the editions of Shāh jo Risālo. For example, in Trumpp's edition, eight surs are omitted, especially Sur Māruī, because of its length. Trumpp regretted this omission, which he said was made to reduce the price of the book.² Ādvānī, Shāhwānī and Sorley all have thirty surs in the Risālo. The rest of the surs are discarded by them since they argue on stylistic grounds that they are not the works of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.

Some of the surs are named on the basis of their subject matter or theme, others refer to the places where they were composed. Some bear the names of the heroines whose stories they refer to, like Lilā, Mūmal, Sasui, Suhnī - and Māruī. Still others are named after the Indian classical rāgās and

1. Ādvānī, Kalyān, Shāh jo Risālo, Karachi, 1976.

2. Trumpp, op. cit., p.vi.

rāginīs (male and female types of melodies).¹

There is a more recent study in English by Jotvānī, entitled Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf: His Life and Work.² He argues that the surs should not be treated as rigid classical rāgās, as they do not possess those characteristics but that they can be called Lok-rāgās. These Lok - rāgās or Laukika-Vinodā he explains as

the music produced by experts for the satisfaction of common people ...

He continues

The Lok-rāgās are sung tunefully to the accompaniment of a drone instrument by minstrels, faqīrs and members of religious sects...

He concludes that Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf's poetry comes under that category.³

This is a disputable point, a problem for linguists and

1. Shāh^c Vānī, op. cit., pp.49-50.

2. Jotvānī, M, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, New Delhi, 1975, pp.87-88.

3. Ibid., p.88.

phoneticians to settle, but what is not disputable is that some of these surs are named after the classical rāgās and rāginīs of Indian music. Out of thirty surs, sixteen are named after these rāgās and rāginīs.

As mentioned earlier, each sur of Shāh jō Risālo is divided into sections which vary in length from two to twelve, depending on the subject matter contained in the sur. For example Sur Mārūī is one of the longest surs, which contains twelve sections; each section contains from 9-21 couplets (baits) and ends with one or more vāīs. The two smallest surs are Ghātū, having one section and Ripp, which consists of two sections, the first having 28 baits and one vāī, the second containing 19 baits and one vāī. In some surs such as Sasūī Ābrī there are up to ten vāīs or vāyūñ.

Three editions of Shāh jō Risālo have been consulted frequently in this thesis. The edition of Gurbukhshāñī¹ is particularly useful. It is in three volumes and is provided with a commentary and notes. Because of the author's death, the fourth volume was not published and so only 18 surs are discussed. Ādvāñī's edition is also helpful because of its

1. Gurbukhshāñī, op. cit.

explanatory comments but it is an abbreviated edition. Shāh vānī's edition contains all thirty surs in their entire length. This has been used, whenever the other two editions have proved inadequate.

Whilst discussing the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf brief mention should be made of a second work which is usually attributed to him. It consists of vāyūn and kāfiyūn, which are also divided into the same surs (musical modes) as in the Risālo. But three more surs are added to it. In this book 233 vāyūn and 183 kāfiyūn are included. It has been published by G.M. Sayyid.¹

Other published versions of the Risālo or parts of it

Several books have been published, which consist of selections from the Risālo. These can be divided into various categories. They include books which consist of poetry selected from different surs of the Risālo, depending on the choice of the scholar, as for example the book by Aḥmad Qāzī,² which was translated by Sorley.

1. **Sayyid**, G.M., Shāh Bhiṭāī jūn Vāyūn and Kāfiyūn, Hyderabad Sind, 1968.

2. Qāzī, Aḥmad, Muntakhab Shāh jo Risālo, Karachi, 1880.

There are several more such selections with or without the introduction. Some scholars select only kafiyun or wayun, such as in Harjānī's¹ collection of kafiyun and in Sayyid's book on kafiyun and wayun.²

Yet again, other scholars have included in their anthologies selected verses from Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's Risālo, as for example, a number of Baloch's collections, e.g. Maulūd,³ Tīh Akhiryūn,⁴ and Haftā Dīhan Ratyūn ain Mahīnā.⁵ Vāsvānī, in one of his works, selected those verses from the Risālo which contain only prayers.⁶ In other works of his there is a selection of verses and wayun with an interpretation and the meaning of difficult words.⁷

Muhammad Sūmār Shaikh edited and published two books entitled Shāh jā Gum Thial Bait.⁸ In the first book he includes

1. Harjānī, Gidūmal Khatanmal, Shāh jūn Kafiyūn, Ajmer, 1949.
2. Sayyid, op. cit. Cf. Lāshārī Rashīd Ahmad, Shāh jūn Chūnd Kafiyūn, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.
3. Baloch, Nabī Bukhsh, Maulūd, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.3 and 4.
4. Idem, Tīh Akhiryūn, Hyderabad Sind, 1960, pp.1-12.
5. Idem, Haftā Dīhan Ratyūn ain Mahīnā, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, p.87.
6. Vāsvānī, Fateh Chand Mangatrām, Manājāt Shāh, Shikarpur, 1946.
7. Idem, Shāhnāmū, Ajmer, 1953, Vol.1. Idem, Laṭīfī Lāt, Ajmer, 1953.
8. Shaikh, Muhammad Sūmār, Shāh jā Gum Thial Bait, Badīn Sind, 1956.

nine surs, i.e. baits which are not incorporated into the Risālo. He argues, however, that he went to the remote parts of Sind and collected the scattered poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf which had remained unpublished. His other book contains only Sur Māruī, which again is attributed to Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.¹

There is yet another category of books on the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. These contain verses from only one sur of the Risālo, with individual writers giving their interpretation of that sur. There are more than thirty-five such books. Not every sur has been treated in this way and whereas on some surs two or three books have been published, on others there are none. For example, for Sur Kalyān, Yaman Kalyān, Srī Rāg, Mūmal, Sasuī Ābrī, Sārang, three different people have written on each sur, whereas on Suhṇī and Māruī four books have been published on each.²

There have been very few translations of the complete Risālo of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf into other languages. Shaikh Ayāz, who is a well-known poet in his own right, translated the whole Risālo into Urdu in 1963. He produced a good translation in poetic form.

1. Ibid.

2. For full details cf. bibliography.

H.T. Sorley was the first Western writer who translated part of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's Risālo. He translated into English.¹

More recently Schimmel has translated some of the **verses** from the Risālo into German.²

Ghulām ^CAlī Allānā translated a selection of the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf into English.³

Previous scholarship on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf

Many books have been written in Sindhī on the life and work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, but only a few are to be found in other languages. The list is very long of scholars in the sub-continent who have written on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to mention each and every one of them. A brief summary only will therefore be made of some of the more interesting works written on the poet.

Among the earliest writers, the first information on the

1. Sorley, H.T., Shāh ^CAbdul Latīf of Bhit, London, 1940.
2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, pp.277-90.
3. Allānā, G.A., Selections from the Risālo, Karachi, 1980. Also idem, Four Classic Poets of Sind, Karachi, 1983.

life of Shāh ^C Abd al-Latīf is in the Tuḥfat al-Kirām,¹ a biographical work by Mīr ^C Alī Shīr Qāni^C, a younger contemporary of the poet. In this work, apart from a brief biographical sketch, Qāni^C attributes several miracles and superstitious beliefs to our poet, as he does to other saints. The book was first ~~written~~ in Persian in 1767; it was translated into Sindhī and published in 1957. In his other book the author also mentions our poet.²

Richard Burton was serving as an army officer in the Lower Indus Valley in 1844, a year after Sind had been annexed to the British Empire. In his book, first published in 1851,³ he writes about the history of Sind, its people and their way of life, and includes in it some remarks about Shāh ^C Abd al-Latīf and his poetry:⁴

Shāh Bheṭāī, the Sindhī, had the disadvantage of contending against a barbarous dialect, and composing for an unimaginative people. His ornaments of verse are chiefly alliteration, puns and jingling of words. He displays his learning

1. Qāni^C, Mīr ^C Alī Shīr, Tuḥfat al-Kirām, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, pp.339, 340, 356, 373, 383, 388, 435, 563, 565, 573, 578.
2. Idem, Maqālāt al-Shu^Carā, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, pp.428-29.
3. Burton, Richard, Sind and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus, London, 1851.
4. Idem, Karachi, 1973, p.203.

by allusion to the literature of Arabia and Persia, and not infrequently indulges in quotations.

A reading of the work of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf refutes Burton's accusations against the poet. It is true that at times Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf quotes verses in Arabic from the Qur'ān and the hadīṡ, in accordance with the tradition followed by most Muslim poets, ^{including} the great Persian masters like Ḥāfiz, ^cAttār and ^kRūmī. As for Persian quotations, these are very few, except for a word or a phrase here and there. As far as Arabic literature is concerned, with the exception of references to the Prophet Muhammad and his family, including the Karbala tragedy, which are to be expected from a Muslim poet, he does not refer to any other Arabic literature. As for Persian literature, the poet uses certain common Ṣūfī images like those of sailors and spinners which were current throughout the Islamic world, but in most cases he relies for inspiration on the indigenous folk literature of Sind.

It seems therefore that Burton failed to appreciate Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf's poetry. The way in which the poet expressed complex Ṣūfī ideas through symbols and images, against a Sindhī background, must have made it difficult for Burton to understand his work. Moreover, the inherent difficulties of the Sindhī language led to his misunderstanding and misrepresenting the work of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf.

Ernest Trumpp, a German missionary, has already been mentioned amongst the scholars who edited the Risālo. He is important because he was the first person who collected some manuscripts and published an edition of the Risālo¹ for the first time. Being primarily concerned with linguistic points, which were his main interest, and being a "strictly anti-mystically minded protestant minister" as Schimmel rightly points out,² he is very critical of the poet and his work. Nevertheless, his importance lies in his editing the Risālo.

Lilārām Watanmal Lālvānī³ wrote a whole book about the poet and his work. He interprets the whole Risālo in accordance with his own beliefs. According to him, the poetry of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf is based mainly on Vedantic teaching. At times he expresses his surprise and irritation at the poet's expressions of love and devotion to the Prophet of Islām and at his references to the Qur'ān.⁴ Indeed Lālvānī expects the Risālo to be entirely in conformity with his own religious beliefs.

1. Trumpp, Ernest, Shāh jō Risālo, Leipzig, 1866.
2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, p.152.
3. Lālvānī, Watanmal Lilārām, The life, religion and poetry of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, 1890.
4. Ibid., pp.36-7.

Mīrzā Qalech Beg wrote an important work on Shāh^CAbd al-Latīf, Aḥwāl Shāh^C Abd al-Latīf Bhitāī.¹ The book has ten chapters, in six of which he discusses the different stages and facets of the poet's life. The seventh chapter is about the Risālo, and discusses how it took its present form. Chapter 8 compares the poetry of Shāh^C Abd al-Latīf with that of Ḥāfiz Shirāzī. In Chapter 9 the author writes about Ṣūfīsm, and Waḥdat al-wujūd, in the light of the Qur'[']ān and ḥadīṣ. In the last two chapters the author speaks about each sur of the Risālo, explaining its religious significance.²

In 1922, M.M. Gidvānī wrote a small book on the life and work of Shāh^C Abd al-Latīf. It is in English, and was probably meant as an introduction for Western scholars.³

1. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Aḥwal Shāh^C Abdul Latīf Bhitāī, Hyderabad Sind, 1897, 1972.

2. Ibid., Latīfī Lāt, Hyderabad, 1912; Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad, 1913, 1922, 1923.

Reference has already been made to two textual works by the same author on the Risālo. Cf. also other important works by Mīrzā Qalech Beg:-

Idem, Luḡhat Latīfī, Hyderabad Sind, 1914, 1967.

Idem, Shāh jī Risāli jī Kunjī, Hyderabad Sind, 1918.

Idem, Qadīm Sindh jā Sitārā, Hyderabad Sind, 1923.

Idem, Shāh Ṣāhib^C Ālim, Hyderabad Sind, 1953.

3. Gidvānī, M.M., Shāh^C Abd al-Latīf, London, 1922.

In 1924, Gulrāj Parsrām Jathmal wrote in English a book called Sind and its Ṣūfīs. This was a small book written about Ṣūfīsm in Sind and the characteristics of Sindhī Ṣūfīs which distinguish them from other Ṣūfīs. In this book he writes only a very short general introduction about Shāh ^CAbdal-Latīf and his public message but his main concern in the book is to discuss Ṣūfīs and their attitude to religion and life.¹ In his other ^{Sindhī} work he discusses the folk stories used by our poet. This book is in two volumes.²

Ādvānī wrote two noteworthy books on the travels of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. In the light of those travels, he comments on his poetry and how those places and people with their customs and traditions are reflected through his poetry.³ With other poets, he selected some poetry of Shāh ^CAbdal-Latīf and edited it.

Mention should now be made of Gurbukhshānī, the well known scholar and authority on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. He wrote

1. Gulrāj Jathmal Parsrām, Sind and Its Ṣūfīs, Madras, 1924.
2. Idem., Shāh jūn Ākhāniyūn, Hyderabad Sind, 1923.
3. Ādvānī, Bherumal Maharchand, Sind jo Sailānī, Hyderabad Sind, 1923; idem, Latīfī Sair, Karachi, 1924, 1928; idem, Chūnd Kalām, Karachi, 1941.

a long introduction to the Risālo and edited three volumes of it,¹ based on eighteen surs. He died before he could complete his edition of all the surs. In his introduction he rightly draws attention to the inability of Eastern scholars to disentangle fact from fiction in connection with the life of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. He discards as unauthentic sections from the Risālo.

His work is very thorough and analytical in a scholarly way. He writes a detailed biography of the poet and discusses in some detail certain poetic themes of the Risālo. At the end of each volume, after the actual text, he writes about each sur, commenting on subject matter and giving the meaning of difficult words. He stresses especially the religious aspect of the Risālo. This is an extremely useful work for an understanding of the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. It is unfortunate that it is incomplete.

H.T. Sorley wrote a critical account of the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. He presented this work in 1938 for his Ph.D. thesis in London. It was published in 1940, under the title Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf of Bhit.² In this work he writes a historical account of the social and political events that took place in the time of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and translates into English a

1. Gurbukshānī, H.M., Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, 3 vols.

2. Sorley, H.T., Shāh ^cAbdal-Latīf of Bhit, London, 1940.

selection (Muntakhab) of the poet's work edited by Qāzī Ahmad Shāh in Sindhī.¹ Sorley's book, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf of Bhit is divided into three parts - (1) History, (2) Literature and Criticism, (3) The Risālo of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. This was the first attempt by a Western scholar to tackle a wide subject and the project took him twelve years to accomplish. His work is appreciated by the Sindhī people because of his efforts to learn the language and to translate some of the poetry into English and to introduce it to Western readers.

Sorley's approach is a conventional one in that he presents the poet as a Ṣūfī, little concerned with political and social conditions around him. This is one neglected area on which it is hoped the present thesis will shed some light.

In 1965, Elsa Qāzī translated some of the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. This is an abridged selection from the Risālo. Sur Kedāro has been omitted for unknown reasons.² Elsa Qāzī's husband was a scholar of literature in his own right. He wrote an article which was published in 1961 in the form of a monograph and was later included in his wife's book.³ This article is a useful review of the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, in which he discusses the characteristics of the poetry, and

1. Qāzī, Ahmad Shāh, Muntakhab Shāh jo Risālo, Karachi, 1880.

2. Qāzī, Elsa, Risālo of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1965.

3. Qāzī explained the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al Latīf, to his wife, who did not know Sindhi language. It was with his help that she was able to translate the Shāh jo - Risālo into English.

submits it to critical analysis.¹

In 1953, G.M. Sayed wrote a book called Paighām Laṭīf² in Sindhī. In this work the writer takes a new look at the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, in which he attempts to give a picture of the religious, cultural and political atmosphere of Sind in the poet's time. According to him, the poet was a great patriot whose message to the depressed masses of Sind was to fight to obtain their rights. He also compares and contrasts the personalities of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and Muḥammad Iqbāl.

Tanvīr ^CAbbāsī's book called Shāh Laṭīf jī Shā^Cirī, was published in 1976. He is one of the few writers who have broken away from the traditional, often repeated interpretations of the Risālo, and he has approached the work from a different angle. He examines the poetry according to the criteria of Western literary criticism. His work is written in Sindhī and is therefore of limited circulation.³

Apart from Sorley, Schimmel is the only Western scholar

1. Qāzī, I.I., Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf: An Introduction to His Art, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, 1973.
2. Sayyid, G.M., Paighām Laṭīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1953.
3. ^CAbbāsī, Tanvīr, Shāh Laṭīf jī Shā^Cirī, Karachi, 1976.

who is an authority on Sindhī literature in general and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf in particular. By including the Ṣūfī poets of the sub-continent and above all Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf in her work Mystical Dimensions of Islam,¹ she has given him his rightful place among the Ṣūfī poets of India and Pakistan and of the Islamic world. Several scholars before her, including Arberry, who wrote on Ṣūfī poets, excluded Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf from their discussions.

Schimmel's Sindhi Literature² is systematic and well documented and the best work of its kind in a Western language.

Schimmel's recent work entitled Pain and Grace³ is a scholarly work of great value. In it the lives and works of two poets, Mīr Dard and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, are discussed. The part devoted to Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is divided into three sections. The first is about the life and teaching of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. The second part concerns Ṣūfīs and yogīs, and the third discusses the Islamic background. The first and third sections are dealt with beautifully, but with perhaps a little

1. Schimmel, A.M., Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill, 1975.
2. Eadem, "Sindhi Literature, A History of Indian Literature, Vol.III, Part II, Wiesbaden, 1976-7.
3. Eadem, Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976.

too much emphasis placed on the Islamic side. She seems to be in agreement with Sindhī-Muslim scholars, and even with Sorley, who believe that the Risālo is solely based on Islamic teaching and on the Qur'ān and hadīs.

In her second section on yogis and Sūfīs, although she refers to yogis, one has the impression that their importance is not fully recognised. Yogis played a great role in the life of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, especially at a very critical stage, when he spent three years of his life in their company. This left a permanent influence on his life.

As is the case with other scholars, whether Hindus, Muslims or Western, who have worked on Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Schimmel makes the comment that women also played a positive role in the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. This is, however, an aspect of his work which deserves much more extended treatment than hitherto accorded to it.

There is a recent work of Ājvānī,¹ in which he writes a chapter about the predecessors of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and he also devotes two chapters to the life of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and to his Shāh jo Risālo. The work is marred by his approach,

1. Ājvānī, L.H., History of Sindhī Literature, New Delhi, 1970.

which is very partial.

On the one hand, he names the prominent poets and learned men of Sind, like Qāzī Qāzan, Shāh Karīm of Bulrī, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Khwāja Muḥammad Zamān of Lawārī, Pīr Muḥammad Baqā, Ṣāhib dīno Faqīr, Makhdūm ^cAbd al-Rahīm of Grihorī and Sachal Sarmast¹ and several others who happened to be all Muslims. Some of the names mentioned above were predecessors, and others were contemporaries of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. They were the product of the Sammā and Kalhorā period. On the other hand, while referring to Muslim rule he writes:

This long period of thousand years or more of Muslim rule in Sind was a period of almost progressive degeneration for Sind and Sindhīs...

He argues elsewhere, however that Sind under

its Hindū possessors was a rich, flourishing and extensive monarchy.²

While praising Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and his poetry he suggests that he was exclusively inspired by Hindu thought.

1. Ājwānī, op. cit., pp.87, 111.

2. Idem, p.6.

He strongly criticises Sorley and Baloch for suggesting that the poetry of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf is based on Sufism. He argues that if the poetry is Islamic, Hindūs would not have considered his book Risālo as a sacred book.¹

Jotwānī's book published in 1975, Shāh^c Abdul Latīf: His Life and Work, is a study of the Risālo and a critical view of some of the other works written on Shāh jo Risālo. His approach is subjective and at times defensive, as he tries to interpret the work of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf as entirely based on Hindu thought. He even tries to prove that Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf was only born a Muslim, but that he was unorthodox in his Muslim beliefs. Jotwānī's work was first presented as a Ph.D. thesis in Delhi, then published as a book.² He seeks to prove the debt which Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf owed to Hindu philosophy and that all his poetry is the result and influence of Vedantic thought. Defending his point he goes to an extreme.

It must be admitted that contemporary Hindu scholars in India such as these last two, when writing about Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf and his work strongly criticise the attitude of Muslim scholars who try to prove that the whole Risālo is based on the Qur'ān and Tradition. It is noteworthy, however, that the

1. Ājwānī, op. cit., p.14.

2. Jotwānī, M., Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf: His Life and Work, New Delhi, 1975.

efforts of these Hindu scholars are similarly directed towards proving that the poetry of Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf is not Islamic at all.

Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf's poetry had a universal appeal for everyone who believed in truth and justice, irrespective of religious differences. Our respected scholars should not get irritated at categorisations such as Hindu or Muslim, Qur'ān or Vedanta. For a seeker after truth, like Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf, all religious books were sources of knowledge, which pointed in the same direction, that of love, unity and peace for mankind. Ideally of course, Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf's poetry should not be restricted to any narrow description or definition. He was neither a pandit nor mulla preaching either religion. He was in fact a believer in waḥdat al-wujūd, and appreciated unity behind diversity. This was the main feature in his work which appealed to Muslims as well as Hindus, and this was the common element in their respective religious philosophies.

A Justification for this Thesis

Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf is the first Sindhī poet on whom an enormous amount of material has been published. Most scholars have, however, concentrated on religious aspects of his poetry¹

1. Cf. Rāshidī Pīr Ḥusām al-Dīn, Presidential address, Latīf Salgrah Makhzam, No.3, 1961, pp.13-16.

and it seems to the writer of this thesis that too much emphasis has been laid on these aspects to the exclusion of all else. It is indisputable that the major part of his work is Ṣūfī in inspiration but to interpret his poetry exclusively in this way is to reduce his stature as a writer of genius with universal appeal. In particular, this thesis hopes to highlight certain social and patriotic aspects of the Risālo as well as to provide analyses of the poet's debt on the one hand to his experiences shared with the yogis and, on the other, to the works of two great Persian Ṣūfī poetic masters, ^cAttār and Rūmī.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF SHĀH ^CABD AL-LATĪF

The important role played by women in the poetry of
Shāh ^CAbdal-Latīf

A study of the life and work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf reveals a broader dimension than has been suggested by previous scholars. In most cases our poet has been represented merely as a saint or Ṣūfī, whose work is based mainly on Quranic teaching¹ or Vedantic philosophy.² As a human being and a poet, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf passed through different phases of life and expressed his feelings and experiences through his poetry. Of particular interest is the way in which his poetry often presents life from the woman's point of view. He expresses women's feelings and problems, even offering advice and suggesting solutions to them. Moreover, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, as will be discussed later in this chapter in more detail, stresses active participation on the part of the women in his poetry.

In the Ṣūfī literature of other Islamic countries, i.e.

1. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Aḥwāl Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Bhitshāh, 1972, pp.35 and 94-181.
2. Jotvānī Motilāl, Shāh ^CAbdal-Latīf: His Life and Work, Delhi 1975, pp.129-146.

that written in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, one does not find such an emphasis on the female role in matters of love, either worldly or mystical (with the probable exception of Zulekha¹). In much Sūfī poetry there is of course reference to the soul as a male seeker who undergoes various hardships in order to attain the 'Divine Beloved'. The language in which the beloved is depicted suggests a female possessing perfect divine beauty. Medieval Muslim poets used the traditional female images of pre-Islamic poetry such as Salmā, Hind (even Laila and Shīrīn), referring to their beauty and other admirable qualities, which in fact came to mirror the attributes of God,² but these figures are treated as the passive partners of men. It is Majnūn or Farhād who perform heroic deeds and women are presented as frail and helpless, entirely dependent on the mercy of men, waiting for them to come and rescue them. A man like Farhād would achieve impossible feats, such as digging or cutting through the mountains to divert the stream of milk to Shīrīn's house. Such men would cross oceans, kill lions and perform great deeds to display their strength to win the hand of their beloved from their father, again a dominant male figure.

1. Zulekha is depicted in the Qur'ān as taking the initiative with Yūsuf and this tradition is perpetuated in Persian poetry, especially in the work of Jāmī.
2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, p.173.

It could happen, of course, that Ṣūfī poets represent both parties, i.e. the seeker and the beloved as male. In the poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (for example),¹ the beloved is clearly addressed as a man, whilst the lover or seeker is the poet himself.

With Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, there is a very different emphasis on the seeker/beloved relationship. This does not arise out of a vacuum. Indeed, the expression of love from the woman's point of view was a well-established local tradition, adopted by other Ṣūfī poets of the Indus Valley. Folk stories in which women play the dominant role abound in Sind and the surrounding states like Rajstān, Baluchistān and Punjāb in the period before Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. These stories were taken by poets as themes for their works. Among the very little written Sindhī poetry that has survived in the period before Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf is that of Shāh ^CAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1536-1624), and Shāh ^CInāyat Rizvi^C (1622-1712 A.D.), both of whom use these folk stories as themes for their poetry. It is evidently this local tradition inherited from his predecessors that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf develops more fully.

Shāh ^CAbd al-Karīm, the ~~great~~-great grandfather of Shāh

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Maṣnawī-yi ma^Cnawī, trans. Nicholson R.A., London, 1925-1940, 8 vols.

^cAbd Latīf, draws extensively on Sindhī folk stories in his poetry. In his work, Bayān al-^cĀrifīn, which is written in Persian, there are 93 Sindhī baits which have survived.¹ In these baits, Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm refers specifically to local Sindhī folk heroes and heroines, such as Sasuī and Punhū, Māruī and ^cUmar, Līla and Chanesar, and Suhñī and Mehar.² It is clear from his treatment of these four stories that the poet sees women as playing the active role and it is they who speak of love in the poetry.

From the starting point of these well-known local heroines of Sind, Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm infuses Ṣūfī spirit into his treatment of their stories. In one place, the poet addresses Sasuī thus:

1. Nizamānī, M.M., Risālo Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm, Hyderabad Sind, 1961.

The work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm has been published by various scholars:

Daudpōto, U.M., Shāh Karīm Bulṛīwārī jo Kalām, Sakhur, 1963.

Maimun ^cAbd al-Majīd, Karīmjo Kalām, Sakhur, 1963.

Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Risālo Karīmī, Hyderabad Sind, 1904.

Nawrangpoto Makhdūm ^cAbd al, Bayān al-^cĀrifīn (Sindhī), Bombay, 1874.

The Sindhī verses of Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm have been translated into English by Jotvānī: Jotvānī Motilāl, Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm, New Delhi, 1970. Cf. also Jotvānī Motilāl, Sindhī Literature and Society, New Delhi, 1979.

2. For detailed accounts of the folk stories, cf. the Appendix.

O woman! Avoid sitting under the thatched roof.
Stand, burning in the sun;
You chose those people as your own
Who are of far-away sunny land.¹

Again, in another verse, Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm addresses his heroine Suhṇī as follows:²

Either leave not your home,
Or return not, O Suhṇī.
Be of one mind, be one with Him and break all
other things.²

Māruī, a poor girl who is imprisoned in the fort of ^cUmar the king, is determined not to give up, and questions the king.³

^cUmar! can a woman in bondage put on good
clothes?
My lover feels embarrassed before others who
reproach him because of me.

Līlā is longing for her husband, who has deserted her

1. Jotvānī Motilāl, Sindhī Literature and Society, New Delhi, 1979, p.39.
2. Ibid., p.40.
3. Ibid.

and Shāh ^c Abd al-Karīm speaks for her in the following lines:¹

On whose heart

You've left and indelible mark.

O Chanesar Dāsarā! How can you now draw away
yourself from her?

Mūmal is another heroine who, after losing her husband, is longing for him in anguish, and the poet expresses the torments she is experiencing:²

Friend, away with your home,
the caravan is speeding away from me.

Your home, unlike mine, knows no burning like
the wick of a lamp.

A later poet, Miyān Shāh ^c Ināyat Rizvī (d.1712 A.D.), who was alive when Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf was a young man, continues this local Sindhī folk tradition in his poetry. Of his twenty-two extant surs, six draw on local folk stories of Sind using well-known heroines, such as Maruī, Mūmal, Līlā, Sasuī, Suhñī and Nūrī. He also speaks of merchants and their wives in Sur Srī Rāg and of women-spinners in Sur Kāpāitī. In these eight surs, the role of women is prominent.³

In Sur Srī Rāg, the poet describes the waiting and hope

1. Jotvānī, op. cit., p.44.

2. Ibid., p.39.

3. Baloch, N.B., Mein Shāh ^c Ināyat jo Kalām, Hyderabad Sind, 1963.

of a merchant's wife in the following lines:¹

نثر سِرِ تواري، اُپي مڱي اوسهيون
آلٽيون اوراه ڏونه، نئين سج نهاري
آلا! آڱڻ آهيون، سو وڻجارو واري
ڪلي ڪيڪاري، تم اُن ڳالهاري، ڳر لائينان.

On the landing place, where the Sir² is chirping,
she (the woman) is standing and praying for
a (good) omen.

At (the time of) early sunrise,
her eyes are fixed on the deep waters.

O God! bring back the merchant to my courtyard
He will make a laughing greeting and I will talk
without stopping and will embrace him.

In the above verse the language indicates that the
speaker is a woman.

From the preceding discussion of the poetry of both Shāh
Abd al-Karīm and Shāh Inayat Rizvī, it is clear that the
poetry of Shāh Abd al-Latīf sprang from a well-established
local poetic tradition which inevitably drew on Persian Sūfī

1. Baloch, op. cit., p.35.

2. The Sir is a black aquatic bird of the crane family.

thought, but also derived much inspiration from local Sindhī folk stories. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, however, as will be shown later, composed poetry which, it is argued, has greater depth than Shāh ^cInāyat Rizvī.

It is interesting to note that a contemporary of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Bullhē Shāh¹ (1680-1758) from Punjab, also speaks of an active rather than passive female role in his Ṣūfī poetry. It is not known if the two poets ever met at any time, but there are a number of similarities in their works. Bullhē Shāh, like Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, stresses the feminine role in a great number of his kāfiyūn. Some of the kāfiyūn are composed out of love for his murshid, Shāh ^cInāyat, but it is significant that he addresses him as if he were a woman yearning for her sweetheart, and expressing her emotions to him. One observes enormous pain in the heart of the woman who happens to be the lover. Bullhē Shāh describes the numerous sufferings and tribulations to which he is subjected in his assumed female identity. ²

Bullhē Shāh expresses his feeling of self-abasement from the viewpoint of the woman. Sometimes he speaks of the love of the human being for God: on other occasions he refers to the relationship between murshid and murīd:-

1. Rafat, Taufiq, Bullhē Shāh, a Selection, Lahore, 1982.

2. According to Hindu philosophy, yoga and Bhakti the human soul is likened to a woman who is separated from her lawful husband (God). The soul's struggle for re-union is called the yearning of a virahini.

I am just a sweepress

Hair uncombed, barefoot, I receive word of his
coming, and am left perturbed.

The broom my meditation: with it I've swept into
my basket all that the world has left.

The judge knows much, the king rules with fear,
but I am happy to be allowed in here.

I am just a sweepress.¹

In the poetry of Bullhē Shāh one also finds kafiyūn about spinners, another common theme of Ṣūfī poetry. An example is the poet's advice to spinners, who are women:²

Lass, look to your spinning

Mother scolds you every day,
but your mind is far away,
you keep modesty at bay,

when will you understand?

Lass, look to your spinning

So much advice I hurl
each day at this silly girl;
she will be in a whirl

when bad times are at hand.

Lass, look to your spinning.

It is noteworthy that in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf there are two distinct and sharply contrasting views of woman. On the one hand, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf can go to similar extremes as Bullhē Shāh in his depiction of woman as an abject, submissive creature within, of course, the traditional Ṣūfī framework. For example, he makes Nūrī admit her low

1. Rafat, op. cit., p.167.

2. Idem, p.131.

caste:¹

تُون سَمُونِ اَتُونِ گَنَدَرِي، مُونِ مِ عِيبنِ جُوڊِ
پَسِي رَاظِمِنِ رُوڊِ، مَتَانِ مَآگَرِ مَتِيبنِ .

You are Sammā² and I am gandārī,³
there are innumerable faults in me.

By comparing me with queens
pray never desert the māngar.⁴

Nūrī also refers to herself as dirty and foul-smelling:⁵

تُون سَمُونِ اَتُونِ گَنَدَرِي، مُونِ مِ عِيبنِ كُوڊِ،
پَسِي كَلِيءِ كُوڊِ، مَتَانِ مَآگَرِ مَتِيبنِ .

You are Sammā and I am gandārī,
there are millions of faults in me.

By seeing and smelling the stinking (fish)
pray never desert the māngar.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.286.
2. Sammā is the name of a dynasty. Here the poet makes a reference to Tamāchī, one of the Sammā kings.
3. Castes of fishermen.

Cont'd:...

Similarly, Sasūī when expressing her love and submission to Punhū, likens herself to the slipper of her beloved.

On the other hand, as will be discussed later, a heroine of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf such as Māruī can admit her poverty, but at the same time take pride in it.

Another well-known poet, contemporary with Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, was Sachal Sarmast (1739-1829),¹ who was much younger than our poet. Sachal Sarmast follows the same tradition as Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf in using feminine terminology to express the feelings of a lover or seeker. In his poetry one finds the same local folk stories as those used by Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and his predecessors, such as the tales of Sasūī, Suhñī and Mūmal who are lovers longing, lamenting and struggling to attain their respective beloveds. For example, the poet makes Sasūī address Punhū in the following kāfī:²

Cont'd: 4. Castes of fishermen.

5. Shāhwañī, op. cit., p.857.

1. Ansārī ^CUs mān ^CAlī, Risālo Sachal Sarmast, Hyderabad Sind, 1978.

2. Ibid., pp.91-2.

توريء ڳالهڙيون ڪنهنن سان ڪنڊيس آءُ وَرَ وَاڳ وراهي !

واڻ ٿو وِندَرِ چي لھان ، وڌيس مُونجھ مُنجهائي
سڪُ تَنھنجي سڀرين ، ڏنگرُ ٿي ڏورائي
ھيڪاندي هيءَ حَبَ ۾ ، ويٺي ورھ وِسائي
طعنن شھرِ پَنپورِ جي ، وڌو تن تپائي
جيو تيو سڀرين ” سچو “ سَندو سڏائي .

Without you, with whom will I converse?

Come back to me, my husband

I cannot find my way in Windar¹

This bewilderment has confused me.

Longing for you has compelled me to cross the
mountain.

All alone in Habb, I am yearning in separation

Taunting in the city of Bhanbhore
has alarmed me.

In whatever condition I am, my beloved,

Sachū (i.e. the poet) belongs to you.

Throughout this kāfī the terminology indicates that the speaker is **Sasuī**, i.e. a woman, but in the last line the poet appears on the scene and mentions his own name, addressing the beloved directly.

On another occasion Sachal, like Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf,

1. The name of a mountain.

advises Sasuī, and tells her what to do.¹

وَيَسِّرْ لِي مَتَانِ مَا كُنتِ كَرِي وَهِي
قَوْلُ اِهْوِ بِاَزِيجِ ، هُوَ جَوَ كَبِيْرِي هُوَتْ سَانِ .

Do not sit down quietly and forget about it,
The promise which you gave to your beloved ^{you must} fulfil.

Since this verse is from Sur Sasuī, it is evident that the poet is reminding Sasuī. Moreover, the word hōat suggests that the reference is to Punhū who was her beloved (hōat).

Sachal Sarmast, like Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, uses verbs and pronouns in such a way to indicate that the speaker is a woman. There are a number of kāfiyūn which are not related to the above-mentioned folk stories, but the terminology suggests once again that they are sung by a woman. In Sachal Sarmast's works one notices a greater degree of submissiveness and humility on the part of the women. In many kāfiyūn the poet gives his name in the end, which suggests that he has taken the role of a woman himself, like Bullhē Shāh, either to address God or his spiritual guide.²

1. Ansārī, op. cit., p.342.

2. Rafat, op. cit., p.164.

ٺڙي جيڏيون ، منهنجي يارَ سَچُ سان زاري زاري •
هيءَ نماڻي عيبنِ هاڻي ، ٻره سندن آهي ٻاري ٻاري
حاضر ٿينديس ڊر دوستن جي ، پائي گچيءَ سان گاري گاري
ٻوٽو ته باڪي يارَ تيو سي ، پهرينون لائي ياري ياري •
هت سَچُ جي اديون ٺڙي آهي ، گاله ”سچو“ جي ساري •

girl
O friends, in the presence of my beloved
I am powerless.

This humble one, full of faults is suffering
from his separation which is great.

I will present myself before my friend
by putting my scarf round my neck.¹

After kindling his friendship,
he has abandoned me.

O sisters, everything (every task) of Sachū
is in his hands.

As has been argued here, the representation of women as
active in the role of lover was *not only*^a Sindhī tradition. *But* this
tradition *does* ~~was~~ however, ~~appear~~ *to have been* widespread
throughout
in the sub-continent.

There is in fact one example in Hindu religious scriptures,

1. It is a symbol of submission to put one's scarf around the neck and beg for forgiveness.

i.e. the Bhagavad Purānā,¹ where Gōpīs are presented as lovers, seeking and longing to see Krishnā their beloved and an analogy may perhaps be drawn between the love, longing and suffering experienced by the heroines in the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and similar experiences undergone by the Gōpīs in this work.² According to this Hindu scripture, Lord Krishnā³ plays such an enchanting flute that all the milk maids (Gōpīs) are fascinated by him. When they are busy performing their duties and they hear Krishnā's flute, they leave every task unfinished and rush to see him.

Some, who were serving food (to their husbands and other relatives) went away, neglecting that duty, others, who were feeding their infants with milk gave up that work and ran. Still others, who were waiting upon their husbands, turned their backs on them and departed, while yet others who were dining, bolted away, leaving their meal.⁴

In the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Suhnī leaves her husband every night to visit her beloved Mehar. Sasuī also

1. Srimad Bhagavad Maha Purānā, tr. Goswānī, C.L., and Sastri, M.A., Gorakhpur, 1971.
2. Ibid., Books 9-12, p.1174.
3. In this text Krishnā is a young cowherd, with whom all the Gōpīs are in love.
4. Ibid.

leaves everything, even her home and parents, to travel empty-handed, searching for her beloved husband Punhū.

For Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf women play the important role in most of his poetry; indeed they are mentioned directly or indirectly in twenty-eight surs out of the thirty surs of the Risālo. In his second work Shāh Bhitāi jūn wāyūn ain Kāfiyūn¹ there are terms used throughout by the poet, such as ادیون، پینر، ماء، جیجل، امتر which mean sisters and friends; جیڈیون، سرتیون meaning mother. Apart from such examples as these, throughout both the works of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf one finds words or phrases like مباروئرا، سانگینرا and وره وھایم ھیئو، سچی، فیبتکو. The addition of the suffix ro in سنيھتو، مئزو، گانگرو suggests the feminine form of endearment. In the Sindhī language pronouns accompanied by verbs distinguish clearly between male and female, unlike the Persian language where it is difficult to distinguish between the sexes of the addressee and addressed. Consequently, it is not difficult in the Sindhī language to tell whether the speaker is the male or female.

There are several verses in the Risālo,² the content of which suggests that the poet is speaking on behalf of women.

1. Sayyid, G.M., Shāh Bhitāi jūn wāyūn ain Kāfiyūn, Hyderābād Sind, 1965.
2. Ādvānī, Kalyān, Shāh jo Risālo, Karachi, 1976.

For example, it was a local characteristic of women in rural areas of Sind to consider a crow as the messenger who would take and bring back love messages for them. So they use words of endearment to the crow and request it to take their message to their beloved. For example:¹

اَءُ اُذَامِي كَانْكَرَا ! پارانیانِ پِچارِ ،
ويهي هِتِ وصالِ جونِ، تانِ ڪو ترُ تنوارِ
جي ڏسُ مِ ڏيسارِ ، سي اُذَامِي اُڻِ پيرينِ .

O dear crow! come and bring me the message
(i.e. from the beloved) and tell me about him.

Sit here and tell me something about our
(i.e. future) meeting,

The beloved who is apparently in a far-off land,
fly him to me.

In the above verse the crow, which is normally called kāng, is referred to as kāngro; the addition of the suffix ro indicates that the crow is being addressed with a term of endearment by the woman.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses eight folk stories as themes for his Risālo, in six of which women play the prominent role.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.428.

Five surs of the Risālo are devoted to Sasuī, a Sindhī folk heroine. Heroines such as Līlā, Nūrī, Suhnī, Mūmal and Māruī are given one sur each. Each one of them is represented as a lover in search of her beloved. Maruī is a lover of a different kind, a point which we shall discuss later in this chapter. In both the works of Shāh ⁶Abd al-Latīf there are substantial parts which deal with romantic love, and it is a woman who is expressing such feelings. She yearns to see her beloved and is willing to make every kind of sacrifice to attain the object of her desire.

In Sur Yeman Kalyān, as the vāī given below suggests, a woman, most probably Sasuī, though her name is not given, is complaining at being separated from her beloved.¹

واڻي

وَنَتَرَنُو هُوَ وَجَنَ ، وو ! جَهَلِيَانِ پَلِيَانِ ، هِيَتَرُو نَه رَهِي !
اَنُونِ جَنِينِ جِي آهِيَانِ ، كَڙِي مَ تِيَانِ تِنِ ،
جَهَلِيَانِ پَلِيَانِ ، هِيَتَرُو نَه رَهِي !
گهورِيَانِ گهڻِينِ پَتِيِينِ ، سَنَدِي بَا جَه پَتِنِ ،
جَهَلِيَانِ پَلِيَانِ ، هِيَتَرُو نَه رَهِي !
مَرُ مَرَانِ مَارِينِ مُونِ ، پُرزا پُرزا اڪَنِ ،
جَهَلِيَانِ پَلِيَانِ ، هِيَتَرُو نَه رَهِي !

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., pp.132-3.

آئون مياڻي گھوريئي ، جي مان محب ملن ،

جھليان پليان ، هيٺو نه رهي !

They are taking away my beloved, alas!

I am withholding and restraining myself, but my heart will not obey.

May those to whom I belong not become disillusioned with me.

I am withholding and restraining myself.....

May those to whom I belong not become disillusioned with me.

I will sacrifice myself in several ways,
but sympathy lies in the hands of others.

If I am to die, let them kill me
and cut me to pieces.

I am withholding and restraining myself, but my heart will not obey.

If I have to die, let me be the sacrifice,
if only I can meet my beloved.

I am withholding and restraining myself,
but my heart will not obey.

It is a characteristic of Oriental poetry that the lover who is a man, discloses his secrets of love to the moon. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf adopts this poetic cliché of the imagery of the moon but he breaks with tradition by making the conveyor of the message in many cases a woman. Sometimes the woman is shown whispering to the moon, asking it to take her glad

tidings to the beloved. On other occasions she compares her beloved with the moon,¹ and reproaches it, saying that it may be beautiful, but that it cannot compete with the beauty of her beloved.

On one occasion a woman is making a request to the moon to rise soon and to see the beloved on her behalf. She tells the moon why she cannot go herself and visit her beloved.²

اُپُرُ چُنْدَبَ ! پَسُ پَرِينِ ، تَو اوڏا ، مُون ڏورِ ،
سَجَهَ مَنا وَلَهَ چَ ، چوئا پَرِي ڪَپُورِ ،
پَرِينِ آئون نَ پُچِهي باهَلُ ڏي نَ پُورِ ،
جِهَ تِي چَرِهي آسُورِ ، سَڄِهي سَڄُ سِيَتِيانِ .

O moon! You must rise and have a
look at my beloved.

1. As is well-known, in oriental poetry the moon is considered to be the symbol of beauty. The lover compares the beauty of his beloved with the moon and a person with a beautiful face is moon-faced.
2. Shāhwanī, op. cit., pp.171-2.

He (the beloved) is near you, but far from me.
My beloved has put sandalwood¹ in his hair and
is sleeping in the cold open air.
I cannot reach him on foot,
And my father will not give me a camel
On which I can ride through the night and reach
my beloved.

It is quite clear here that the speaker is a woman.

Again and again the poet refers to the difficulties with which women are confronted. Nevertheless, it is the woman who is the lover who is longing and thinking about her beloved.²

ڪَـرَهِو ، نڪي ڪان ، پيرين آئون نه پڇي ،
جو مون رات رستي ، نيتي ساڄن سان ،
مون نه وهيشون پاڻ ! ويني نيتي نچوڻيان .

I do not have a camel or a horse
which can carry me to my beloved overnight.
My 'self' is not under my control.

1. In olden days it was the custom to use perfumed oil for one's hair, for fragrance, and it was considered to be good for the growth of hair.
2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.173.

I am sitting and shedding tears.

In the above verses the verbs indicate the speaker to be a woman, who is longing to reach her beloved, but who is unable to do so because he is out of her reach.

In Sur Suhñī our poet paints the picture of Suhñī who, ignoring the warnings of everyone, jumps into the river and sacrifices her life for the beloved.¹

پَل پَل تِي پَلِي ، دَمُ تِيهَا لِي كِي تَرُو ،
پَسِي دُورُ دَرِيَا هُ جُو ، وِچَان كِي نَ وَلِي ،
كَارِي رَا تِ قَرِيْبُ تِي ، مَنجَا حَبَّ هَلِي ،
نَمُ كِه جَهولُ جَهلي ، هُنِي سَمَنُ پُوري سَهِي .

Every day and every moment Dam² was
stopping her,

Even the sight of the strong current in the river
did not make her return.

Out of love, in the dark night, she went to her
beloved

1. Shāhvāñī, op. cit., p.304.

2. Name of Suhñī's husband.

Diving into the whirlpool did not prevent her because Suhnī was true to her promise.

Women and Society:

In the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf he reveals sympathy for the weaker sections of society. In many of his verses it could be argued that he expresses the hopes and fears of the suppressed classes, comforting them in their miseries and encouraging them to struggle for their rights. He must have observed that women were the most oppressed class in society and he may well have given thought to their problems and decided to encourage them to struggle for improvement of their position. In a statement which he clearly addressed to women, he comments:

سڀ ننگيون تي نڪرو ، لالچ ڇڏي لويَ ،
سڀريان سين سويَ ، ننڍون ڪندي نه ٿيي .

By giving up avarice, greed and clothing.¹
set out for the desired goal.

1. It is possible that the poet means specifically the veil here. Certainly, if taken literally, the command suggests the shedding by women of their inhibitions.

Success with the beloved cannot be
achieved merely by sleeping.¹

In his poetry Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf often addresses women, offering them advice. In Sur Samūdhī Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf seems to be warning women in general, and the wives of sailors in particular, to beware of the forthcoming dangers:

پڳھ پاسي گھار ، آيل ! ساموندين جي ،
وجهي جي جي جنجار ، جم وچني اوھري ،

O mother!² Stay beside the rope of the seafarers
lest they should sail away in their boats,
causing you heartache.³

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf seems to appreciate the courage of
women and their determination in adversity.

تڏي ٿڪي نه وھي ، تتيءَ ڪري تال ،
وڌائين وڻجار م ، سسئيءَ پاڻ سڪان ،
پڇي پنه پکين کي ، پيئي منڌ پريان ،
تنس ٿيه وڻن جا ، تن الله لکب اھجان ،
مان پڇي پاڻ ، آچي آرياهي وري .

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.156.

2. It is a polite way of addressing a woman in Sindhī.

3. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.78.

She does not take rest in the shade, even though she is tired and she is proceeding in the heat.

Sasūī has come to Waṅkar and has exhausted¹ herself.

The woman² is enquiring about his whereabouts³ from the birds.

In the name of God, they⁴ have given her directions to follow the trees, towards that place.⁵

May Aryānī⁶ be reconciled and come back.⁷

In another example given below, the poet reveals his admiration for Sasūī's tenacity in the face of difficulties:

ڪنڊا مون پيرن م ، توڙي لڪ لڪن ،
اگر اڪوئي نه مڙي ، ڇپون پير چنن ،
ويندي ڏانهن پرين ، جتي جات نه پائيان .

1. Literally 'withered', dessicated.
2. This reference is to Sasūī: for details of the story of Sasūī and Punhū, cf. the Appendix.
3. Sasūī is enquiring about Punhū.
4. I.e. the birds.
5. I.e. Kech where Punhū lived.
6. I.e. Punhū.
7. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.161.

Let thousands of thorns prick my feet
and the mountain lacerate them.

Even if my toes and fingers become dislocated,
I will not wear the slipper while going
to my beloved.¹

In these verses, the poet is expressing Sasuī's determination to achieve her goal. Her particular example may be extended to serve as a model for women in general. While putting words into Sasuī's mouth, our poet commands women to give up inhibitions and to perform courageous deeds.

اَدِيُونِ ! وُرُ الْهَاتَزْ ، وَهَانُ جِنَهْنِ وِسَارِيو
جِيَدِيُونِ ! چَدِي جَارَزْ ، سِي نَنگِيُونِ تِي نِكِرُو .

Sisters! success is theirs, who abandon
vanity.

Friends! you must give up heedlessness.

Become naked² and come out.³

In the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, at times our poet accuses women of negligence. Here he is blaming the wife of a

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.159.

2. I.e. give up inhibitions.

3. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.156.

sailor:

پڳه پاسي ويه ، ايل ! سامونڊين جي ،
تون ويسري وڪي ڪلهين ، هو پوريندا پرڏيهه ،
منڊ جن ساڙيهه ، ڪو نه وٺين تن سين ؟

O mother! sit beside the rope of the
seafarers,

While you are taking slow steps
They will proceed swiftly to the
foreign land.

The sea is their home, why did
you not go with them? 1

On other occasions our poet makes the wife of a sailor
blame herself for not acting at the right time:

1. Shāhwanī, op. cit., pp.243-4.

جِئْسِ نَبْرُ نَيْدُ سَنَدُومِ جِنَّ مُونِ أَيِي ، هُنِ تَبْلَبُو ،
سَعِيو سامُونْدِينِ سِينِ ، اَلْهَمِ تانِ نَهْ كِئومِ ،
وَجَهْلُ مَنَجِهْ هُنومِ ، پائِ وِراڪِي رَسِ سِينِ .

Perhaps my love was weak, as they
sailed away while I stood there.

I did not prepare myself beforehand for
the seafarers.

I should have tied myself up with
the string and put myself in it (i.e the ship).¹

By addressing women directly, the poet gives them a valid social status and recognition as individuals having their own identity. He wishes to encourage them to recognise and realise their own potential. He addresses Sasuī in the following lines:

وَدُو طالِحُ نُو ، جِنَّ لَگِنَّ پِيرِ پُنْهُؤ جِي ،
سَسِئيْ ! اِنِ سُونِ كِي ، رُوِيو رُوِيو رُو ،
وِينِي هِتِ مِ هُو ، هَلِينِ تَهْ هُؤ لَهِينِ .

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.248.

It is your great luck to follow the footprints
of Punhū.

Sasuī! continue crying¹ for that support.²

Do not sit down; as you proceed
you will find the beloved.³

In the above verse Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf addresses Sasuī directly, then welcomes her quest of Punhū. He even gives her hope that she will ultimately succeed. While advising her to use all her potential, he says:

هَتِّينَ ، پيرينَ ، مَوْنَزِئِينَ ، هَلِّجْ سَانِ هَنْئِينَ ،
عِشْقُ آرِيءِ جَامِ جُو ، نَبَاهِي نَنْئِينَ ،
جانِ جانِ تِي جِنِينَ ، تانِ پَارِجِ كَوْمِ پُنْهونِ سِينِ .

You must walk with your hands, feet, knees
and even with your soul.

In this way accomplish your love with Ārī Jām.⁴

As long as you live, never equate anyone with
Punhū.⁵

1. Here the poet suggests continued pursuit of a certain goal.
2. Literally pillar; i.e. Punhū.
3. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.418.
4. I.e. Punhū.
5. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.161.

It is customary in the East and West to associate medieval poetry and other forms of literature primarily with the élite and the upper-classes of society and to use characters and themes connected with the life of the nobility. It is significant that in his use of folk-stories in his poetry and, in particular, in his selection of characters, Shāh ^cAbd al-Laṭīf opts predominantly for people from the lower working-classes. Instead of praising kings and nobles, he praises the poor, who, he suggests, possess more virtues than the rich.

His heroine, Nūrī, is a poor fisherwoman; Sasuī, although she is in reality a princess, lives as the adopted daughter of a washerman. Suhnī is the daughter of a potter, whilst Maruī is a poor village girl. The poet praises all of these for their strength of character and numerous virtues. Only two of his heroines, Līlā and Mūmal, belong to the higher classes. The poet points out their vainglorious attitude in order to depict the weaknesses of high society, as will be demonstrated later.

Heavy emphasis has, of course, always been placed on a Ṣūfī interpretation of the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Laṭīf. But it can be argued that the poet has another aim, i.e. that of depicting a social system which victimises women. According to the story given by Shāh ^cAbd al-Laṭīf, Suhnī is married to Dam

against her wishes.¹ As a result she never accepts him as her husband. She falls in love with Mehar, and in contrast to the accepted tradition, whereby the man is the lover who undergoes hardship, Suhni visits him every night by crossing the river. Society and her family despise her and accuse her of immorality. The poet, however, praises her courage in breaking all the rules of society, suffering the disapproval of her family in order to visit her beloved. This does not necessarily mean that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf approves of her unfaithfulness. Indeed, the poet does not appear to hold her responsible for her act of infidelity to her husband. The marriage which has been imposed on her, without her consent, does not bind Suhni in a lasting relationship. Our poet admires the strength of this woman who is willing to sacrifice everything for love. Society, family, and friends turn against her. It seems that even nature, the river, storm and whirlpool are all waiting to punish her for her unfaithfulness. But the poet justifies her actions in the following lines, which he puts into the mouth of Suhni:

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.89-90.

اَلَّتْ اَرواحِنِ كِي ، جَدَّهِن چيائون ،
مِشاقان مِهار سِين ، لَدَيُون مَوْن لائُون ،
سو موتي كِئَن پانهُون ! جو مَحفوظان مَعاف تَبو !

When the souls were questioned in *pre-eternity*,

My relationship

with Mehar was preordained from that day,

How could that which was

already written in my destiny be undone? ¹

The poet admires Suhni's bravery and determination in face of innumerable difficulties. Her enemies are not only the people among whom she lives, but all the dangerous sea-creatures who are waiting to devour her. Again Shāh Latīf pays tribute to her in the following words:

دَهشتِ دَمِ دَرِيَا ، جِتِ كَتَرِكو كُنُ كَرِي ،
نوڏِي تاڪُنِ وِجِ ، مِثانِ وِبرِ وِري ،
آءُ ، سَاهَرُ ! مَنهِنجا سُرِينِ ! پَرتانِ پِيرِ پُري ،
هادِي ! هَتِ تَري ، اونهي مان اڪارِينِ .

1. Advānī, op. cit., p.109.

There is the terror of the overflowing river,
Where there is the thunder of the whirlpool;
Taudī (i.e. Suḥnī) is surrounded by devouring
creatures.

The tide is flowing high.

O Sāhar! come my sweetheart! come
to me in love.

O my *guida*! help her out from the deep
waters. 2

In the last line of the verse, it seems that the poet
himself is intervening and praying for her ultimate safety.
Once again the poet reinforces his point in the following
words:

سُهْمِينَ سَائِرَ بَوْرِيُونِ، مُنَدَّ بَوْرِيُو مِهْرَانِ
وَهُ وَجَائِيُو پَانِ، هَلِي كَنْدُ كَبِنِ سِينِ .

Hundreds of them (i.e. women) have been drowned.

But this woman has drowned the Mehrān. 3

By hitting its head on the bank, it (the river)
has retreated in submission. 4

1. One of the Divine names.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.96.

3. I.e. the river Indus.

4. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.332.

While referring to Suhñī's courage in jumping into the rough stormy river and drowning in it, our poet considers even her death as a success, saying:-

تہ کر کنہ سُنِي؟ جِي سِير نہ گھڙي سُهڻِي ،
هت حِيَاتِيءَ تَدِينَهڙَا ، هڏهن تان نہ هُنِي ،
چَنگِي تہ چَري کَئي ، جو دَنس اُن تَهِي ،
سُهڻِيءَ کِي ، سِيَد چَنِي ، وڌو قُرْب کَهي ،
هَنئِين هُونَد مُنِي، پَر بُڏِيءَ جا بِيڻا تِيَا .

If Suhñī had not entered the deep waters,
how could she have been known?

She could not have lived for ever.

The sip¹ he milked and gave her, made
her ever crave for it.

Sayyid says love has murdered Suhñī:

She would have died anyway, but drowning
increased her value.²

1. I.e. the milk which Mehar gave to Suhñī, after which she fell in love with him; for details of the story of Suhñī, cf. the Appendix.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.107.

In the story of Nūrī, the poet is pointing to the stratifications of the society in which he lives. Nūrī belongs to the muhānā¹ caste, the lowest in Sindhī society. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf praises her, giving her the credit for her good behaviour, saying that, although she belongs to a low class, she nevertheless so impresses the king, Tamāchī, that she wins him over by her virtues and he makes her his chief queen. The poet thus suggests that virtues should not necessarily be attributed only to high-class society, nor should vices be immediately associated with the lower classes. These are individual characteristics which anyone can possess, irrespective of caste or class. He comments on Nūrī in the following words:

هتین، پیرین، ارکطین، مہ نہ مہاٹی ،
جنہ سگلو وچ سرندری ، تنہ راشن پہ راشی ،
اصل ہنی ان کی ، اہل جاماٹی ،
سی سجاٹی ، بیڑو بندس باہ م .

1. Muhānā is a local term used for fishermen.

She was not a muhānī from her hands, feet nor behaviour.

Like the thread in the centre of the strings of the Surindo,¹ she was a queen among queens.

From the beginning, her manners were those of royalty.

Sama² ~~recognised~~ her and tied red thread round her ³wrist.⁴

In the stories of Mūmal and Rāno and Līlā and Chanesar, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf brings to light the vanity and snobbery of high-class society. Mūmal and Līlā are both daughters and wives of Rājās. They are arrogant and self-centred and turn a blind eye to their duties. As a result, both of them lose their husbands and have only themselves to blame. Mūmal blames her own neglectful nature, for not being attentive and for under-estimating her husband, who leaves her while she is asleep, having suspicions in his mind about her character. She feels regret only after losing him. As Mūmal says:

1. A stringed musical instrument of Sind, similar to the violin.
2. Tamāchī.
3. A symbol of marriage. I.e. he chose to marry her.
4. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.863.

شَمَعٌ بِأَرِينَدِي شَبَّ بِرِهِ هَاكُونِ كِدْبُونِ ،
مَوْتُ ، مَرَانِ تِي ، مَبْدَرَا إِرَاثَا إِكَارِطِ رَبِّ ،
تُنْهَجِي نَاكِ طَلَبِّ ، كَانِكِ أَذَائِمِ كَاكِ جَا .

Until the rays of dawn appeared, I spent
the night waiting and lighting candles.

O Rānō!¹ please do come back, for God's sake!

O Maindarā!²

I am going to die

While yearning for your love,

I sent the crows of Kāk.³ 4

One third of the sur is concerned with Mūmal's longing and begging for forgiveness until she ultimately commits suicide by burning herself.⁵

1. Mūmal's husband is Rāno.

2. Rāno's caste.

3. A town where Mūmal lived.

4. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.725-26.

5. Here the poet is referring to a local Hindu tradition, especially Rajput where the life of a woman is not worth living after her husband's death. According to the sati system, the woman is burnt on her husband's funeral pyre. In the case of Mūmal,

In another story Līlā is the loving wife of Chanesar, until she loses him because of her negligence and love of jewellery.¹ Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf blames her for her frivolity and superficiality. When she realises her mistake, it is too late. The poet points out the miseries Līlā has to undergo as a result of her foolish mistakes and he makes her pay for it with her life. While suffering the pangs of separation from her beloved husband, she regrets the past, saying:

وڏيري هياس ، چنيسر جي راج ۾ ؛
دهلين ، ڪمامين ، نقرين ، ٿي پلپل پڇياس ،
يولي يديلياس ، تيسر ڏهاڪو ڏيه ۾ ؛

Cont'd: since she has been deserted by her husband, she burns herself. When Rāno realises that she has lost her life for him, he also jumps into the fire and dies.

1. Cf. the Appendix for the story of Līlā and Chanesar.

I was the queen in the kingdom of Chanesar.

A musical band of drums and pipes
used to welcome me, and I was always
entertained with special treatment.

(i.e. I was the centre of attraction among
friends.)

Since my beloved has deserted me,
I have become like a widow.

In the story of Sasuī, her brothers-in-law do not approve of their brother Punhū marrying an ordinary washerwoman. They belong to a well-known family of Kech Makrān. So, while Sasuī is asleep, they kidnap her beloved husband Punhū. From the moment she wakes up, Sasuī does not rest in peace. She leaves everything and sets out alone in search of Punhū. In the heat of summer, she crosses the desert, passes through rough mountains and forests, all on foot. Shāh ^cAbd al-Laṭīf admires the courage of a woman who is not discouraged by rough paths, nor scared by the wild animals of the jungle. He appreciates her bravery and strength in overcoming every obstacle which stands between her and her beloved Punhū.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.682.

تپي ڪندين ڪوہ ۱ ڏونگر ۱ ڏکون ڪي ،
تون جي پهل پپ جا ، ته لگ منهنجا لوہ ،
ڪنهنجو ڪونهي ڏوہ ، امر مون سين ائن ڪيو .

What will you do with your heat,
to the already distressed woman, O mountain?

If you are the stone of Pub¹

My body is also of iron.

It is no fault of anyone, except
my own destiny.⁴

Moreover, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf advises Sasuī thus on how
to cope in adverse circumstances:

مهند محتاجي ڪري ، پنيءَ پير ڪٽيج ،
ڪٻيلياڻي ڪيچ ڏي ، حج ۾ هلائيچ ،
پاهڻا ڌار ڀرتو ، سئي ۱ سان ڪٽيج ،
اوڏي عزازيل ڪي ، ويجهي تان ۾ ويجج ،
نا اميدي نيچ ، ته اوڏي تئين اميد ڪي .

1. The name of the mountain.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.190.

By taking humility as your guide, follow
its footsteps.

O lonely¹ helpless one! never carry expectations
while travelling to Kech.²

Sasūī! take selfless love with you.

Never let 'Azāzīl³ come near you.⁴

Take hopelessness with you, then hope will come near to you.

In Sur Māruī, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf depicts life in two distinct social milieux. On the one hand, there is that of ^cUmar the ruler of Sind, full of glory and riches. On the other hand, there is the life-style of the poor nomadic people of Malīr, who barely have the necessities of life. The paradox brought to light by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf in this story is that the poor are contented with what they have, whereas the rich are never satisfied and will never leave the poor to live in peace. Māruī is a poor girl, brought to the palace by force, who detests everything around her. She recalls her poor friends and relatives, and portrays : a picture of ^{their} simple life.

1. The adjective suggests that the poet is addressing a woman.
2. The home of Punhū, the beloved.
3. Satan, or one's baser instincts, which tempt one to sin.
4. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.129.

وَرُ سِي وُطْنِ چَائِيُونِ ، صَحْرَا سُرُجِنِ !
گولاڑا ۽ گُگْرِیُونِ ، اوجُحُ اَبَاهِنِ ،
وِیڑھیا گُھَمَنِ وَلِیْبِنِ ، جھانگھی مَنجھ جَهَنگِنِ ،
مُونِ کِی ماروئْتَرِنِ ، سُجِ گُٹھانِی سِیجِ ۶ !

Blessed are the women of my country, whose
shelter¹ is the desert.

The gōlārā² and the gugriyūn³ is the bedding
of my relatives.

They are wrapped up with creepers,
the forest dwellers move about in the forest.

My Mārū⁴ gave me wasteland
as a dowry.⁶

While commenting on their contentment in poverty, Shāh

1. It has two implications, shelter as home, as well as protection to keep them chaste and pure.
2. Name of a wild plant - its botanical name is Coccinea Indica.
3. The name of a tree and its gum. Its botanical name is Bedellium or Balsamodendron Roxburghus
4. I.e. Marū's relatives and countrymen of Malir.
5. Since Mārū had nothing to give, they gave her what they owned, i.e. wasteland and desert.
6. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.261.

^cAbd al-Latīf puts his words in the mouth of Mārūī, saying:

ڪارا ڪراين ۾ ، سونُ آسان ڪي سوءُ ،
وَرُ جيڏين سِين جوعُ ، فاقو فرحت پانڻيان !

We wore black thread around our wrists,
And gold for us is the symbol of mourning
Let there be hunger and starvation,
but the company of my girl friends
is a blessing for me.¹

Frequently Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf mentions people of lowly trades and backgrounds such as weavers, spinners, washermen, potters, blacksmiths, brick-bakers, minstrels, fishermen, nomadic people, merchants and sailors. For each of them the poet has some advice, some friendly chiding for negligence and a word of encouragement and hope for the future. When talking about different lowly trades, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not ignore the role of women. For example, when he refers to merchants, sailors and the dangers of the sea, the poet sees the situation from the viewpoint of the women's hopes and fears, who pray to God for the safe journey of their loved

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.260.

ones. The poet gives an image of the longing of wives in the following lines:

وچينءَ جان ويهي ، جرُ پلوءِ پائيان ،
تترِ پيٽرا ! گهرِ سپرين ! اوسه لِي پيئي ،
جنن وٽجارو سين وڪرين ، سرها سڀيئي ،
حرمَتَ سانِ حبيبِ جي ، سونگيا نه سڀيئي ،
پاڻهين اوءِ پيئي ، کنڊ کيٽائون آڻيا .

Before sunset, when I sat praying by the sea,
the answer to my omen was, "the ships
will anchor on the shore and my beloved will
reach home".

As the merchant is happy with his merchandise,
may God make everyone happy too.

By the blessings of the beloved,¹

They were not held back for customs' duty.

Ultimately the travellers to far-off lands
came safely home.²

1. According to Ādvānī and Shāh-wānī, this is a reference to the prophet Muhammad.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.74.

On another occasion the poet refers to the longing of a wife whose husband has spent a long time away from her. In the verse the poet depicts the anxiety of this woman, who is eagerly waiting and thinking what she will do when her husband returns:

آيل! ديولتي سان، اچي ته جهيڙيان،
لايم ڏيه گهٽان، مون سين ڪي ٿورڙا .

O mother! let my beloved return (i.e. from the journey).

I will have a quarrel with him.

And ask him why he stayed long
when he promised to come soon.¹

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf does not neglect the lonely woman without provision; while sympathising with her, he expresses her feelings.

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.250.

اُتْرُ دَنِي اَوْتُ ، نَهْ مُونِ سَوْرَ ، نَهْ كِهَرُو ،
چَارَنِي چُنِي پَوْتُ ، مُونِ رِيژِهِنْدِي رَاتِ كَثِي .

When the northerly wind blew strong, I did not
have a quilt or a mattress.

While I kept pulling the four corners of my
head-cover (to keep warm), the whole night
passed away.¹

Here the poet is depicting the poverty of his countrymen,
but again puts his words into the mouths of women to express
their feelings and bitter experience of life with no home, no
warm clothes and no proper bed.

Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf seems to dread the severe winter which
will cause much discomfort for the poor. He expresses the
feelings of a woman in the following words:¹

سَبْرُ سِي پَشُو ، تَهْ مُونِ سَوْرَ ، نَهْ كِهَرُو ،
نَهْ مُونِ كَانَدُ ، نَهْ قَوْتُ كِي ، جَوِينِ وَهِي وَئُو ،
تَنِينِ حَالِ كِهَوِ ! نَدَرُ جَنِينِ نَجِهْرَا .

1. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., p.1045.

There has been intense cold, and I have neither
quilt nor mattress.

I do not have a husband, or food,
and youth has passed away.

What will be the state of her who has
a worn-out hut in disrepair.¹

In the last two lines the poet intervenes and wonders
what will happen to this woman. On another occasion, he
depicts the condition of a poor woman.

ذُكِّيْ تَمْرُ نَاهِ ، مُبْكِي كِلْ نَهْ اُجْهِي ،
اُكْهَارِي وَهَانْ ، وَوِوِجَارِي وَسْرِي .

The distressed one has no anger, one who is
hungry cannot afford laughter.

The poor, naked one has forgotten all about
the wedding.²

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1044-5.

2. Ibid., p.426.

The role of women with particular reference to Sur Māruī

In order to highlight the role of women as depicted in the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, it seems worthwhile to analyse one of the folk stories in some detail and look at its theme and content from different angles.

The story of Māruī which is one of the most popular folk-stories of Sind has been used by several poets as their theme. As already mentioned, before Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, Shāh ^cAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī and Shāh ^cInāyat Rizvī used this theme for their Ṣūfī poetry. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, like his predecessors, takes this story for the longest sur in the whole Risālo. This is a very significant point since it indicates that the poet puts special emphasis on this sur. The Risālo edited by Gurbukhshānī has thirty pages devoted to Māruī,¹ whereas in Shāhwānī's² edition, there are ninety pages.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.550-79.

The reason why Gurbukhshānī's Risālo has only thirty pages is because he discarded some verses on the grounds that he did not consider them as authentic. Moreover, his version of the Risālo has wider and longer pages, which contain more verses than the Risālo edited by Shāhwānī.

2. Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.767-852.

Before embarking on an analysis of Sur Māruī, it seems appropriate to give a brief account of the story.

There lived in Thar a shepherd called Pālno with his wife Mādoī and a beautiful daughter Māruī. The shepherd employed a young man Phog to assist him with work on the farm. When Māruī grew up to be a young girl of marriageable age, Phog asked her father for her hand. Pālno rejected his proposal because he had already arranged for her to marry a relative called Khetsīn. Phog, as a rejected lover, thought of revenge. He went to king ^cUmar and praised Māruī's beauty in such words that ^cUmar was tempted to win her himself.

^cUmar disguised himself, and in the company of Phog, rode on a camel back to Malīr. According to the tradition of the village, Māruī was found among other girls, fetching water from the well for household consumption. When Phog pointed towards Māruī to tell the king who she was, ^cUmar went forward pretending to be a thirsty traveller, and asked Māruī to give him some water to drink. As she went closer to give him water, he seized her and carried on a swift camel towards his palace.

In his palace, he imprisoned her and tried to persuade

her to marry him and become queen. Māruī rejected every offer, including gold, silver, jewellery, fine clothes, disliked the palace life of a queen and was determined to go back and join her people, Mārū. When ^cUmar saw that Māruī was crying day and night, neither eating, washing nor changing her clothes, he realised that she would never give up. He therefore decided to set her free. He called some of her people and asked them to take her back to Malīr.

She went with them but her fiance Khetsīn, had become suspicious of Māruī's character while she was in the palace, and used to taunt her for this. When king ^cUmar heard this, he sent his force against the Mārū saying that Khetsīn was not only accusing Māruī, but casting doubts on ^cUmar's good name.

Māruī intervened and blamed the king, saying that if he had not kept her in the palace she would not have acquired a bad name. When ^cUmar had been put to shame by her, he told Māruī's relatives that he was ready to go through any test to prove Māruī's purity and innocence. But Māruī insisted that she would go through the test to remove doubt from Khetsīn's mind. Thus an iron rod was put in the fire; when it was red-hot, Māruī held it in her hands, but she was not burnt at all. ^cUmar did the same thing, and was not hurt either. Thus both of them were proved not guilty; from that

time onwards Māruī lived happily with her husband Khetsīn.¹

According to Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Khetsīn went to ^CUmarkot, (the fort of ^CUmar) and secretly planned with Māruī to rescue her. With other ladies of the palace Māruī arranged to visit the tomb of a holy man, and from there she escaped with Khetsīn to Malir. It is not, however, clear where Mīrzā Qalech Beg has found such details. According to the same scholar, the significant features of the story are Māruī's love for her country, her husband's jealousy, her honesty and sincerity. ^CUmar's tyranny and oppression, the way of life of rural people, and her longing for her country.²

The main interpretation of this sur given by Mīrzā Qalech Beg is a Ṣūfī one. In his view Māruī represents the true seeker or lover of God, ^CUmar stands for tyrants and the powerful men in this world, and ^CUmarkot is suggestive of this world, which is a prison for seekers and religious people. Malir is the original home of the soul or the next world. The pleasures of the countryside and the beauty of nature suggest the peace and rejoicing of the next world, whereas the jewellery and expensive clothes refer to worldly showiness and manifestation.³

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.253-4.

2. Mīrzā, op. cit., pp.169-70.

3. Ibid., p.170.

Gurbukhshānī also puts forward a Sūfī interpretation for this story.¹ He suggests that with Māruī, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf refers to the original country (hometown) of a human being. Our whole universe was in a state of non-existence but God desired to reveal the treasure of his essence and attributes; so he said 'to be' and 'it became'. God created human souls, took from them a promise of faithfulness, and left them in the world of spirits. In Gurbukhshānī's view, when the poet talks about Māruī being free and enjoying herself in the company of her girl friends and Khetsīn, her fiancé, he is referring to souls who are free like birds, to fly and enjoy themselves by being in love with God and praying to Him. When the souls were asked to leave that celestial world, they put on the clothing of a body, left heaven and came to live on earth. Just as this world is a prison to the sālik, Māruī's body is in bondage in ^CUmarkot, the fort, but her soul is always longing for Malīr; thus the soul of a spiritually enlightened person finds its body a prison and is always shedding tears for its eternal home. Man's base nature is also tempting his higher soul to create a barrier between God and man but the soul of the virtuous is never defiled by such bribes. Therefore God sends a spiritual man for his guidance, for deliverance, like a messenger came from Malīr to rescue Māruī.²

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.687-8.

2. Ibid.

Nevertheless Gurbukhshānī can view the character of Māruī from another angle. He writes, /

Māruī is a humble village girl. She is the image of patriotism and devotion to her country. The duth, daunra (caper fruit) gōlārā and gugriyūn, pharah and laniyūn, khārā and khahāryun¹ are in her eyes blessings from heaven.⁴

Ādvānī's Sūfī interpretation³ is almost identical to that of Gurbukhshānī. Malīr refers to homeland (wāṭan) and countrymen. Souls are imprisoned in this world because of greed and temptation. ^cUmar stands for the lower soul (nafs), whose aim is to mislead the seeker to the wrong road. But the true seekers like Māruī, being aware of the tactics of the lower soul (nafs) reject every offer. As a result, the nafs gives up bothering such persons. Thus Māruī symbolises the pure soul, who is always longing to go to her original home, until God's grace descends on the seeker to set him or her free. Like the messenger who came for Māruī to rescue her and take her back to Malīr, in a similar manner a murshid comes to the aid of a sālik to guide him back to the highest heaven,

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.254.

2. Different types of wildly grown grass, bushes, fruit and its blossom, eaten by poor people.

3. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.50.

i.e. Arsh, where other wise people already reside. The true lovers reach their original home and become One with their heavenly Beloved (God).¹ This interpretation is shared, broadly speaking, by Shāh^{wānī}.²

The story does fit in certain ways a Ṣūfī interpretation but it can be argued that various other themes are interwoven, consciously or subconsciously in Sur Māruī; more especially a 'feminist' aspect and a patriotic feeling may be discerned at times. There is certainly a possibility, anyway, that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf wishes to express the feelings of women through the words of Māruī, and to stress a more active role for women.

Māruī, who is kept chained in ^cUmarkot, the fort of ^cUmar, could indeed represent any or every woman of Sind who is forced to live within the confinement of four walls. Throughout the sur, it is significant that although ^cUmar is the king, he remains in the background. It is usually Māruī who is heard, either arguing with him, pleading with him or upbraiding him for his cruelty and injustice. Most of ^cUmar's actions are suggested, rather than explicitly described, in Māruī's responses to him. Above all, there is the paradox that the woman in prison is courageous enough to reject all temptations offered to her by

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.254.

2. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., pp.763-66.

the powerful king who is at liberty.

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf seems to suggest through Māruī that country life is preferable to life in the town, since in the village women can enjoy more freedom. This is a view advanced by Tīrathdās Hōtchand who rightly points out that in the rural areas of Sind, in former times, women were much freer to participate in agriculture and animal husbandry, and that they were thus able to maintain their independence and identity in society.¹

Tīrathdās Hōtchand does, however, go a little too far when he suggests that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf is speaking of a matriarchal society. Nevertheless, he is one of the few scholars who has laid some emphasis on a neglected aspect of the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf.

Let us look more closely at some evidence. Māruī is in prison, unhappy and restless, a symbol perhaps of the veiled imprisonment of urban women in Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's time. She yearns for the life of her village where the women move around freely.

1. Hōtchand, Tīrathdās, Pakistan's Immortal Poet: Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1962, pp.45-46.
2. Ibid., p.45.

وَرَّسِي وُطَنَ جَائِيُون، صَحْرَا مَسْرُ جِنَّ !

Blessed are the women of my country
Whose shelter and protection is the desert.¹

Māruī is not daunted by setbacks and diversity. She is resolute in her struggle, even though she has no news of her family and no help has been forthcoming from them. On one occasion she exclaims about her family in the following terms:-

أَلَا ! اَوْنِي آطِين ، جِي نِيَاپَا نِين !
أَعُ أَنِين جِي آهِيَان، تَوَلِي مَوْن نَه مَجِين
مَسْمَنْهَجِي هَت ه ، كَاغذ كِي آطِين !
لَتْرَك نَه لَكَلُّ تَدِين ، كَرِيو پُونِ قَلَم تِي .

O God! bring the camelman, who can
take my message (to them).

I belong to them, whether they accept me or not
The ink is in my hand, can anyone bring me
paper.

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.783.

The tears that keep falling on my pen are preventing me from writing.¹

Though a simple village girl, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf makes the suggestion here that Māruī wants to write to her family, although tears and lack of paper prevent her from doing so.²

Not all women are as restless and discontented as Māruī herself. Indeed, she is surprised at the apparent contentment of other women who are with her in the fort in confinement:-

بَنَدِي بِشَا قُرَارِ ، اَسِين لَوِجُون لَوَه م
مَتِي تِن تَرَارِ ، سَدَا سَانِيَتُونِ جِي .

The other prisoners are at peace
But we are restless in iron (chains)
Because the guardian's sword is always
hanging over us.³

By putting these words into the mouth of Māruī the poet

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.552.

2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, p.172. (*This is again a topos*).

3. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.557.

could be interpreted as expressing surprise at women who are submissive and who though in chains appear content with their lot. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf makes Māruī act as a rebel who complains about the bondage in which women are kept. ^cUmar ^msymbolises those men who keep their women locked up behind closed doors. The sword may be interpreted as the threat of male domination which constantly hangs over women, guarding and threatening them at the same time. Some women accept this as their destiny; others, like Māruī, resent and resist it. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf seems to sympathise with Māruī when he offers her these words of consolation:-

مَڪِين روءِ پَ رُزُ كِين ، پَ كِين هُنْجُون هَارِ ،

جهڙا ڇن ڏينھڙا ، تھڙا ويٺي گھار ،

ڏکڻ پٺيان سڪڙا ، سگھائين ، سگھار ،

لڻا لوه ، لطيف چي ، پروڙج ، پھنوار !

بيٽيون ، نيٺي ٻار ، تونان ٻنڌ ٻڌا ٿو .

Do not cry nor wail nor shed tears

Whatever your days may bring you,
endure them

O Sanghār!¹ after the sorrows, soon
will come the comfort.

O Panwahār!¹ understand this, says Latīf

Your bars have been lifted

Break your chains, your confinement
will soon be over.²

جي هِت هُني ماري ، ته لَدِيمَ كَرِ ڪيڻاس ،
آردائينمَ عمرَ ڪي ، ويجهو ٿي وٽاس ،
جي نه چڙيائين ، ڪِ جَهليائين ،
ته پنهنجو انگُ آڇيائين ،
لاهي لوهَ ، لطيفُ ڄي ، هتان هِنْدَ هلائين ،
موڪي مليرَ سامهين ، وٺي بانه وڃائين ،
رهبرُ ٿي ، ريترهياين ، سُنهارِي ساڻيهَ ٿي .

If Māruī were here, I would comfort her.

I would approach ^cUmar and beg for her freedom.

If he did not free her,

then I would offer myself instead.

After releasing her from the prison

says Latīf,

1. Both these titles refer to Māruī herself.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.578.

I would take her by the hand
and lead her towards Malīr.

Becoming her guide, I would
slowly walk her towards her
blessed country.¹

Turning now to another possible interpretation of Sur Māruī, it is interesting to speculate on the degree to which the question of patriotism plays a part in this sur. Ājwānī rightly points out that there has been too much emphasis in the past on Ṣūfī elements in Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's poetry, at the expense of another dominant motif which he calls Sindhīyyat or Sindhi-ness.² While commenting on the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, Ājwānī says :

Shāh was really a great patriot; one has only to read Sur Māruī to know what love he bore for the land of his birth.³

Other scholars, such as Pīr Husām al-Dīn Rāshidī,⁴ in his articles, and Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Joyo⁵ and others⁶ have

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.576.

2. Ājwānī, op. cit., p.67.

3. Ibid., p.87.

4. Rāshidī Pīr Husām al-Dīn, Latīf Salgrah Makhzan, Hyderabad Sind, 1961 , No.3, p.12.

made passing remarks on Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's patriotic feelings about Sind, expressed in the Risālō. G.M. Sayyid believes that through Sur Māruī Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf has a special message of patriotism for the people of Sind. According to this view in this sur one finds feelings of love for the land and the people, an appreciation of their traditions, and pride in their simple way of life. The poet makes Māruī reject all the luxuries offered to her by an unjust ruler, ^cUmar. In spite of her being a simple country girl, like a patriot she has courage and is determined never to submit even under great pressure from the king. Sayyid suggests that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf refers to Malīr as an independent state and ^cUmarkot (the fort of ^cUmar) as a place of servitude; thus Māruī prefers the poverty of Malīr to the luxury of ^cUmarkot. Māruī represents the people of Sind who pray for rain in Malīr, and hope for the prosperity of Mārū and Malīr.¹

Sayyid is right to lay stress on the patriotism of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, but it seems that there is a need for a slight shift of emphasis. From the historical records of Sind, it is

Cont'd: 5. Jyo Muhammad Ibrāhīm, Shāh Sachal Sāmī, Hyderabad Sind, 1978, p.55.

6. E.g. Badawī Lutfallāh, "Bhitāī je Shi^cr jā Tārīkhī Wāqī'a", Nain Zindagī, September 1956, p.22.

1. Sayyid, G.M., Paigham Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp.249-55.

clear that Sind has been attacked and trampled down, and captured and ruled by foreign powers. A more likely interpretation from a close reading of Sur Māruī is that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is using Māruī to represent Sind itself, rather than its people.

The poet makes Māruī speak of her anxiety and restlessness in prison. Māruī surely represents Sind, and Mārū, her country folk, are the symbol of the people of Sind. Māruī is made by the poet to express her surprise at her own people's negligence. When Māruī is captured and brought to ^cUmarmot, none of her people come to rescue her. This quite upsets Māruī because of their passive attitude. It seems here that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is referring to the passivity of the Sindhī people under oppression, and he is making Sind speak through Māruī. The whole sur is full of Māruī's restlessness in chains, and an expression of her regret that Mārū never came to rescue her.¹

It is an evocative symbol that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf personifies Sind as a woman, who takes various forms including that of a loving mother, a faithful wife and a devoted and caring daughter. Sind, through the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, is seen to be always concerned with the well-being of her loved ones. Māruī loves Mārū and Malīr unconditionally. Māruī, like a devoted and sincere woman, faithful in every

1. This is of course a symbol which is quite close to the concept of Mother India.

relationship, loves Malīr in spite of its lack of food, discomfort and poverty. She adores and sheds tears of blood for her Mārū, irrespective of their faults.

The following verses taken from Sur Mārūī are but a selection of many such lines which evoke Mārūī's longing and love of her people.¹

ارم هَذِي اوديان ، بنتولا ، بَتَّ چيرُ ،

پاندوٹھا بنِ دِيان ، ارغچ # عبيرُ ،

ماروۂ سين شلَ مالِيان، كَتِيونَ جَهْرِيونَ كيرِ !

اندرِ اَجِ اكيرِ ، مُنكي پري پهنوارَ جي .

I will never wear fine woollen clothes, nor a
colourful silken dress

Damn the printed material, silk and
blue fine fabrics.

May I wear Khāthī,² pure like milk
with my Mārū

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.554.

2. A coarse raw woollen blanket worn as a shawl in winter by poor herdsmen and women.

I have thirst and longing within me, for my
beloved shepherd.¹

The poet's love for Sind, its people, language and
countryside is unconditional. The picture he paints is lyrical
and passionate, idealistic and eloquent:²

وَرِي وَطَنَ جَائِيُونَ ، صَحْرَا سَتْرُ جِنِ !
گولاڙا ۽ گگريون ، اوچل اباھن ،
ويٿرھيا گھمن وارين ، جھانگي منجھ جھنگن ،
مُنڪي ماروٿڙن ، سچ ڳڻائي سچُ مڙ !

Blessed are the women of my country,
Whose shelter and protection is the desert.
Wild trees (of the desert) are their cover,
The residents of the jungle use creepers as their
clothing.
My parents (Mārū) gave me the desert for my
dowry.

In another place he says:³

1. I.e. to Mārū and Khet in her fiancée.
2. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.783.
3. Ibid.

بَلْرُ پَيْلُ ، اَوْحِلُّ اُنَّ ، جِنِ جَا پَيْرِ مَتِي پِنْتِ پَا كُ ،
وَهْلُ وِرَاكُنْ مِهْ اُنِ جِي اَجُوكِي اَوْطَاقُ ،
بَا لُ نَهْ بَسْنُ پَا لُ كَنِي ، وَيَجَارَا يِي پَا كُ ،
عَمْرُ ! وُوْ نَهْ عَاقُ ، تَكَلَا رَجْمَ تَكُوْمِيْبِيْنِ !

Their feet are on clear ground.

They drink rainwater, and wear hand-woven
clothes.

They live under the boughs of the trees, so there
is no danger of destruction or harm to their
residence.

They are poor, but fearless and unbashful people.

O ^cUmar! They are not unruly - why are you
hurting those who are already suffering.

Perhaps the passage in Sur Māruī which most lends itself
to a patriotic interpretation is Māruī's request to ^cUmar to do
her one last favour; namely that before she breathes her last,
he should send her back to Malīr:

واجھائي وطن کي ، ساري ڏيان ساهُ ،
بتُ منھجو بندُ ۾ ، قيد ۾ ڪريجاھ ،
پر ڏيھاڻي پري ري ، ڌار ۾ ڌريجاھ
تڏي وسائجاه ٿرن جي ، مٿي مٿي مقاه

جي پويون ٿي پساھ ، ت نجاھ مڙھ ملير ڏي .

If I expire while longing for my country

Do not imprison my body

Do not withhold the stranger (Māruī)
from her loved ones.

Cover me with the cold mud of Thar,

When I am about to breath my last,
take my corpse to Malīr. ¹

A little later she says:²

واجھائي وطن کي ، آئون جي رھت مياڻ ،
گور منھجي سومرا ! رڪج پھنوارن پاس،
تڏج ڏاڏاڻين ڏيھ جي ، منجھا. اولڙن واسُ ،
مياڻي جياس ، جي وڃي مڙھ ملير ڏي .

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.561.

2. Ibid., p.562.

If I expire while longing for my country
O Sumra! let my grave be with my countrymen.
Burn the bushes of my grandparents' home
for incense
I will live again even after my death,
if my body goes to Malīr.

In one of her speeches on the anniversary of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Khadīja Daudpota called him the "poet of heroines". She went on to say that much of the Risālo reveals the great status Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf accorded to women and that he was aware of their admirable characteristics, such as selflessness, patience and determinations.¹

The preceding discussion in this chapter has, it is hoped, at least criticised an exclusively Ṣūfī interpretation of the Risālo and suggested that other strands may be discerned in it.

1. Daudpota, Khadīja, "Bhitāī Surmiyun: jo Shā^Cir", Nain Zindagi, January 1960, pp.8-11.

CHAPTER 3

SHĀH ^c ABD AL-LATĪF AND HINDU THOUGHT
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO YOGIS

General Introduction

Inevitably, there has been considerable interchange of ideas between Hindus and Muslims in the sub-continent over the centuries. In northern and central India, from the fourteenth century onwards, there were many examples of poets who did not classify themselves as Hindus or Muslims. They were essentially non-sectarian, they owed a great deal to Vedantic monism and their belief in monotheism brought them closer to Islam than to traditional Hinduism.¹

According to Gulrāj,² cordial relations had been created between Muslims and Hindus by pioneer figures such as Kabīr³ and Nānak.⁴ Both these men attracted followers from both religious communities and Nānak visited northern Sind, preaching love, unity and peace. Distinctions between the two faiths were of course blurred, especially at the popular level,

1. Vaudeville, C., Kabīr, Oxford, 1974, p.97.
2. Gulrāj, J.P., Sind and its Śūfīs, Karachi, 1979, pp.79-86.
3. Kabīr (1440-1518) was an Indian mystic and poet who attempted to reconcile Hindu and Muslim thought, preaching the fundamental unity of all religions and all men. Cf. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1974, vol.V, p.651, art.: "Kabir".
4. Nānak (1469-1539) was the first gurū of the Sikhs. His teachings stressed

Cont'd:...

and many Hindus, both illiterate and educated, were called 'Ṣūfīs by religion' and were associated with Ṣūfī centres in Sind.¹ It was in such an environment that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was brought up.

The contact which Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf made with yogis is discussed at length later in this chapter. It is difficult, however, to pinpoint with certainty any specific influence which traditional Hinduism may have exerted on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. It is not even clear whether or not he had studied Hindu scriptures, although it can be argued from his work that he did have some knowledge of them.

A great deal of material has already been produced on this topic. Partisan scholars from both sides have found in the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf evidence to support their views but frequently, in their polemical zeal, they have carried their arguments too far. What now follows, therefore, are a few tentative points which, it is hoped, present a more balanced view in the continuing debate on the possible areas of Hindu influence in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. Certainly, his poetry has long been enjoyed by Hindus and Muslims alike.

Cont'd: salvation through meditation on the divine name. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.VII, p.178, art: Nānak.

1. Gulrāj, op. cit., pp.81-4.

In his introduction to the Risālo,¹ Gurbukhshānī devotes a section exclusively to the relationship between Vedantic philosophy and Sūfīsm, suggesting that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf followed the same traditions in his poetry. In order to ascertain the possible links between Vedantic philosophy and the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, a brief outline of Vedanta would seem appropriate at this stage.

Vedanta may be divided into various important sub-systems: Advaita (monism or non-dualism), Visistadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Dvaita (dualism).² The chief exponent of Advaita was Shankara, who believed in only one reality, a single unity underlying everything. As for Visistadvaitā, Rāmanūjā was its propounder. He emphasised union rather than unity. The third system, Dvaita, was propagated by Madhva, for whom multiplicity formed the basis of the universe.

In the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf there would appear to be a number of resemblances with the first two systems, i.e. Advaita and Visistadvaita.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.29-36.

2. Swamī Chidbhavananda, Bhagavad Gita, Madras, 1970, pp.50-52.

According to Shankara, the most important propounder of Advaita or a non-dualistic philosophy, Reality is the only one. It is Existence-Knowledge-Infinite Bliss and has intrinsic power to manifest Itself as the Jagat (universe) and Jiva (soul). It is Saguna Brahman (conditional Reality) when in the state of omnipotence and omnipresence. But it is called Nirgunā (Absolute Reality) when it is static. It is unqualified unconditional and without attributes. In this system the emancipation of the Absolute and the Self is complete, no distinction is made between the soul and the universe or God. Everything merges into one single unit, i.e. One.¹

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf one does find similarities at times between his views and Shankara's philosophy. There are a number of verses where no distinction is made between God, universe and the soul, all things seem to be One, though in appearance they are different. He expresses his amazement at the Unity of Being in the following words:²

1. Lott, Eric, Vedantic Approach to God, London, 1980, pp.121-9.

Cf. Swamī, op. cit., pp.52-3.

2. Āgvanī, op. cit., p.12.

ڪوڙين ڪاڀائون ٽنهنجون، لکين لک هزار ،

جيءُ سڀڪنهن جي سڀن ، ڏرسن ڌارو ڌار ،

پرڀم تنهنجا پار، ڪهڙا ڇڻي ڪئن ڇٽان .

There are millions and hundreds of thousands of
your appearances.

And each glimpse seems to be different from the
other.

O my beloved! in what and how many ways shall
I count them?

On another occasion he says:

پاڻهين جل جلاله ، پاڻهين جانِ جمال

پاڻهين صورتِ پرينءَ جي ، پاڻهين حسنِ ڪمال،

پاڻهين پيرِ مُريدِ تڻي، پاڻهين پاڻِ خيال،

سڀ سڀوئي حال ، منجهائي معلوم تڻي .

Himself is worthy of grandeur of prestige

Himself is the essence of beauty

Himself is in the form of the Beloved

Himself is the Perfect Beauty

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.4.

Himself is the murshid and murīd

Himself is the Idea (from which the forms emerge)

He is capable of comprehension from within.

Both Shankara and Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf believe, moreover, that there are certain obstacles such as ignorance, pride and the ego which separate God and the human soul. There are, however, dissimilarities between Advaita and the view of the world found in the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. For Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, the universe and the soul are not mere illusions but they have existence in God. For Shankara, on the other hand, the universe is an illusion (maya) and only God exists. Shankara gives the example of a rope which seems erroneously like a snake. In a similar way, the universe which is apparently real, is in reality an illusion, thus reducing human individuality to a mere phantom.¹ If this were true for Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, the burning desire of the soul for union with God and the emphasis on individual human struggle would be futile and unnecessary.

On the other hand, according to Visistadvaita, nothing exists except God. The universe is the body of God and souls (jivas) exist as innumerable life-cells in that cosmic body. Individual souls are inseparable from God. Realisation of this

1. Feuerstein, G., Bhagavad Gita, Oxford, 1974, p.74.

is attained only through intuitive knowledge when the soul (jiva) realises that God (Paramātman) is the whole and that it (the soul) is just a minute part of that whole. After this realisation the soul struggles for the attainment of mukti: release from the world. By attaining mukti, the soul is re-united with God.¹

For Rāmānujā :

the creative Will of God is the sole cause of the universe, and for his creative act God is dependent on nothing but his own Will and Being. This creative act of God could be called self-expression or self-emancipation.²

Turning to Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's poetry, Rāmānujā's ideas are also echoed in a number of verses. For Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf everything in the world works in a certain way because it is the will of God. Human beings come from God and will go back to God. As waves are inseparable from the sea which is their source, so too the existence of souls is impossible without their source which is God. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf says:

1. Swamī, op. cit., pp.51-2.
2. Lott, Eric, God and the Universe in the Vedantic Theology of Rāmānujā, Madras 1976, pp.166-7.
3. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.118.

لهرن لڪ لباس، پاڻي پسن هڪڙو
اونهي تنهن عميق جي، واري ڇڏو ماس،
جت ناه نهايت نينهن جي، ڪوہ ات پنهنجي ڪاس،
تڙن جي تلاش، لاه ت لالڻ لڪ تئين .

The waves seem to be in thousands
But the water you see is just One
Do not worry about the depth of the sea
Nor should that thought bother you.
Where there is no limit to love
One has to give up every other desire
One can only come closer to the beloved
When one gives up looking for the seashore.¹

On another occasion he writes:

پڙاڏو سو سڏ، وڙ وائيءَ جو جي لهن،
هئا اڪم گڏ، ٻڌڻ ۾ به ٿيا .

The echo and the call are the same
If only you could know the secret of it
They are together, but become two when one hears
them.¹

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.118.

2. Ibid.

The above verses seem to bring Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf more close to the position of Rāmānujā, who sees human souls as part of God but not identical with God.

Each soul is an amsa of the body of Brahman and is a personal being, possessing a measure of freedom.¹

There are also certain obvious similarities of ideas between the Gita and the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, although to postulate a direct influence would be a difficult hypothesis to prove. To take a few examples to illustrate this, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf expresses similar views to those in the Gita on the subject of God's being within oneself:-

جو تون ٿورئين ٿور، سو سدا آهي ساڻ تو ،
لالن لاءِ لطيف ، چئي ، منجهي تي معذور !
منجهان پنهنجن پرورن ، تو منجه آهس تڪيو .

1. Farquhar, J.N., "The Historical Position of Ramananda", The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Part III, 1922, p.375.

For whom are you looking in the distance?

He is always residing within you.

For the sweetheart, says Latīf,

(Meditate), see within yourself

Only from within can you know,

As His resting-place is within you.¹

Turning now to the Gita we read:-

That is without and within all beings, unmoving and yet moving. That cannot be known because of (Its) subtleness. That is far-standing and yet near.²

Again, while referring to the Unity of Being, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf emphasises the importance of the letter alif, which as it is the first letter of the alphabet symbolises the beginning of everything, God:-³

اَکَرِ پَٲَرُھُ اَلْفَ جُو، وَرَقَ سَیِّ وِسَارِ ،

اَنَدُرُ تَوْنِ اُجَارِ ، پَنَا پَٲَرُھِنْدِیْنِ کِیْتَرَا •

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.133.

2. Feuerstein, op. cit., p.76.

3. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.33.

Just read the letter A (alif) and forget the
rest of the pages

You have only to keep your inner self pure

There is no need to read more pages.

A similar view is expressed in the Gita on the letter A
but here it is God Himself who is speaking:-

Of letters I am the letter A and of word-compounds
I am the dual. I am verily like inexhaustible
Time. I am the Dispenser facing everywhere.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and yogis

The various editors of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's poetry
mention that the poet spent three years of his life with yogis
and they then indicate the two surs of the Risālo, Sur Khāhoṛī
and Sur Rāmkalī, which discuss the subject of yogis.² The

1. Swamī, op. cit., p.565.

2. Gurbukhshānī, H.M., Shāhjo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1979, 3 vols.

Ādvānī, Kalyān, Shāhjo Risālo, Karachi, 1976.

Shāhvānī, G.M., Shāhjo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1950.

Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Shāh ^cAbdal-Latīf Bhitāī, Hyderabad Sind, 1910.

Hindu scholar Ādvānī adds that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf derived positive benefit from his contact and experiences with the yogis. He praises the simplicity, selflessness and asceticism of the yogis.¹ Gurbukhshānī talks about Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's travels with the yogis, but it is difficult to assess what his view on this might have been since he died before completing the last part of the Risālo which includes the two surs on yogis.²

Shāhvānī, on the other hand, who is a Muslim scholar, is willing to admit that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf spent time with the yogis, and that even after he had left them, he always remembered them and mentioned them in laudatory terms in the two surs in the Risālo.³ Shāhvānī admits that from his poetry it is clear that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf loves and longs for the yogis. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, according to Shāhvānī, admires the yogis' existence which transcends caste and creed, and he praises the yogis for their ascetic practices and selfless lives. Shāhvānī is, however, at pains to point out that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf "had the heart of a Muslim who could not get

1. Op. cit., p.387. In his introductory note on Sur Rāmkalī, Ādvānī mentions different types of yogis, but does not comment on their origins and customs.
2. Op. cit., p.13.
3. Op. cit., pp.1099-1100.

satisfaction by worshipping potsherd and bricks".

Controversy has raged fiercely between Muslim and Hindu scholars over the whole issue of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf and Hindu yogi influence. On the Muslim side, Mīrzā Qalāch Beg is typical of the traditional approach. Whilst he admits that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf travelled around with yogis visiting some Hindu holy places and that he did actually write the two surs mentioned above, he goes on to say that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf did not approve of the practices of the yogis which he saw at first hand and that after arguing with them he left them:

The sole purpose of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf in wearing the clothes of faqīrs and in travelling with them was to find out their religious ideas and customs. He visited Nānī a second time, but he did not observe the required rites properly. He had a disagreement with them and left.¹

Ḍīn Muḥammad Wafāī throws some light on the possible reasons for Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's break with the yogis, after having spent three years with them. He suggests that Shāh

1. Mīrzā Qalāch Beg, Aḥwāl Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf Bhitāī, p.20. Earlier, with reference to Nānī, the author discusses the practices at that place and reports that when Hindu faqīrs visit it, they shave their beards and heads, and "it is said that for three days their faces turn black, no matter how fair their faces may be". Ibid., pp.15-17.

^cAbd al-Latīf may well have argued with them on the question of idol worship and about certain rites which had to be performed at Hindu holy places.¹ He then quotes Mushtāq Muta^calvī as follows:-

He (Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf) went to see the Hindu shrine of Nānī, where with his Ṣūfī miracles (karamāt) he insulted and degraded the faqīrs so as to make them realise their mistake. Ignorance being their innate nature, they (the yogis) planned to hurt him. When he realised this, he dived into the earth and came out in his own country.²

The author concludes that inspite of spending time in the company of yogis, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf managed to remain a true Muslim.

In response to such a negative attitude on the part of Muslim scholars such as Mīrzā Qalch Beg, Hindu writers such as Ājvānī and Jotvānī have been vigorous in defence of their own position and they resent the fact that Sorley, Baloch and

1. Wafāī Dīn Muhammad, Lutf Latīf, Karachi, 1951, pp.55-9.

2. Ibid., p.59. The same author also mentions that the yogis on the eight-day journey from Karachi to Chandercop do not brush their teeth or wash throughout. He comments that it is not surprising that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf should have disliked this. Ibid., p.60.

Brōhī call the poet "a true Muslim".

Ājvānī criticises Mīrzā Qalāch Beg for distorting the truth and suggests that the reason why Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's poetry has always been so popular with Hindus is because it reflects the influence of Vedantic and yogi thought on the poet. He goes on to say:-

“A man who could don the garb of Hindu Jogīs, wander with them for years, make pilgrimages to Hinglāj, Dwārka and other sacred places of the Hindus, a man who broke, without the slightest compunction, the Islamic injunction against samā^c or dance-music, and died tasting the pleasure of that dance-music, a man who went out of his way, in that era of bigotry, to pull out from a crowd of fanatic Muslims a poor Hindu whom they were proceeding to convert forcibly to Islam, could hardly be regarded as a Muslim.¹”

Ājvānī stresses that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf retained his respect and affection for the yogis, even after he had argued with some of them and left them. He then sums up as follows:-

“All the roughness, irregularities and oddities he may have derived by growing up in the company of fanatic Syeds and Fakirs were rounded off and

1. Ājvānī, op. cit., pp.66 and 81.

polished by his initiation into Yoga Bhaktī and Vedant, the traditional philosophy and all-embracing mysticism which India had treasured for thousands of years. It is problematic whether Shāh would have risen to full stature as the poet of Sind and a true mystic, if he had not travelled over the whole of greater Sind and spent at least three precious years in the company of Hindu Sanyāsīs and Jogīs and dressed, lived and worshipped like them and become one of them.¹

Such judgements as these reflect, of course, Ājvānī's pro-Hindu bias.

The argument was continued by Baloch and Jotvānī. The Muslim scholar, Baloch, suggests in his various articles that the main influences on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf were those of the Qu'rān, ḥadīṣ and Persian poetry, and he totally ignores the question of Hindu inspiration, including the issue of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and the yogis. The Hindu writer Jotvānī vigorously refutes and ridicules the views of Baloch and attempts to prove that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's thought is inspired by Hinduism, saying the Risālo, particularly its Sur Khāhoṛī and Sur Rāmkalī eloquently testifies to the all-Indian character of his religion and philosophy.²

1. Ājvānī, op. cit., p.81.

2. Jotvānī, op. cit., p.6.

With particular reference to the yogis, Jotvānī generally reiterates the views of Ājvānī.¹ Unlike Muslim scholars, Jotvānī states that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf parted from the yogis on good terms. He does not, however, comment on what kind of yogis became Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's companions nor on their origins or customs.

G.M. Sayyid is able to admit, as a Muslim, that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf could and did derive positive benefit from the company of yogis, from whom he learned to be unbiased and from whom he inherited qualities such as self-sacrifice, humility and asceticism.²

As regards Western scholars who have written on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Sorley says nothing at all about yogis. He mentions only that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was inclined to an ascetic way of life and that he used to spend his time in the company of holy men.³

1. Op. cit., p.6.

2. Sayyid, G.M., Paigham Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, p.80.

3. Sorley, H.T., Shāh ^CAbdul Latīf of Bhit, London 1940, p.171.

The article written by Southey on Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf is worthless since it is a blend of inaccuracies and superstitious stories, including an amusing anecdote about Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf giving an idol a drink of milk. The yogis, having seen the idol take the cup of milk, are determined to kill and eat Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf in order to obtain his magic powers. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, realising

Cont'd:...

Schimmel, on the other hand, discusses Ṣūfīs and yogis in the second part of her section on Shāh Ḥ Abd al-Latīf in Pain and Grace.¹ She highlights the important points of resemblance between the Ṣūfīs and yogis. Though Ṣūfīs and yogis apparently belong to two different religious systems, each group, in their approach to life and their religious practices, are found to be parallel, if viewed closely. Both yogis and Ṣūfīs (at least most of them), being sincere seekers after Truth, voluntarily set out on a difficult path and welcome suffering and affliction.²

As the title of her chapter, "Ṣūfīs and yogis in Shāh Ḥ Abd al-Latīf's Poems" suggests, Schimmel discusses both Ṣūfīs and yogis together and gives examples from the poems.

In view of the fact that Shāh Ḥ Abd al-Latīf has devoted two whole surs, Rāmkalī and Khahorī exclusively to yogis, and that there are references to yogis elsewhere in the Risālo, this chapter aims to concentrate closely on the theme of yogis in more detail in order to do full justice to this interesting

Cont'd: the danger, sank into the ground and arrived safely at Kotrī. W. Southey, "History of Shāh Ḥ Abdul Latīf", in Shāh Latīf, ed. A.A. Qurashī, Karachi, 1978, p.59. This story is incidentally accepted uncritically without comment by Sorley.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.190-235.

2. Ibid., pp.210-222.

aspect of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's work.

As has already been mentioned in the introduction, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf spent some years of his life in the company of yogis. This occurred at a crucial stage of his own emotional and spiritual development. There are, in his poetry, specific allusions to the period of his life spent with yogis, and it may be of use to summarise here the sequence of events as they are known of these three years.

At the age of twenty Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf seems to have left Kotrī secretly as a frustrated lover. He proceeded along the Halla road towards Hyderabad (Sind) near which is a mountain called Ganjo-Takkar. In the vicinity of that mountain was a temple to the goddess Kālī.¹ This was the centre where different groups of yogis used to gather both to perform a pilgrimage to that shrine, and also to prepare there for a pilgrimage to Hinglāj.²

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf travelled in the company of yogis whom he had met on the way to the temple of Kālī. Like the yogis he wore salmon-coloured clothes (his robe is still

1. The name of a Hindu goddess; her temples were found all over the sub-continent during the poet's lifetime.
2. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., pp.7-9.

preserved in Bhiṭ Shāh, and taking a few necessary things for the journey, he then set out with the yogis for Hinglāj.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf actually refers in his poetry in Sur Khāhoṛī to the mountain of Ganjo-Takkar, where he questions his own motives in being there:-¹

ڪهڙو آئي ڪام ، گنجي ڏنگر ڪام ۾ ؟
پسي ته پهڙا ڪي ، آچي نه آرام ،
مٿان ڏنگر ڏورين ، اُجهين ڪو عوام !
هرا ڪري حرام ، ڪام ته ڪاهوڙي ٿين .

What is the purpose of your visiting the
Ganjo mountain?

The sight of the mountain makes one restless.

You should never search around
ordinary hills.

Make every (worldly) thing unlawful, burn
yourself, then you will become Khahoṛī.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf must have followed the same route as the pilgrims, which goes along the Makrān coast from Karachi

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1063-4.

Miyānī and Hinglāj. The journey must have been difficult since they went on foot, with no provision of food. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf says:¹

کَظَن نَه كَهْكَانُ، پَنَدَ پُرَاهِينِ هَلِيَا ،
دَوْتِيَرَا كِه دُتْ كِي ، جُنْبِيَا دِي جَابَانِ ،
كَاهُوْرَنِ اِهْجَالُ ، اَلْكَ نَه سَجِي اَبْزِي .

They do not take horse or camel with them,
and walk towards the far-off destiny.

*
Dothī are searching in the desert
for wild growth²

The signs of Khāhorīs are that they do not wear
intact clothes on their body.

By crossing the deserted places on foot, they must have torn their clothes, as the poet mentions. On the journey, the pilgrims made offerings at different places. 'The shrine lies in a verdant valley surrounded by mountains. Further below is the resting place of Nānī, a castellated mud edifice with a

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1059-69.

2. Spiritual food.

* The nomadic people of Thar, who live on Duth, i.e. wild grass, are called Dothī. Here the poet is referring to spiritual seekers, who search for spiritual food.

rough wooden door. A flight of steps leads down a deep semi-circular cleft through which pilgrims creep on all fours to reach the building. The shrine is a level, mud surface upon which a lamp is kept. A superstition is attached to it that a sinner cannot enter the shrine and only the chaste are able to enter.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf seems to have visited a number of other places in Sind sacred to yogis, including shrines such as Pīr Arr, Koteswar and Hinglāj.² He refers several times in his poetry to Hinglāj and praises the yogis who visit that place. He writes:³

ڪن ڪٽ ، ڪاڀڪ ، ڪاڀڙي ، ڪنڦٽيا ڪن ڌار ،
هلن جي هنگلاج ڏي ، ٻاهو چڏي ٻار
جي ڪين قبول طهار هلو ! تہ ٽڪڻا پسون تن جا .

The slit-eared, Kāpaṭ Kāpaṭī who wear
earrings and have cuts in their ears;
are going to Hinglāj

1. Briggs, op. cit., p.107.
2. Ibid., p.103.
3. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.1124.

These Bābū have given up everything

Those who accept 'nothingness'

Let us go and visit their place.

Hinglāj is situated on the Makrān coast, about 80 miles from the mouth of the Indus and some 12 miles from the sea.

Hinglāj is one of the 15 pithas.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf refers to such a visit as follows:-²

نانگا نانِي هَلِيَا، هِنِگَلَا جَا هَلِيَا ،
دِيكِي جَن دُوَارِڪَا، مَهِيَسَن مَلِهِي
آبَه وَ جَن عَلِي ، اَتُون نَه جِينَدِي اِن رِي .

The Nagās went to Hinglāj to
visit Nānī

The mehesi (worshippers of Śiva) happily
visited the Dvārka.

Their leader is ³^cAlī, I cannot
live without them.

1. Places where the dismembered limbs of Kālī were scattered. Briggs, op. cit., pp.105-6.

2. ShāhVānī, op. cit., p.1111.

3. In this verse, although the poet is speaking of the yogis who are worshippers of the Hindu god Śiva, he is also happy to mention "Alī in this context. What is important is the search for divine, whether the guide is 'Alī or Shivā.

On the return journey from Hinglāj, pilgrims stopped at the shrine of the Mahādave, who is said to have been the brother of the Devī of Hinglāj. It is at Koteswar and was an ancient and celebrated tirtha. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf must have passed this place on his way back to Nagar Thatta, which is an ancient town important to Gorakhnāth yogis. On their way to Hinglāj, the pilgrims used to buy rosaries from Thatta. These rosaries were made by local people from hard yellow limestones, which they collected from the ground and strung. Pilgrims used to buy two types of rosaries. On reaching Hinglāj they offered one to the goddess, and then put it on themselves. On arriving at Asapūrī Devīs' shrine at Nagar Thatta on the return journey, the pilgrims offered the other rosary to her and again took it back.¹

Other places are mentioned by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf in his poetry, such as Qandahār, Kabul and above all Benāres (Kāsī). However, Kāsī is such a common symbol of Hinduism in Indo/Pakistani Sūfī poetry that it may not necessarily be assumed that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf actually went there in the company of yogis, although he may have done, as Kāsī was visited by Gorakhnāth yogis.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also refers in his poetry to other

1. Briggs, op. cit., p.104.

places which had religious significance for Hindus, such as Lakhpat, Girnār, Jaisalmīr, Lasbelo, Pūrāb-Bandar, Jhūnāgar, Mughalbhīn, Hālār, Khanbhāt and Dvārka.¹ Some of these places, at least, he must have visited. Certainly, he probably went to those within a reasonable distance from his home.

The motive for Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf spending three years with the yogis should not be regarded as escapism, but rather as the wish to learn from them. After this period of spiritual probation, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf returned as a more mature and experienced man to his home town to live again among his own people. No doubt his experiences with the yogis enabled him to rise above petty religious differences and to allude in his poetry to ways in which the society which he saw around him could be improved. Certainly, there was much to be improved. This was a rigid class-ridden society in which the religious leaders made life intolerable for the common people. The message which emerges from Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's poetry is one of tolerance between Muslims and Hindus as well as one of hope that the true purpose of religion is self-realisation for the individual. Through his poetry he conveys a message of love, unity and peace for mankind.

Before discussing in more detail the relationship between

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.13; Ādvānī, op. cit., p.4.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf and yogis, it may be useful to give a brief note on yoga and yogis. It is interesting to note that yoga was practised in the Punjab and in Sind long before its development in Vedic India. The term yoga refers to spiritual disciplines which are found in Buddhism and Hinduism and which aim at the attaining of higher consciousness and liberation from ignorance, suffering and rebirth.

The word yoga is "derived from the root yuj-, to connect or join. Yoga can thus be translated as a connection or union, i.e. the union of the individual soul with the cosmic soul or the Supreme Principle".¹

Yoga is a spiritual effort on the part of the individual, who by passing through physical and spiritual mortification, reaches a higher state of consciousness. In other words, "the whole purpose of yoga is to provide the specific disciplines and techniques of inner control whereby liberation of this spiritual reality from its confinement is brought about".² The ultimate end is the union of one's own self with the prime source of all things.

1. Pott, P.H., Yoga and Yantra, 1971, trans. Needham R., The Hague, 1966, p.1.

2. Berry T., Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism, London, 1971, p.77.

Such a union is possible only after the individual has attained liberation from the cycle of rebirth.¹ After achieving liberation, the adept is not born again, but attains supreme bliss in union with his source. In order to achieve such an end, the individual has to overcome the many obstacles which lie on the path of yoga. These obstacles are called klesas, which are described as all impulses leading to the negation of one's "true self". Ignorance, for example, is one of the greatest impediments, since it causes the adept to cling to the temporary world, and to consider his own soul as distinct from the cosmic soul. Another obstacle is attachment to this life, worldly things and other such objects.²

The following discussion is limited to those facets of the development of yoga which bear on Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf and his relationship with the yogis. Within Hinduism, two of the major schools are the Shivaite and the ^{Vaishva} Vishnuvite orders.

The Shivaite are so-called because of their chief god, Shiva. The Vishnuvites are named after their godhead, Vishnu. Turning first to the Shivaite, some of them are called

1. According to Hindu belief, a person is reborn over and over again at different states, the levels according to his previous actions or karma.
2. Pott, op. cit., p.1.

Gorakhnāthīs or Nāthīs. They are also known as Kanphaṭā yogis because of their slit ears. The Gorakhnāthīs followed their foremost gurū, Gorakhnāth. Nāth yogis were exponents of Tantric yoga or Hatha yoga which originated in Mahayānā Buddhism.¹ The Kanphaṭā yogis who lived in north-west India and beyond were possibly influenced by Buddhist thought since traces of that thought can be found in their practices.² The Kanphaṭās could not avoid being in contact with Muslims since the important Hindu shrine of Hinglāj was in Muslim hands.

According to Briggs, Gorakhnāthīs or Kanphaṭās are thought to be a better class of yogis, although some undesirable elements have crept in and are to be found amongst them.³

Also belonging to the Gorakhnāthī group are the Aughar yogis who have not undergone the final ceremony of having their ears split. After that ritual they become Kanphaṭās. The Gaudriyya yogis form part of the Aughar sect but they sometimes do wear earrings like the Kanphaṭās.⁴

1. Omen, J.C., The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India, Delhi 1973, pp.150-2.

2. Ibid.

3. Briggs, G.W., Gorakhnath and Kanphata Yogis, New Delhi 1973, pp.1-2.

4. Ibid., pp.1-10. It is interesting to note that Briggs mentions another section of the Kanphaṭās who are called Jāfir Pīrs and are Muslims. Although they are

Rāwal or Nāgnāth are another group who are associated with the Shivaites. They are the most important group of Muslim yogis who are found in Peshawar and Afghanistan, and whose chief seat is in Rawalpindi. They are great wanderers.¹

The Shivaites carry two types of rosaries: thumra and āsāpūrī: the first is made of small beads, the other of slightly larger ones, made of hard yellow limestones from Thatta in Sind.²

As for the second major group of yogis, the Vishnuvites, they were founded by Ramananda in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. The order then spread all over northern India.³ Amongst the sub-sects of the Vishnuvites are the Sannyāsīs, Nāgās and the Bairāgīs.

The Sannyāsīs derive their name from the term Sannyāsā, which literally means resignation or abandonment. The Bhagavadgītā defines Sannyāsā as the renunciation of actions

Cont'd: Kanphaṭās, Hindu yogis do not eat with them. They are found in the Punjab.

Ibid., pp.64-5.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., pp.103-4.

3. J.N. Farquhar, "The Historical Position of Ramananda", JRAS, 1922, Part III, pp.373-4.

done with some purpose in view. According to Berry:-

The Sannyāsīs were wandering mendicants, men who live the homeless life, without wife, children or possessions of any sort except robe, staff, begging bowl and drinking cup.¹

Although the term Sannyāsī may be used in a general sense, it sometimes has a narrower application. It may be applied to Vishnuvite ascetics, such as the officiants at the Krishna temple at Udipi in the south Manāra district of Madras.²

In another place, the same author remarks as follows:-

Although, however, Sannyāsīs and Vairagīs and other similar denominations are used, and correctly used in a wider acceptation, yet one occasionally does find them limited in meaning and designating distinct and inimical bodies of men. When this is the case, it may be generally concluded that the Sannyāsīs imply mendicant followers of Siva and the Vairagīs, those of Vishnu.³

1. Berry, Thomas, Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism, New York 1971, pp.8-9.
2. Wilson, H.H., Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus, London 1861, p.141.
3. Ibid.

As for the Bairāgīs, their name is derived from bai (meaning "without") and rāg (meaning "attachment"). This group will recruit any Hindu irrespective of caste or colour.¹ The Bairāgīs paint on their foreheads the trifla, consisting of three upright lines, starting from the top of the nose, the central line being red, which typifies Vishnu ; the other two lines are yellow, which represent Brahman and Shiva.² The Bairāgīs carry a rosary made from basil (tulsī) beads.³

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's treatment of yogis in his poetry

The theme of yogis in Sindhī poetry was known before the time of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. According to the extant poetic sources in Sindhī which pre-date the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, it would appear that the first poet to speak extensively about yogis was Shāh Lutf Allāh Qādirī (1020/1611-1090/1679). His two main works are Minhāj al-Ma^Crifat, written in Persian, and Sindhī Risālo.⁴ This poet belonged to the Qādirī ṭarīqa and many murīds gathered around him. In his poetry he mentions various groups of yogis, such as Sannyāsīs, Ādesīs and

1. Oman, op. cit., p.189.

2. Briggs, op. cit., pp.12-16.

3. Ibid., pp.103-4.

4. Baloch, N.A., Shāh Lutf Allāh Qādirī jō Kalām, Hyderabad Sind, 1968, p.11.

Kāpaṛīs, and he refers to their way of life in order to shed light on his explanation of the Ṣūfī path.¹

جتي هئا ڪاڀري ، هاڻي هن نه هئد
چئا سڱ سنا سين ، پرا پرا هن پنڌ
سي نانگا ننگ وٺا ، ڪين جني جي ڪنڌ
پسو ساميٽرا سنڌ ، لوڪان لڪي جي وٺا .

Where once there were Kāpaṛīs, they are no more.

Sannyāsīs have broken relationships

They have gone away to a distant place

The fearless Nāngā have left, taking 'nothingness'
on their shoulders.

Look at the 'secret way of the Sāmīs',²

Who have hidden themselves from the
people and left.

1. Baloch, op. cit., pp.22-23.

2. The word used in Sindhī is Sandh - which means a hole broken through the house.
This suggests the way yogis disappear suddenly from a place.

Shāh ^cInāyat (1620 A.D. - 1708 A.D.) also uses the theme of yogis in his poetry. Indeed, he devotes two whole surs, Rāmkalī and Pūrab to yogis, whom he calls by various names including Ādesī, Pūrabī, Sannyāsī, Lāhūtī and Rāwal. He refers to the habits and places of pilgrimage of the yogis and uses these in a Sūfī context:¹

جي پائين جوگي رتيا، ته پر جوگيڪي پار ،
ادب اخلاص، صبر، شڪرانو، ذمردگ وسار،
انڻي پهر، عنايت چني، مهر پري م گهار (مره
پوري منجه گهار)
جي سڪين رايء ڪار، ته وپر نات، ويجهو ٿين .

If you want to become a yogī,
then observe the tradition of the yogīs.

Forget adab, ikhlāṣ, ṣabr, shukūr,
emnity and sorrows

^cInāyat says you should spend every moment
of your time buried within yourself.

1. Baloch, op. cit., p.46.

When you have learnt this undertaking,
then you will come nearer to
virnāth.¹

In another place Shāh^c Ināyat writes:-²

نہی گولین گوٹ مہ ، پیہی کین پنن ،
وینی ہک بس کری ، اتان ادیسین ،
اٹ گھریو ، عنایت چنی ، تن کی دنو تہہ نہین
گورک گودڑین ، اسٹ وینی ائیو .

They do not search in the village,
nor do they go begging around.

Hunger has left the Adesīs.

The Master of the Universe has provided for them
without their asking, says^c Ināyat.

While Gaudriyya³ sat, Gorakh⁴ came
to their courtyard.

As for Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf's treatment of the yogis in his
poetry, it should be emphasised that inevitably he does not

1. The spiritual leader of yogis, or this could be a reference to God.

2. Baloch, op. cit., p.48.

3. The Gaudriyya are a type of yogī.

4. Gorakh refers to their first guru Gorakhnath.

In this verse, Gorakhnath came to the yogis to help them, without their searching for him, because of their sincerity.

present them in a systematic or consistent manner, since he is a poet, not a scholar of religion. However, the theme of yogis is important to him. They are mentioned frequently in his work and are referred to by more than thirty different titles.

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf reveals extensive knowledge of the activities of yogis. According to him, yogis who have renounced the world and reduced their belongings to a minimum, carry a begging-bowl, a signad (whistle) made of horn or wood, which they blow before meals and before and after prayers, and a gaudrī (wallet) made of rags or patched clothes in which they carry food which they have been given in charity. Yogis also take with them a taus tavas or bairagun (crutch) on which they rest their chin and arms when meditating. They also carry with them a pair of fire tongs. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf gives detailed descriptions of the appearance of yogis in his poetry:¹

سَکِيُونُ سَبَلِيُونُ گَبَرِيُونُ تَبِيِي تُول تَلُو ،
بَتُّ هَبِي بَتُّ مَبِنِ ، پِيرِي مِّن پُکُو ،
لَاهُوْتُ جِن لُکُو ، سِي مَرَهِيَان مَوْرَمَ نَگِيَان .

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.418.

Get rid of the signad, the rope and the ragbag,
all three things, and the sacred thread (janeo)

Throw the begging bowl onto the
floor, break it to pieces.

Those who are in love with Lāhūt*
never leave their resting-places.

کوہ گودڑ ! بن گبریون ! نیی کدائون کانہ

جیدانہین جوگک ویو ، نیی تیدانہن نانہ ،

پٹو ایئن پانہ ، تہ سگیون شو مت ہت جونہ

Abandon the gaudrī¹ and patched frock, burn
the blanket.

Where there is yoga, fix your eyes there.

You must understand that carrying
whistles in one's hand is an evil.²

In another place, the poet writes:-³

1. A blanket made from old rags, which is also used as bag or wallet to carry food or alms.
2. The poet suggests that yogis usually carry these things but that at times this practice is also followed by hypocrites. A true yogi should free himself of these trappings. Ādvānī, loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p.419.

* Those yogis who have reached the Sūfī stage of Lāhūt need not travel nor are rituals applicable any more to them.

پت چڙيائون پت ۾ ، ڏنڊ چڙيائون ڏس !

الايشان اڳي ٿيا ، موتي ٿين نه مس ،

هي چڙيائون جس ، وڃي ڪاله ڪل ٿيا .

They have thrown their begging bowls onto the ground and abandoned their signad (whistles) and bairaguns.

They are above evil, and cannot become impure again.

They have given up worldly desires.

Since yesterday they have attained union with the whole.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf describes the yogis in these words:¹

اچي پيا آت ۾ ، واٽ وڃائي ڇڻ ،
اوه بصير برن ۾ ، انڌا ٿيو اڻين ،
ڪنن آڏيون تاريون ، گنگن ڄڻ گهن ،

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.375.

فِرَاقِيَّ فَرْمَانَ جُو ، آهِي بُرُّ بُوْرِن ،
لَنگَهَا تَبِيَا لَاهُوْتُ كِي ، سَتَا بِبِيَا سَكْنِ ،
كَبِتْ كَاهُوْرِيْنَ ، آهْ اُتْثِي پِئِي نَهْ لَهِي :

Those who are overcome by longing and sorrow,
have lost the worldly path.

Though they ~~are able to see~~ ,
they are standing in the desert
like the blind.

Their ears are closed

Like the dumb they are roaming
around.

Those deaf ones are dismayed because of *the (Divine order of)*
separation.

For Lāhūt they have nullified themselves

While in sleep even, they are seeking
the same.

The Khāhōrīs never give up longing
at any time.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf recognises the effort needed by the
yogis to attain their goal. He describes them as wandering
around forests, mountains and deserts, detaching themselves

from every relationship. He appreciates their patience and determination to purify themselves by voluntarily inflicting restraint, denial and torture on themselves:¹

تڏسي ٿوڙي ٿوڙي ٿوڙي ، واٽَ وڃائي جڻ ،
گرنديان ڪي ڀروڙيو ، رندُ سي نه رڙهن ،
بيٺي درا ڏيون ڪيو ، بيزت تان نه ڀڄن ،
ٿوڙ پريان لءِ تار ڪيو ، ويچارا وجهن ،
خبرُ ڪاهوڙين ، آهي لڪ لاهوٽَ جي .

While looking and searching in the mountains,
they have (voluntarily) lost their way.

They have learnt by following the contrary path

They do not take the straight path.

They have given up both the worlds, and never
ask for the correct path.

Those poor ones are putting ashes over themselves
for the sake of the Beloved.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.375.

The Khāhorīs possess some
knowledge about the Lāhūt.

The poet advises his audience to seek the company of
such true wanderers:-¹

تان وٿن ويهي آءُ ، اگل ڪاهوڙين جي ،
جوش ڏنائون جيءَ کي ، لڪائي لوڪاءُ ،
ڌوٽين ڪنهن ڌڪاءُ ، سمهي سڪ نه ماڻيو .

Go and sit in the courtyard² of Khāhorīs

By keeping it a secret from the common people
they have burnt themselves.

Because of pain, the Dothī never sleep
contented.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is aware of the fact that some people
masqueraded as yogis to obtain the admiration and charity of
the common people, who used to give the yogis food and alms.
For such false yogis he is full of condemnation, as he mentions
in Sur Āsā:-³

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.371.

2. The poet is suggesting one should seek the company of yogis.

3. Ādvānī, op. cit., loc. cit.

ڪوڙو تون ڪُفِرُ سين، ڪافرُ ۾ ڪوناه ،
هندو هڏ نه آهين ، جڳيو تون نه جڳاه ،
تلڪُ تنين کي لاءِ ، سڃا جي شرڪُ سين .

You are untrue to kufir;

You should not therefore call yourself an
unbeliever (kāfir).

Nor are you a Hindu, so the janeo¹ does not suit
you.

The only people who are eligible to wear the
tilak² are those who are faithful to shirk.

Here Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is critical of those people who do not even adhere to their own, albeit infidel, standards of conduct imposed on them by that religion. To such people he gives the following advice in Sur Rāmkalī:-

جي ڀانئين جوڳي ڌيان، ته من پوري منجه مار،
دائِمُ دونهين دل ۾ ، من مين مالها وار ،
سه سبڪا آر ، آڳي جي آڏب سين .

1. Janeo means 'the sacred thread' worn by Hindus.

2. Tilak is a symbol on the forehead of yogis.

If you want to become a yogi,
Then bury worldly desires within yourself.
Kindle the flame of love within your heart
and count the rosary with your soul.
Whatever befalls you from God,
Be content with gratitude.¹

As regards the differences between the various groups of yogis, it is difficult to state categorically whether or not Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf understood these clearly. Indeed, he uses more than thirty titles to refer to yogis.² On some occasions he appears to use diverse yogi names indiscriminately but at other times he shows an awareness of certain differences

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.1128.

2. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses several titles to refer to yogis. Some of the names refer to sects and subsets of the different groups of yogis, while others are adjectives which allude to their characteristics, e.g. dothī suggests 'those who eat duth' (i.e. wild plants), gunjā and borā means mute and deaf, i.e. these yogis who have voluntarily stopped talking or listening. The titles by which he refers to yogis are: Mahesī, Shivaite, Kanphata, Kanūt, Kāpaṛī, Kanōtiyya, Kanchīr, Yogi, Bairāgī, Pūrabi, Sāmī, Lāhūtī, Bābū, Bekhāri, Nāngā, Ādesī, Mavalī, Šābrī, Malakūtī, Jabarūtī, Kāpat, Faqīr, Khāhoṛī, Nūrī, Nārī, Dothī, Gungā, Bōra, Sannyāsī, Bhabhūtiyya, Khākī, Rāwal, Harkes, Gaudariyya.

between the yogi groups. Were he using these names interchangeably, he would surely not need to cite so many different sub-divisions of the yogis; one or two would suffice. Indeed, it is almost as if he wants to display to his reader the knowledge he has acquired of the different yogi groups. Mentioning their names does not, of course, indicate that he knows the doctrinal variations between them (although he may have done), but by travelling with yogis for several years, the poet must have learnt many of their beliefs and ways.

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf refers specifically to the Kanphaṭā yogis, who, as already mentioned, wear earrings made of bone, horn, ivory, glass, stones and other types of metal. He speaks of them in the following way in Sur Rāmkalī:

ڪُنُ ڪُڪُٽُ ، ڪاڀُڪُٽُ ، ڪاڀُڙِي ، ڪُنُوڪُٽِيَا ، ڪُنُ ڇِيَرُ ،
سدا روهن سامهان ، عاشق اتر هير ،
تسا ڏيئي تن کي ، ساڙيائون سرير ،
جي فنا ٿيا فقير ، هلو ! تڪيا بمون جا .

The slit-ear Kapat yogis, wearing earrings
Who have cuts in their ears.
They are the true lovers who sit facing the
cool northerly wind.
They have starved and tortured their bodies
Those who have annihilated themselves,
Let us go and visit the dwellings of such
faqīrs.¹

He seems to be referring to the Kanphaṭa yogis in particular, who wear around their loins a special rope made of black sheeps' wool, or a strip of cotton, to which a lāngoṭī² is fastened, when he says the following:³

کھي سائے کھن ، تڙيل کيائون تڙيرا ،
پيت نه هيريائون بانهنجا ، چوري سائے چمن ،
اهري راه رمن ، کاپري کاهول کي .

They tied their bodies with leather bands
To make themselves lean.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.397.
2. The loin cloth worn by Hindus, especially yogis.
3. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.409.

They never allowed their appetites
expensive delicacies.

In this way the Kaparī reached Kabul.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is clearly referring to the Vairāgīs,
a group of Sannyāsīs, when he writes:-¹

ويهي وير اڳين جو ، ٻني رڌينهن ٻڌم حال ،
ان جا تاڳا ڏوڙ پڪليا ، جاڳوتا زوال ،
تن چاهي چٽائون ڇڏيون ، چوٽا چڱي چال ،
ويچارا موجود جي ، ڪنهن سان ڪن نه ڳال ،
نانگا ٿيا نهال ، لڪا ڀٽن لوڪ ۾ .

The next day I sat down, and listened to the
story of Vairāgīs.

Their salmon-coloured clothes were covered with
dust.

Their hair-bands were worn out.

They had let their hair grow quite long.

The poor ones never talk to anyone about their
being.

These Nanga are content and happy.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.393.

They move about amongst the
common folk.¹

As far as Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's attitude to the yogis in poetry is concerned, it is generally one of obvious admiration and respect. Indeed, he uses the highest praise when he likens the spirituality of the yogis to the highest levels attained by the Sūfīs.

He considers that it is a privilege to spend time in the company of yogis. He is of the opinion that their company is spiritually profitable to everyone. He remembers them in the following words:²

مُونِ مِي رَدْنَا ، مَاہِ ! جَنِينِ رَدْنُو پَرِينِ کِي ،
رَہِي اَچِي رَاتَرِي ، کِنِ جُنْگِنِ سُنْدِيءِ جَاءِ ،
کِنِينِ جِي سَاجَاءِ ، تَرَهُو ئِي تَارِ ۰

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.393.

2. Ibid., p.370.

O mother! I saw those

Who have seen the Beloved.

It is worth spending a night at the
place of such courageous ones

Having an acquaintance with them
will serve as a raft to sail across the
deep waters.

In another place, in Sur Rāmkalī, he speaks in glowing
terms about the yogis:¹

سامي کامي پرینء لء ، کسي تبا کبابُ ،
جھڑو تڏسن تڏوہ کي ، تھڑو تن شوآبُ ،
اوتين اُرتي گاڏئون ، منجهان اکين آبُ ،
سندو ذات جوابُ ، تون کئن پڇين تن کي ؟

The Sāmī being cut in pieces is burning
like kabāb for the Beloved.

In their eyes, piety and profanity are the same.

They are shedding tears which are combined
with blood.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.397.

How could you ever question such people regarding
caste or creed?

He expresses his views in the following lines in Sur
Rāmkalī.¹

رَاهَ شَرِيعَتِ هَلِنَا، تَفَكَّرُ طَرِيقُونَ ،
حَالُ حَقِيقَتِ رُسِنَا، مَعْرِفَتِ مَا بُونِ ،
نَاسُوتِ ، مَلَكُوتِ ، جَهَرُوتِ ، رَايِ رَانَامُ لَدُونِ ،
بَسْ لَاهُوتِ لَنِكْهَتُونِ ، هَاهُوتَا مُتِي هَلِنَا .

They follow the path of Sharī^ca, and *the contemplation*
of the tariqa.

They reach the state of ḥaqīqa,
because their destiny is ma^crifa.

Nāsūt, Malakūt, Jabarūt, is the reward they
have received.

Thus they cross the Lāhūt, and pass beyond
the stage of Hāhūt.

1. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., p.1139.

In this verse, the poet uses Ṣūfī terminology to describe what has been achieved by yogis. Although the word 'yogi' is not mentioned, the very fact that Sur Rāmkalī is devoted to yogis suggests clearly that he is referring to them in the above lines.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is impressed by the modesty and selfless devotion of the yogis. He believes that they are true seekers after truth.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is not blindly uncritical of the yogis. He agrees with the yogis on the spiritual journey of the soul, but for him such a journey is within one's own life and not in a cycle of rebirths.

In the practice of yoga, there are eight stages which can be seen as steps in the mystical ladder. These stages help the yogi to ascend towards the deeper states of mind. They are as follows:-¹

1. Hajime, N., The Religions and Philosophies of India, Tokyo, 1973, Part III, pp.4-6.
Berry, T., The Religions of India: Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism, London, 1971, pp.93-101.
Oman, op. cit., pp.175-6.
Pott, P.H., Yoga and Yantra, The Hague, 1966, pp.4-6.

1. Yāmā - abstinence or restraint.
2. Niyāmā - the observance of spiritual discipline.
3. Āsnā - postures. A number of sitting positions are adopted by the yogi to attain the intended goal.
4. Pranyānā - regulation of breath, for inner purity and preparation for meditation.
5. Pratyāharā - abstraction of the senses.
6. Dharanā - fixing of thoughts without the assistance of senses.
7. Dhayānā - meditation as the result of undistracted concentration.
8. Samādhi - the final stage in the yoga mystical ladder, when the unification of subject and object is attained.

Yāmā - abstinence or restraint concerning the outside world - is the first step on the mystical ladder. A yogi restrains his activities with regard to others, that is, he practices ahimsa (non-violence), telling the truth, maintaining

celibacy, and not doing anything that is morally wrong.¹ This step of yoga is comparable to one of the stages in Ṣufīsm, i.e. warāḳ.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf appears to be well aware of these different stages in yoga. He emphasises the importance of abstinence. In Sur Khāhoṛī and Rāmkalī he praises this quality as mastered by yogis. He often compliments such seekers of God for training themselves to subsist on a minimum diet. They are not interested in food or any other worldly possession. They possess nothing, and thus they are free of all worldly cares. They are indifferent to wealth, good food or high status. For such divinely intoxicated people such things have no value at all. He says that such people can be easily differentiated from the rest of the world.²

سڪا مُنہ سندن، پيرين پراڻا ڪيترا ،

سا جوءُ دوري آيا ، سونهان جت مُنجهن ،

گجهان گجهون ڪن ، تھان پراھين پنڌ جون .

1. Pott, op. cit., p.4.

2. Shāh^vanī, op. cit., p.1060.

Their faces are dry and skinny: they wear
old and worn-out slippers

They have discovered such a place,
where even the knowledgeable are perplexed

(These mysterious seekers) are secretly
planning for a far-off higher path.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf expresses his appreciation of the divine seekers for their special qualities. They consume as little food and drink as possible and keep away from the company of people and social life. They find worldly goods offensive. Their time is occupied in contemplation and recollection.¹

قوتِ کڑایا کاپڑی ، طعامِ نہ طاماعو ،
سینِ ہنیاٹونِ سچ ، پھر نہ پینائو ،
اوسر آسائو ، اٹی گوندَر گڈیا .

They are weary of eating and have
no desire for food;

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.408.

They beg in the desert, but
they are not beggars.

They are seekers of nothingness, and have
attained the companionship of sorrows
and pain.

The next stage in yoga is niyāmā - the observance of spiritual discipline. A yogi is expected to observe purity both in ritual and in the moral sphere. He should be content with his fate and practise asceticism. With regard to asceticism or tāpās, a yogi should be able to bear hunger, thirst, heat and cold.¹

There are several examples in the work of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf where asceticism, contentment and endurance of pain, hunger and thirst are attributed to yogis. For example, he says:²

هُكَّ وَتَاوُنٌ مُّبْغِرِيْمِن ، جَوْگِي كَنَدَا جُجُ ،
طَلَبُ رُكْنِ طَعَامٍ جِي ، اوتِنُو پِيْنِ اُجُ ،
لَاهُوتِن ، لَطِيْفَ پِي ، مَنُ مَارِي كُتُو مُجُ ،
سَامِي جِهَگِي مُجُ ، وَسِيْنِ كِي وَيَجَهَا تِنَا .

1. Pott, op. cit., p.5.

2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.1163.

The yogis put hunger in their bags
and celebrate it (i.e. hunger).

They have no quests nor desire for food
but satisfy themselves by drinking thirst.

Lāhūtī (i.e. ascetics), says Latīf, have subjected
their ego to their will.

Sāmīs have travelled through the wasteland
and reached the inhabited place.

According to Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, such yogis have to
make great efforts to achieve their goal. They have disciplined
their base desires and brought them under control.
Consequently their actions appear peculiar to the common
people.¹

رَدَنِي تَدَكْوِيَا ، اَلْحُ تَدَنِي رَاضِي تَنَا ،
صُوفِي تِي تَنَا ، جِنء رَكِيْن كِيَانُوْن پَالِي سِيْن.

They are offended when given, and satisfied
when ignored (i.e. not given alms);

They have become Ṣūfīs by possessing nothingness.

Pretenders, notes our poet, are quite different. Those who

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.122.

claim to be yogi, are supposed to follow the same path, but one can judge them from their behaviour.¹

گولا جي گراهه جا ، جوڻا سي جوڳي ،
قتل او قوڳي ، جنين شڪم ساڍيا .

Slaves to their appetites are
false yogis.

Those who are more concerned with
their food are entirely mere dregs.

A true seeker, says Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, abstains from the world and keeps hoping to be released from it soon.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf observes that, although the practice of abstinence may appear difficult to common people, a true seeker, who is fully submerged in love, feels differently:²

1. Shāh ^vānī, op. cit., p.1132.

2. ^vānī, op. cit., p.127.

مُحِبَّتُ جِنِ جِي مَنْ مِه، تَنْ تَشْنَكِي تَارِ ،
پي پيالو اُچ جو، اُچ سي اُچ اُتِيَارِ ،
پُنْهُونِ پاڻِ پِيَارِ ، تِه اُچ سِينِ اُچ اُجْهَانِيَانِ .

Those in whose hearts there is love,
are engrossed in thirst.

Where there is love in one's heart, there
is enormous thirst within.

Then drink the cup of thirst, and quench
your thirst with thirst.

If Punhū can serve me the drink
I can quench my thirst
with thirst.

The third stage of yoga is āsna or sitting posture.

According to Oman, for the purpose of meditation and for the mortification of the flesh, a large number of sitting positions or āsans are adopted by yogis. Some of them are very difficult and need long practice.¹

1. Oman, op. cit., p.51.

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, he makes some allusion to the sitting positions of the yogis. Since his work is not, however, a study of the yoga system, one cannot expect references to all the postures. Nevertheless, he refers to yogis in the following words:¹

پایو مُهٔ موننِ مہ ، وینا سی وُھسنِ ،
جوگی جاتا کن ، آبا اُھیتُ مہ .

They are enjoying sitting and putting their face
in their knees.

They are making a pilgrimage, and have reached
ulūhiyyat.

In another place, he is possibly referring to the sitting
position of yogis when they meditate:²

مونا جنِ مُحْرَابُ ، جُسو جامعِ تِنِ جو ،
قبلي نُماءُ قَلْبُ کُري ، تِنِ کي کَيائونِ تَوَافُ ،
تَحْقِيقُ جِي تَحْکِیْرُ چَني ، جِسْمَانِ کَيائونِ جَوَابُ ،
تِنِ کُھَرُو تَوَه حسابُ ، جنِ ھِنْتَرِي ھادي حَلُ تَيُو .

1. Shāh Vāṇī, op. cit., pp.1138-39.

2. Ādvāṇī, op. cit., p.402.

Their knees are the miḥrāb, their body is the mosque

They treat their heart like the qibla and circumambulate it.

They have said the takbīr of truth, and neglected their bodies.

Of what account is sin to them, the guide has penetrated their heart.

Pranayānā - the regulation of breathing - is the fourth step in yoga practice towards mystical experience. This involves intense mental concentration, the regulation of breathing which eliminates impurity from within the body, and brings higher perfection in the body and the psychic faculties.¹ This practice of breathing is similar to the Ṣūfī way of *holding onto the breath*. With regard to breathing, there are no direct references to it in the Risālo, although there are several allusions to the attainment of inner and outer purity.

Pratyāharā - the fifth stage of yoga, involves the abstraction of the senses or the withdrawal of the sense organs from their objects. In order to transcend contact with the external world which ties the individual to Sam sārā, the external cycle of rebirth, one should restrict one's sense

1. Berry, op. cit., p.97.

perception. This is done by concentrating the attention on a single point, till one is no longer conscious of the external world.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf makes some references to this stage, advising yogis to lose consciousness with the external world in order to gain a higher goal. For example:-²

تَحْقِيقَ جِي پَرِي تُون، مَٽِي رِي كُٻِيجِ ،
هَڪَلِ حَقِيقَتَ جِي ، ٻوڙو ٿي ٻُڌِيجِ ،
اَٺِدهَرِ ٿِي پَسِيجِ ، مُشَاهِدو مُحَبُوبَ جُو .

You must carry the load of *realisation*
without (*using*) your head.

Listen to the call of Truth by becoming deaf

Become blind and have the perception of the
Beloved.

Once yogis are in control of their senses, then nothing can distract or attract them, as our poet comments:³

1. Pott, op. cit., p.5.
2. Shāh wānī, op. cit., pp.1070-71.
3. Ibid., pp.722-23.

ڪاڪ نه جهليا ڪا پڙي، موهيا نه مڃن ،

بائين ۽ باهنن جي ، بندل ڪين بجهن ،

لڪين لاهوتين ، اهڙيون اورنا ڇڏيون .

Kāk¹ did not stop them, nor could that palace attract them.

They are not tied and trapped by the relationship of ladies and maidservants.

The Lāhūtīs have left hundreds and thousands of such (beauties) behind.

As for the sixth stage, dhāraṇa, here the yogis can prevent their thoughts from wandering and are able to fix them without the assistance of their senses. This they achieve by mental concentration, which brings them to the first stage of liberation.²

The seventh stage, dhīyānā or continuous remembrance. During this stage the yogi focuses his attention intensely on an object. When he reaches the point where his concentration is no longer distracted, then he is able to perceive the

1. Name of Mūmal's town, but here it means worldly attractions.

2. Pott, op. cit., p.6.

intended object with his mind so clearly that it is as if he has seen it with his eyes.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is possibly referring to yogis in this stage, when he says the following words:²

ڪاهوڙين خفيءَ سين، سوجي ٿو سُبْحَانُ ،
عاشق آهڙي اکرين، لنگهيا لامڪانُ ،
هوءُ مڱڻجي هوءُ ٿيا، بابو جي پريان ،
سڀوئي سُبْحَانُ ، آيو نظرُ انن جي .

Khāhoṛīs (wandering yogis) with their secret remembrance, searched and found God (subhān)

The lovers with these words reached the place beyond time and space (lāmakān).

Bābū (yogis) have been roasted and united with Him and become Him (God)

Everything they see, they see God in it.

This is the stage preceding Samadhī, when the yogi aims at annihilation.

1. Lester, R.C., Rāmānūjā on the Yogā, Madras, 1976, p.23.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.370.

Samadhī is the final stage of spiritual consciousness in 'the eight member yoga of the orthodox yoga school'.¹ When the individual reaches this stage, he loses consciousness, and is no more subject to relativity. This state is beyond description, transcending the concept of place and time; it is that of bliss. There are two types of samadhī. In one, the person is conscious of the object on which he is concentrating. In another undifferentiated samadhī, all consciousness disappears, and mental functions are stopped; the person is fully liberated, and arrives at an identification *with the Divine.*

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf advises yogis on what they should do if they want to attain that stage in the following lines:³

جي پائين جوگي، ثيان، تہ کين پيالِي پي،
نہ نہاري هتِ کَر، ”آئون“ سين اِت نہ پي،
ت سَنَدُو وُحَدَتِ وِي، طَالِبِ ! تَوَرَا مَاہِيِن .

1. Hajime, op. cit., pp.4-6.
2. Eliade, M., Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, trans. Willard, R.T., New York, 1958, pp.79-81.
3. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., pp.1128-29.

If you want to become a yogi,
then drink the cup of (non-existence)
annihilation.

Seek and find non-existence.

Never stand there with "I" (i.e. ego or self).

Seeker! then only will you achieve the
merchandise of Unity.

Our poet also comments on those yogis who have attained
union after annihilation.¹

جتي عرش نہ اُپ گو ، زمینِ ناهِ دَرُو ،
تکرو چارہائو چنبدِ جو ، نکرو سچِ مَرُو ،
آتی آدینِ جو ، لگو دنگِ دَرُو ،
پُوی پینِ پَرُو ، ناکِ دَنائونِ ناهِ ۰

Where there is no *Divine Throne* nor sky,
nor any particle of earth,
nor rising moon, nor
signs of the sun.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1175-6.

There is the stamping¹
place of Ādesī

They looked into the distance, and there they saw
Nāth (Shiva or God) in annihilation.

This analysis of the work of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf in relation to yogis and their practices, reveals that our poet does have some understanding of the yoga system, though he does not enumerate the eight stages of yoga systematically, nor is the number of the stages mentioned by him. It would appear, however, that some of the stages of yoga are referred to in his poetry, in Sur Khāhoṛī and Rāmkalī.

It seems that our poet has a great appreciation for genuine yogis, to whom he pays generous tribute throughout the above-mentioned surs, because of their philosophy of selflessness, non-violence and non-attachment, in contrast to selfishness and violence. This does not, however, mean that he believes that all yogis are genuine and he roundly condemns the false ones.

Moreover, there is no evidence from his work to suggest that he agrees with yogis on the cycle of rebirth. As regards the spiritual journey of the soul, our poet agrees with the yogis, but that journey is also accepted by Muslim Ṣūfīs. It

1. Where yogis stay and dance about.

seems that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf believes in the journey within one's own self, and in the spiritual development of a person that is within his lifetime.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf spent three years with yogis, with whom he gained valuable experience and from whom he learnt lessons in the field of spirituality. He then came back to convey his message to the people, a message gleaned from his own experience.

As has already been emphasised, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is not a narrow doctrinaire theologian: whilst it is true that he speaks specifically of yogis in two surs of the Risālo, even here ^{and} there are obvious parallels to be drawn between them and Ṣūfīs. As for the rest of his poetry, it would be safe to say that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf sees both yogis and Ṣūfīs as sharing many of the same characteristics in the same search for the divine. Indeed, it is almost as if they are one and the same thing in his poetry, which rises above religious differences and goes to the heart of the individual's seeking after true religion.

CHAPTER 4

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE POETRY
OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-LATĪF AND THAT OF
FARĪD AL-DĪN ʿATTĀR

It is generally accepted that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf knew Arabic and Persian quite well and that he must have been acquainted with the great ^{Sūfī} writers of the Middle Ages, such as ^{al-Sayra} al-Tūsī, al-Hujwīrī, al-Suhrawardī and others. Above all, it is certain that he had read the Maṣnavi of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī since there are direct references to it in the Risālo.¹

As for the work of Farīd al-Dīn ^CAttār, it is not certain that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf had read it, although it is quite likely that this was the case. Rūmī had a high regard for ^CAttār and since Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf was such an admirer of Rūmī's work it may well be that he had followed Rūmī's example and read the poetry of ^CAttār. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf must have come across the famous saying of Rūmī's:-²

Sanā'ī was the spirit, and ^CAttār his two eyes;
We have come after Sanā'ī and ^CAttār.

Whether or not there is proof that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf read the work of ^CAttār, it is of some interest to make a close comparison between the poetry of these two poets. The comparison which follows is between the Risālo and the Mantiq

1. For a detailed discussion of this question, cf. Chapter 5 of this thesis.
2. Schimmel, A.M., The Triumphal Sun, London and The Hague, 1978. p.37.

al-Ṭair of ^cAttār.¹

Before embarking on a more detailed comparison between the two works, it is perhaps useful to summarise the salient points of the plot of Maṭīq al-Ṭair. One day all the birds of world assembled at a certain place, and expressed their concern at not having a king who could look after them and administer their affairs. Thousands of birds were present, including the nightingale, the parrot, the peacock, the duck, the partridge, the humay, the hawk, the heron, the owl, the sparrow, the hoopoe and several others.

The hoopoe then came forward and told all the birds that it knew of a king whose name was Sīmurgh. It described to them the manifold qualities of Sīmurgh and volunteered to guide them to find him. The hoopoe considered itself worthy to lead them because it claimed to have knowledge about the secrets of God and the creation of the world. All the birds became very enthusiastic at the idea of setting out on a journey to meet their king Sīmurgh.

The hoopoe warned them beforehand of all the hardships they would encounter on the journey and told them that they

1. ^cAttār, Farīd al-Dīn, Maṭīq al-Ṭair, Tehran 1929, ed. Gauhārīn Sayyid Ṣādiq.

should be ready for every kind of sacrifice, even if it meant their lives. The hoopoe told the birds that there were seven valleys to be crossed before they could reach their beloved Sīmurgh.

After hearing from the hoopoe about the adverse circumstances they were going to face, several birds began to make excuses for not being able to set out on the journey. Although the hoopoe encouraged them, many refused to go. Nevertheless, there were still thousands of birds who started the journey. Many were killed during the journey or were lost on the way.

Thus, out of thousands of birds who started the journey, only thirty reached the desired goal. When they reached their destination, they discovered that what they were seeking for was none other than themselves. Indeed Sī-murgh in Persian means thirty birds.

The journey of the birds is used by Farīd al-Dīn ^ᶜAttār to symbolise the journey of the sālik in the various stages through which he has to pass before attaining self-realisation. Shāh ^ᶜAbd al-Latīf also speaks of the journey of the sālik, a journey which he represents by the search of his heroines for their beloved. The stories of Sasuī and Suḥnī are especially appropriate in this context as they both set out on a journey in search of their love.

With reference to Sasuī there are five surs which speak of her journey and the hardships she has to go through during her travels. According to the story, Sasuī is married to Punhū without the prior consent of her in-laws who belong to a higher stratum of society than she does. One day her brothers-in-law come to visit them and stay the night. When she wakes up in the morning, she discovers that her brothers-in-law have taken her husband away from her. This separation from her beloved husband makes her restless and overcome with sorrow. She then decides to set out on a journey to find him again. Throughout the five surs which are devoted to the story of Sasuī, the poet refers to the agony which she undergoes through separation from Punhū and he highlights Sasuī's determination to attain her goal irrespective of the hardships involved. The poet depicts her longing and hope for Punhū even after her death.¹

As for Suḥnī the second heroine of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf who travels, her journey is of a different kind. According to the story, Suḥnī, who is already in love with Mehar, is married by force to Dam. The poet speaks at length of her sorrows caused by the separation from her beloved, and the obstacles which she faces on her way to meet Mehar. The poet describes how, in spite of the dangers involved, Suḥnī swims across the

1. For the full story, cf. Appendix.

river every night to meet her beloved and how she returns at dawn. The story ends in tragedy when Suhṅī finds herself in difficulties in the river, Mehar jumps in to rescue her and both are drowned. Thus they attain their union after death.

From this brief outline of the birds' journey from Mantiq al-Ṭair and the relevant two stories from the Risālo, we find certain similarities between the two works. Both poets use the symbol of a journey in a Ṣūfī context. This of course is a stock theme. For example, Sanā'ī's small maṣnavī is based on this theme. Its title is Sair al-^Cibād ila'l-ma'ād (The journey of the servant towards the place of return). In this book the poet describes the return of the soul through different stages of life towards its original source.¹ Moreover, Farīd al-Dīn ^CAttār is said to have followed the same tradition for Mantiq al-Ṭair. Whereas, however, ^CAttār uses birds which is a common motif in Persian poetry before him to denote the soul, as indeed do Avicenna and al-Ghazālī,² Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf prefers to take the heroines Sasuī and Suhṅī as allegories of the soul on its journey.

According to Hindu (yoga) philosophy the human soul which is likened to a woman who is separated from her lawful

1. Schimmel, A.M., Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill, 1978, pp.302-3.

2. Ibid., p.307.

husband, the Brahmā, the Great Soul (i.e. God), has to struggle for re-union.¹ The story of Sasuī fits very aptly with the above mentioned imagery. It would appear that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses the same idea of the soul as a woman, a concept which is already adopted by his predecessors, Shāh ^cAbdal Karīm of Bulrī and Shāh ^cInāyat Rizvī, who also utilise the the concept of a journey. So Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf may be seen to draw on two traditions and to display in his work an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim ideas.

Both Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and Farīd al-Dīn ^cAttār represent in their poetry the Ṣūfī concept of the search of the soul for divine union. In the Risālo heroines from Sindhī folk stories are used allegorically to represent spiritual seekers, as are the birds in the work of ^cAttār. The purpose behind Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's allegorical use of these heroines is probably to bring the complicated and abstract ideas of Ṣūfīsm into a more substantial form, for easier comprehension by ordinary people. The heroines represent the sālik or seeker, whose soul is always restless, yearning and suffering in separation from the beloved. The beloved represents God, the eternal origin and home of the soul. The soul is always striving to attain union with its source.

1. Oman, J.C., The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India, Delhi, 1973, p.171.

Another less obvious similarity between the two poets is the use of Ṣūfī maqāms in their respective works. With ^CAttār all seven maqāms are discussed clearly and explicitly with headings and in sequence. In Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's work, although it may be argued that he alludes to seven maqāms, they are not in any systematic order as in Mantiq al-Ṭair. On the contrary they are found scattered throughout the Risālo. The whole question will be discussed at length later in this chapter.

So much for certain broad similarities between the Risālo and Mantiq al-Ṭair. We now turn to important differences between the two works. In Mantiq al-Ṭair numerous birds gather around the hoopoe whom they acknowledge as their guide on the journey. Just as a murshid is required by a sālik on his path of spirituality, so the hoopoe acts in a similar manner for the birds. The hoopoe has, of course, deep religious significance for Muslim poets. The Qur'ān mentions the hoopoe as having been in the company of Solomon and having brought him messages from the Queen of Sheba.¹

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, has a rather different approach with his heroines. When Sasūī and Suhnī set out on their journey they do not have a guide. With reference

1. Quran: xxvii. 22-26, and xxvii, 22-44.

to Suhñī he comments:

هُنِي طَالِبِ حَقِّ جِي ، تَوَدِّي لَكُونُ تَوْرَ ،
نَه مَلَّاحُ ' مَه مَكْرِي ، نَكْبِينِ بَدِّي نَوْرَ ،
پَالِي پَنِي پَوْرَ ، سُهِي لِيكِي سِرْمَه .

From the beginning Todī¹ has been the seeker after
Truth

She does not ask for the sailor, the boat, or
the rope

When Suhñī is in the middle of the river,
to her the water seems only knee high.²

In other surs Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf stresses that one should
take a sailor as guide while crossing the river or the seas.
But for Suhñī he says that her quest for love or Truth is so
great that she does not seek assistance of any kind, nor does
she ask anyone to guide her. The poet believes that her love
and personal determination are enough to guide her. Indeed he
makes Suhñī rebuke those who seek for assistance:

1. I.e., Suhñī.

2. — Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.261.

ڪونه اڳهه اهڙو ، جهڙي محبت من ،
اڀيون اوريين پار ٿي ، ڪوڙيون هڪ پڇن ،
ندي تڻ نيڙ ٿيبي ، جي ريه ترهي ترين ،
سڪ رساڻي ، سهڻي ! اصل عاشقن ،

سي جهليون ڪين ڪنن ، پڇن جي ميهار ڪي .

There is no support better than the love within one's heart.

They (the women), the false ones, are standing on this side of the bank (of the river) and are asking for straws.¹

The river becomes a trench to those who swim without a raft.

Suhnī's longing has accomplished it (the task), yearning is the characteristic of lovers.

Those who seek Mehar are not stopped by whirlpools.²

In the case of Sasuī, since she does not have any guide, she asks animate and inanimate objects the whereabouts of her beloved. While she passes through the mountains and forests, she requests them to be kind to her and to show her the way:-

1. I.e. a raft or anything used to cross the river.

2. Gurbukshānī, op.cit., p.258.

وارو ! مون وڌراهه ! کا سڌ سنهپَ جي نه ڏهو ؟
وجھي وراڪن ۾، معذوري کي هر منجھاءِ ،
منجھا پاڻ پياديون ، هادي تي هلاو ،
پريان کي پهچاءِ ، ته لڳي لوئو نه ٿين .

Vegetable kingdom! O why don't you guide me?

Do not confuse this wretch by your windings and
twists.

You should show the way, to the traveller on foot
like a guide.

Help me to reach my beloved,
before you wither away.¹

Occasionally the poet shows these heroines calling to their beloveds. Both of them call to their respective beloved to come and assist her in hard times. This implies that for Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, the beloved can be treated as a guide, but it should be stressed that his presence with the traveller is not necessary. With reference to Sasuī he says:

ڪريو ڏونگر ، ڪه گهٽي ، جيت برتت ٻهڙن ،
ڏاهن ڏاهپ ويري ، ٿيا حريف تي حيران ،
سئي لنگھو سيدُ جي ، محبت سين ميدان ،
جه جو آريائي آڳواڻ ، نه جي ڪانه باڪ بهير ۾ .

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.313.

The walk (i.e. journey) is long and the mountains
are harsh

(It is known that) desert and desolation lie ahead.

Where wise ones forget their wisdom and the
knowledgeable are bewildered.

Sasūī crossed the ~~arena~~ (i.e. accomplished the heroic place
or journey) out of love, says Sayyid.¹

She whose guide is Āryānī² has no danger in his
company.³

At other times the poet intervenes himself. When his heroines are in trouble or are feeling distressed, he gives them advice and comforts them with kind words of encouragement. Sometimes he even accuses them of negligence and warns them of the forthcoming dangers. His advice to them is that of a good friend and there is warmth and tenderness in his words.

For example, when Sasūī is travelling through the forests, mountains and plains, the poet addresses her with words of encouragement, advice and sympathy:⁴

1. I.e. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf himself, who was a Sayyid.
2. I.e. Punhū, her beloved husband.
3. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.336.
4. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.145.

آذَرِ، نِذَرِ، اَپَرِ ۽ سَدَرِ تِي سَجِي ،
سَبَكِي تِي ، سِيْدُ چَنِي ، پَهَلِي مَنجِه پَچِي ،
مَعذُورِ تِي مارو كِيو ، اولَاكَنِ اَچِي ،
مُنجِهَانِ رَاهَ رَچِي ، تِيْرِي لَالُ ، لَطِيْفُ چَنِي .

Forlorn, defenceless and weak woman,

Gain strength with sincerity

Cook yourself within the stones (i.e. mountain)
says Sayyid and become matured.

The helpless one has been confronted with affliction

Latīf says, the path has enriched her, and she
has become red ^(honoured) (i.e. attained perfection).

In contrast to the Risālo, the hoopoe in Mantiq al-Tair plays a major role. It gives instructions to the other birds, who have accepted it as their leader. Its speeches, which are long and full of wise advice, sound like a discourse or sermon delivered by a Shaikh or murshid for the guidance of his murids. The hoopoe relates to the birds anecdotes from the lives of Ṣūfīs and saints and concludes with a moral. It warns them of forthcoming difficulties on the path, and advises them to prepare themselves for every kind of sacrifice. After hearing from the hoopoe about hardships on the way, several birds begin to present excuses to withdraw from the journey. At this stage, once again the hoopoe comes up with encouragement to the birds in the same way as a murshid would do in such a

situation.

He who prefers the Sīmurgh to his own life must struggle bravely with himself. If your gizzard will not digest a single grain how shall you share in the feasting of the Sīmurgh? When you hesitate over a sip of wine how will you drink a large cup, O paladin? If you have not the energy of an atom how shall you find the treasure of the sun?.. This is not a simple perfume, and neither is it a task for him who has not a clean face.¹

From the hoopoe's words one can feel the distance between a murshid and a murid.

The question of Shāh ^ᶜAbd al-Latīf's heroines not having a guide, as the birds do in the Mantiq al-Tair, may well reflect on the lives of the two poets themselves. Whereas ^ᶜAttār became a pupil of a learned shaikh and was initiated into Ṣūfīsm, there is no reference to a living murshid or shaikh in relation to Shāh ^ᶜAbd al-Latīf.

Another significant difference between the journey of the birds of ^ᶜAttār and the heroines of Shāh ^ᶜAbd al-Latīf is one of number. Thousands of birds congregate around the hoopoe

1. ^ᶜAttār, The Conference of the Birds, Mantiq al-Tair, London 1961, trans C.S. Nott, p.29.

who is their leader. In the case of Sasuī and Suhnī, each one travels all by herself without any guide and without friends to accompany her. In the case of Sasuī it appears that some of her friends do suggest to her that they should accompany her. She rejects this offer saying that it is exclusively her own duty and desire to go alone:

وَجُو سِپِ وَرِي ، اَنِينَ جِي وَرِنِ وَاړِيُونِ ،
قَوْرَانِي فِرَاقَ جِي ، سِجِي ڳالِ ڳَرِي ،
بُنِيَا جَنِ بَرِي ، ڏَنگَرِ سِي ڏَوْرِيَنديُونِ .

All you who have husbands, must return back

It is a trial of strength, to be separated from the
beloved

The ones who are burnt from within will cross the
mountain.¹

It seems that Sasuī's mother may have been concerned about her daughter and warned her of the forthcoming dangers on the journey. Although the poet does not bring her mother onto the scene to prevent her from setting out, Sasuī's reply to her mother reveals that the latter may have tried to stop her from going. The poet puts these words in the mouth of

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.290.

Sasūī:

اَجُّ مَلِينْدِيَسِ ، ماءُ ! ذَا جَا كَنْدِيَسِ كَبِرَا ،
جِي جَا ! جُو كِبَا طِي تِيَان ، مُونَكِي جَهْلَ مَ پَاءِ ،
هُوتَ پَرُو جِي لَاءِ ، كَنِينِ كُنِرَ پَائِيَان .

O mother! I will wash¹ today, and dye my clothes
an ochre colour.²

Dear mother! do not stop me, for I am going to
become a yogin³

I will wear earrings⁴ in my ears for my beloved
Baloch.⁵

In the above verse one can see Sasūī's determination to go after Punhū, forsaking every other relationship. She is requesting her mother not to create hindrances for her.

One also finds verses in response to her friends'

1. Here washing suggests the need to purify oneself before setting out on the spiritual journey.
2. Ochre-coloured clothes are worn by yogis, symbol of simplicity and detachment from worldly desires.
3. Yognī is a word used for a female yogi, who is not attached to any relations or belongings.
4. The earrings worn by yogis.
5. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.290.

suggestions. Again, the friends are in the background ; one only hears Sasuī speaking:

پنهوره سين پریت جو، ڪو جو پيچ پئوم ،
پنپي هن پنپورم ، رهڻ وه تئوم ،
مٽيون موٽڻ سندنون ، ڪا ڪيون ! ڪيم ڏئوم ،
سرتيون ! ساه سندنوم ، ٿو حوالي هوت جي .

My intense love for Punhū, has made my living in this wretched Bhambhore¹ an affliction.

O companions! do not advise me to return

Friends! my soul is in the possession of my beloved.²

On several other occasions the poet points out that it is her love for Punhū that gives strength to Sasuī. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf expresses her determination in the following lines:

هلندي هوت پنهوره ڏي ، ڪهجن ڪي ڪوتيون ،
پهڻ تنين پت ٿي ، جي لء لائن لونيون ،
سپ سهيليون سڪ ڪي ، چنجهون ۽ چوڻيون
بانپڻ ! ٿي بوٽيون ، ته ڪنا ڪينئي ڪيچ جا .

1. Home town of Sasuī.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.337.

While walking towards Punhū, the insincere ones
are exhausted

The stones¹ become plains for the ones who wander
for the beloved.

In love all the friends are short-sighted and
weak hearted.²

Brahmaṇ!³ become pieces so that the dogs of Kech⁴
may eat you.⁵

As for Suhṇī, she is a married woman and her husband,
friends and neighbours accuse her and try to prevent her from
going to Mehar. Even the forces of nature are against her, for
the rough river stands as a barrier between her and her
beloved. But the poet says:

نڪا جهولَ جهليَسَ ، نَمَ تانگهو نَمَ تارِ ڪينَ ،
ذَمُ دَبيهاڻي ڪينرو ، پَرِ مِ تُو پَليَسِ ،
تَان تَان جِيُ جَليَسِ ، مِلي جَان نَمَ ميهارَ ڪي .

1. I.e. the mountain.
2. I.e. mere pretenders on the journey who cannot comprehend the Truth.
3. I.e. Sasuī was a Brahmaṇ girl by birth but was brought up by a washerwoman.
4. Kech was the home of Punhū, Sasuī's beloved husband.
5. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.309 .

Neither deep nor shallow, nor overflowing water
can stop her

Everyday, Dam is prohibiting her in several ways
Her life keeps burning until she meets Mehar.¹

Dam who is Suhnī's husband, does all he can to stop her from visiting Mehar. Moreover her friends and neighbours make things worse by not only blaming her for being unfaithful to her husband, but by creating obstacles for her. As Suhnī says:

تَرَان تَان مَرَان ، وَرَان تَان وَهُ وَتَرَو ،
هِيَرِي مِه هوتن جا ، اِجَن گُورَ گَهطَان ،
پَسُو پاڙِي واريون ، تَسُو تَوَه تَرَان ،
وِجَان گِنَه وَرَان ! كِنْدِي مُنْهَجُو كَارِي .

If I swim, that will bring death,

Returning will drown me in distress.

Within my heart are many longings for my beloved.

The sight of the neighbouring (women) is making
me dread my faults.

How could I return? While my support (Mehar) is
on the other bank (of the river).²

Thus the heroines, Sasūī and Suhnī, are without friends or guide and harassed by obstacles. It is only their personal

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.262.

2. Ibid., p.278.

determination which keeps them going on their journey. For Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf clearly, there is great emphasis laid on self-reliance and individual effort on the part of the seeker.

In Mantiq al-Tair there are no such hindrances from outside. The hoopoe, who fulfils the role of murshid, is seen encouraging the birds but in spite of this encouragement there are many moments of weakness on the part of the seeker. The birds are seen coming up with various excuses and expressing their inability to leave the place and the possessions which they treasure. For example the nightingale presents its excuses to the hoopoe in the following words:¹

The journey to Simurgh is beyond my strength; the
love of the Rose is enough for the Nightingale.

Occasionally the hoopoe sounds disappointed with the birds, who do not have enough longing to make them lovers. Like a teacher or a guide, it criticises and reproaches them thus:

O birds without aspiration! How shall love spring
bountifully in a heart devoid of sensibility?

1. ^cAttār, Farīd al-Dīn, The Conference of the Birds (Mantiq al-Tair), London, 1961, trans. C.S. Nott, p.5.
Also cf. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.43.

Begging the question like this, which seems to gratify you, will result in nothing. He who loves sets out with open eyes towards his goal making a plaything of his life.¹

Thus a comparison of these two heroines with ^CAttār's birds reveals that Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf wishes to lay emphasis on the part of the seeker. Unlike birds, who need a guide to remind them what they should or should not do, Sasuī and Suḥnī are keen themselves and in spite of all odds they overcome everything that stands in their way and achieve union with the beloved. For ^CAttār the guidance of the spiritual master is necessary, as well as sacrifices on the part of the individual.

We now turn to a more detailed analysis of maqāms in the works of ^CAttār and Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. As is well known, the classification and even the sequence of maqāms vary from one Ṣūfī writer to another. According to al-Sarrāj Ṭūṣī, for example, there are seven maqāms but they are different from those mentioned by ^CAttār.²

1. Nott, op. cit., p.30. Cf. ^CAttār, op. cit., p.66.

2. For al-Sarrāj Ṭūṣī the maqāms are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. repentance (<u>tauba</u>) | e. patience (<u>ṣabr</u>) |
| b. abstinence (<u>warā'</u>) | f. trust in God (<u>tawakkul</u>) |
| c. renunciation (<u>zuhd</u>) | g. contentment (<u>riḍa</u>) |
| d. poverty (<u>faqr</u>) | |

Cont'd:...

Seven Ṣūfī maqāms, known as valleys in Mantiq al-Ṭair, are enumerated in systematic order. In the poetry of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, on the other hand, one does not find such an orderly presentation of maqāms but there are verses scattered all over the Risālo which can be interpreted as maqāms. More especially, if one studies the journeys of Sasuī and Suḥnī one can find maqāms parallel to those in Mantiq al-Ṭair, although the sequence is different in the work of the two poets.

In Mantiq al-Ṭair the maqāms are outlined as follows:¹

1. The valley of quest (talab)
2. The valley of love (ishq)
3. The valley of knowledge and understanding (maʿrifa)
4. The valley of detachment and independence (istighna)
5. The valley of unity (tauḥīd)
6. The valley of astonishment or bewilderment (haira)
7. The valley of annihilation (fanā')

In Mantiq al-Ṭair the hoopoe which acts as the guide for the birds is seen giving information on each valley in

Cont'd: al-Sarrāj Ḥūsī, Ibn Naṣr, Kitāb al-Lumāʿ fi'l-ṭasawwuf, ed. Nicholson, R.A., London, 1914, pp.15-16.

1. Nott, op. cit., p.98.

Cf. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.180.

systematic order. As already mentioned, the hoopoe's way of addressing the birds resembles that of the murshid giving instructions to his pupils or followers. After the hoopoe's direct speech there then follows a number of anecdotes relating to each valley. Most of the time the narrator appears to be the hoopoe but on occasion the poet himself seems to be speaking directly to the birds. He then reminds himself to go back to the hoopoe which then continues its discourse.

In the work of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, on the other hand, Sasuī and Suhṇī do not have a guide to give them instructions about the Ṣūfī maqām or stages. Nevertheless, the seven Ṣūfī maqāms are alluded to and the poet comments through Sasuī and Suhṇī as they pass through each stage. For Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf the exposition of the seven maqāms is represented as more of an experience than instruction. His heroines express their feelings on each stage interspersed with occasional advice from the poet himself. This is quite different from the hoopoe who continually warns the birds beforehand of the forthcoming dangers of each stage which they then experience personally.

The following seven maqāms have been extracted mostly from Sur Sasuī and Sur Suhṇī of the Risālo of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf. They appear to be the same as those in Mantiq al-Tair but differ in sequence:

1. The maqām of love
2. The maqām of quest
3. The maqām of detachment or independence
4. The maqām of astonishment and bewilderment
5. The maqām of knowledge, understanding and gnosis
6. The maqām of unity
7. The maqām of annihilation.

This suggested sequence of maqāms comes from an analysis of the stories of Sasuī and Suhnī. These two heroines are shown to be in love in the first place and their quest comes later, when they are separated from their loved ones. So in this case quest follows love. When the heroines set out on their journey, they have to detach themselves from family, friends and everything which may hold them back from their beloved. Thus the maqām of detachment comes third here.

While in search of her beloved, Sasuī is bewildered when she passes through mountains, valleys and desert. After Suhnī leaves her home, husband, and friends behind, her beloved is on the opposite bank of the river, the night is dark and there is no help around. Her earthenware jar breaks in the middle of the river and the length and breadth of the river bewilder her. In this way our poet highlights the stage or maqām of bewilderment through these two heroines.

After this perplexity experienced by Sasuī and Suhnī, they attain knowledge, or understanding (gnosis). This is knowledge of themselves, a self-realisation which leads them to an understanding of the divine nature. It is at this stage that our poet makes Sasuī say these words.

پُنھُو تَيَسَ پَالِھِينِ ، وِیئِي سَسِي جِي سُونَهَ ،
خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلِي صُورَتِهَ ، اِي وَلَئِن مَنجِهَ وِرُونَهَ ،
چَرِي مَنجَعَا چُونَهَ ، کَلِي هُوْتُ هَنِي چِ کُئُو .

I have become Punhū myself, and Sasuī has lost
her beauty

"God created man in His image"

The trees are uttering that tune.

The crazy woman² has found her beloved from
within and has taken him in her lap.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf suggests that once the seeker attains self-realisation, he or she proceeds towards unity, which is the sixth maqām.

Sasuī and Suhnī apparently do not reach their beloveds

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.293.

2. Sasuī is calling herself crazy, because love of Punhū has made her mad.

in their life-time, but they do realise the secret of unity. With reference to the maqām of unity, our poet suggests that unity should be sought from within and not from without. Once again he makes his heroines come up with the answer to the intricate question of unity, e.g.:

هوتُ تَنْهِي هَنَجَ هِ ، بِجِينِ كَوُهْ بِيهِ ؟
وَنِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ، أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ، سَوْجِيهِ كِيرِ سَيِّ ،
كَذِهِ كَانَهُ وَنِي ، هَوْتُ كَبُولِي هَتَّ نِي .

The beloved is in your lap, why are you asking
from others?

As also in your own selves: will ye not then see?

You have to search for it.

Nobody has gone in search of the beloved in a
shop.¹

Finally both heroines, Sasuī and Suhnī, meet their death while still on their journey. Thus one finds the heroines of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf reaching the final stage (maqām) of annihilation.

There now follows a more detailed comparison between the maqāms outlined by ^CAttār and those which may be discerned

1. Q: LI.21.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.293.

in the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.

The Valley of Quest

^cAttār and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf both speak of a quest and of the hardships which the seeker encounters on his path. Both suggest that the seeker should detach himself/herself from the worldly life to reach the desired goal. They also agree on the point that the seeker should not be afraid of the forthcoming dangers and obstacles on his path. The method of presentation of both authors is, however, different in their respective works.

In Mantiq al-Tair, the valley of quest is the first maqām. The birds represent the sālik and are in search of an unknown beloved or king. With Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, the quest is the second maqām, since his heroines are in love first and are then separated from their beloveds. This compels them to set out in search of them.

^cAttār points out that in the beginning the birds are anxious and wonder why they do not have a king. Then their curiosity is increased by the hoopoe (who represents the murshid) who tells them about the simurgh but they themselves have not seen the king.¹

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., pp.80-81.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf's heroines do not obtain information about their beloved from a third person. Their quest and longing is the result of love and an actual experience, which does not allow them to bear any separation from their beloveds.

In ^cAttār the hoopoe addresses the birds and gives them instructions as to what they should do. It tells the other birds that they should prepare themselves for every difficulty on the pilgrimage. The hoopoe informs the other birds about this maqām. It tells the birds that when you enter the first valley of quest, you will be confronted with hundreds of difficulties and undergo numerous trials. You will be required to put a great effort before any progress could be seen. You have to give up every possession and detach yourself from everything, then only you will be able to see the pure light of Divine Majesty, and your wishes will be fulfilled. He who enters this valley, will be ever longing and in quest, and ask for the wine. After drinking the wine they fear nothing, except pursuing his true aim.¹

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, the heroines

1. Nott, op. cit., p.98.

Cf. ^cAttār, op. cit., pp.180-81.

themselves are aware of the hardships and hindrances without being told of them. Sometimes the poet himself describes the situation in which the heroines find themselves. At other times Sasuī and Suhni themselves refer to the emotions and experiences which they are undergoing at that time. In the case of Sasuī she is aware that it is not an easy journey, as not only do her brothers-in-law stand between her and Punhū but it seems also that all natural objects are against her. Our poet describes her plight in the following words:

وَذَا وَطِي وَطِكَارِ جَا ، رَجَبُونِ جَتِ رَجِيهَا ،
منزل دُورُ ، مَن تَنهَا ، اُت بُولِيُونِ كَن بِيهَا ،
رائي پيرِ رَتُ كُتَا ، لَگي لُكَّ تَدِيهَا ،
لَكن جيون لِيهَا ، لوژهيان لال لَطِيفُ چي .

There are the tall trees of Wankār² where only owls³ and chīhā⁴ are found.

In my loneliness, my destination being far away.

I can hear only the screeching of behā³

The gravel stones have made my feet bleed,

1. The name of a mountain.

2. The owl and the behā are said to be unlucky birds and several bad omens and anecdotes are associated with them.

3. The name of a small reddish spotted bird

Latīf says: She is suffering hardships while passing through the mountains and there is a hot wind throughout the day.¹

While discussing the quest, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf distinguishes between those who are true lovers and those who are fraudulent. In Sur Suhnī he comments on them thus:-

ڪنڌي اُيون ڪيتريون ، ساهڙ ساهڙ ڪن ،
ڪنن سانگو ساه جو ، ڪي ”گوريين“ ڪيو گهڙن ،
ساهڙ سَنڌو ٿي ، گهاگهائي گهڙن جي .

While standing on the bank (of the river) several (women) call out Sāhar Sāhar.²

Some are concerned for their own lives,

Others just jump in, saying "let me be the sacrifice"

Sāhar is for those who enter (the deep waters) with a smile.³

Thus true lovers are not afraid of any sacrifice they have to make in search of their beloved.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.389.

2. Sāhar refers to Mehar, Suhnī's beloved. For the story of Suhnī, cf. Appendix.

3. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.256.

In the above verses our poet refers to Suhnī who embarks on a genuine quest to meet her beloved. She does not think about the consequences, nor is she daunted by the inevitable dangers encountered on her way. Her only concern and heart's desire is to reach Mehar. In another verse the poet expresses his idea more clearly in the following passage:

ڪه ڪه گهٽر گهٽري ، ڇڻ اوترا تڙ ٿوس ،
سالم ويني سهڻي ، ڪنن ڪين ڪيوس ،
اهس الڙين ۾ ، پريان جو پئوس ،
حقا حق ٿوس ، هني طالب حق جي .

Suhnī has entered (the river) from the dangerous landing place

But it turns out to be favourable for her.

Suhnī crosses (the river) safely, and the whirlpool does not harm her.

She attains the light of her beloved which shines in her eyes.

As she is seeking for the Truth,

The Truth does justice by her.¹

Sasui has several friends who wish to accompany her on her journey, as do the numerous birds in Manṭiq al-Ṭair. But

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.261.

she warns them of the obstacles on the path, and the misfortunes which they may have to face. After hearing about these hardships, most of the women give up the idea of this journey as do most of the birds. But here the warning is not from the guide but from the sālik. The poet comments on this in the following words:

ذُونِگَر نہ تُوْرِي ، سِکَن جِيُون سَدُون کَرِي ،
وِينِي گَهر گَهورِي ، مَتَاء پَرِين جِنْدُو

They do not search in the mountains¹

They merely wish to search

They sit at home and [pretend to] sacrifice their lives for the beloved.

In the above verse we are given an example of false seekers on the Ṣūfī path, who apparently make a show of being in search of the truth.

Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf seems to believe that not everyone can claim to be a sālik, prepared to set out on the journey. Only a few have the courage to give up everything else for the one Beloved (i.e. God). Sasuī is remarkable among hundreds of

1. I.e. they do not adopt a different course of action.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.290.

other women for her bravery. Her quest for the beloved is so great that she cannot be deterred from facing any kind of difficulty.

جي سجھائي سڪَ ، تم پڻ سڪي سڻي ،
پيتائين پنھوءَ سين ، ھڏ نه پگيس ھڪَ ،
ان تڙ منجھا نڪَ ، ڏني پاڻ اڄ تبي .

Out of longing, Sasuī is on fire and still yearning,
She has drunk in the company of Punhū.
Her thirst remains unquenched for ever.
Whoever has had a sip from that stream will
always be thirsty.¹

^cAttār also speaks of false seekers. He mentions certain birds who show enthusiasm to search for their king, but begin to make excuses when they hear of the hardships.

For Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf there is a further aspect to the quest. When the lover seeks the beloved, according to Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf the beloved also responds by seeking him or her. For example:

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.284.

2. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.42.

مِهارُ مَلَحَنَ كِي ، اَپو ڪري مَدَّ ،
اَدا ! اِنهِن پَرا جا ، موڙي اچو مَدَّ ،
وئا جي وءَ گڏ ، هلو ته ڏوريون اُن ڪي .

Mehar is standing and calling the sailors.

Brothers on the other side,

Turn and bring your rafts

Let us search for the one who has gone with the
current.¹

In this verse there is clearly some involvement on the part of Mehar (i.e. the beloved) as well. In Mantiq al-Tair, on the other hand, the role of the Sīmurgh is passive. It is interesting to speculate what such a difference in attitude on the part of the beloved implies in the minds of the two poets under discussion. Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf's Beloved is here seen to be willing and interested in seeking out those who seek Him, whereas for ^CAttār the Beloved seems remote.

The Valley of Love

In ^CAttār's work this is the second valley or stage on the Ṣūfī path. The hoopoe, as mentioned earlier, being a guide to other birds, gives them instructions in a long discourse

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.273.

regarding this valley. It tells them what love is and the sacrifices involved on this the path, what are the requirements of that valley are, and what a true lover would have to undergo before he attains the desired goal.

In Mantiq al-Tair the hoopoe, while describing love to other birds, explains to them :

You are neither experienced nor in love
You are dead, how can you be worthy of love
He who is on this path, should be alive with a
thousand lives
So that he can sacrifice one at every moment.¹

The hoopoe tells them that love is impulsive and can be likened to fire. Just as fire knows no limitations, and burns everything without distinction, so too love does not wait or reason why. For a lover good and evil have no meaning.²

In the work of ^cAttār the hoopoe is found telling the other birds about the burning quality of love, which does not listen to reason. In the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, however, Sasuī and Suhnī prove through their own actions that love does

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.187.

2. Ibid., pp.186-7.

Cf. Nott, op. cit., p.102.

not care for any reason.

Suhnī's love for Mehar may well be likened to a fire, which knows no bounds. She loses all sense of reason and does not care what neighbours, friends, and even her husband says to her. Her only desire and aim is to see Mehar, for whom she gives up everything, even her life. She takes pride in what a reasonable person would consider an act of shame:

جِيہرَ لوڪُ جَہپُ ڪَري ، نَرُو جاڳتَ نہ ھوہ ،
اُوھيرَ اچنو ، اديون ! پتہ پريان جو پوہ
جي ڪجورَ جونم ڪرہ ، نہ مرڪُ پايان مھڻو .

When the people are fast asleep,
At that time, o sisters! I think about my beloved
Even when they blame me,
I regard the accusation as an honour!

In the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, the same requirements are expected for the lover, but the seekers are not given instructions by anybody else. They themselves are aware of what they must do, and are prepared for any danger that they have to face. Sometimes the poet does warn the

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.268.

heroines who represent the seeker, but again it is not a long discourse. Short hints only are given to them.

As mentioned earlier, in Shāh ^ḤAbd al-Latīf love is the first maqām and the motivating factor for the search on the Sūfī path. His heroines who represent the seekers are already in love before they start the journey. Therefore their restlessness is due to separation from the beloved, as one can see from the verse given below.

جھلي تان نہ رھان ، دارا پسٹ پري جي ،
اپرَ عاجزِ آھيان ، لالنُ جان نہ کھان ،
فردا مونَ قتي کي ، وعدي تدي نہ وھان ،
صباحِ سينہ نہ سھان ، خواهِ ميٿريينِ ، خواهِ ماريينِ .

When restricted, I cannot refrain from (going) till
the time I meet my beloved.

I will continue to be tormented,
until I attain my sweetheart.

I have rejected the tomorrow, nor will I wait for
the promise.¹

It is up to them, whether they unite with me or
kill me.

1. Reference is made to the day of judgement.

I cannot put it off till the morning.¹

In the above verse one can see the intensity of the love which Sasuī has for Punhū. Sasuī's love for Punhū or Suhñī's love for Mehar, as presented by Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, is different from the love mentioned in Mantiq al-Tair. In the latter work, the hoopoe is talking or giving a discourse to the other birds on the theory of love only, whereas in Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's work the verses relating to love are the expressions of the emotions of love of the heroines themselves. One is the actual experience of love, the other is abstract expression about love. One is meant for others, i.e. the hoopoe tells the birds what love is, whereas the other is the experiences of the heroines themselves.

Suhñī is deeply in love with Mehar and is too impatient to wait and think out a safer way to reach her beloved. While commenting directly upon the state of Suhñī in love, our poet's implied meaning relates to the condition of a true spiritual seeker.

سياری سیه رات ۾ ، جا گهڙي وسندي ميه ،
هلوتہ پڇون سھڻي ، جا کڙ جاھي نيہ ،
جھ کي راتو تڏيہ ، ميهارُ ئي من ۾ .

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.317.

During the midst of the winter night,
when it is raining, she enters it (river)
Let us go and ask Suhnī who knows about love.
Who is thinking of Mehar day and night.¹

The hoopoe describes the signs of a lover who is always melancholy, distressed and agitated, sighing and struggling like a fish out of water. It also tells the birds some anecdotes in connection to the maqām. It emphasises that a true lover will be ever ready to sacrifice everything and life and that he would wish to have thousands of hearts to sacrifice one every minute.²

In one anecdote, ^cAttār describes the state of a true lover who has sold everything to buy wine from the wine-seller whom he loves. When people ask him what love is, he says that love is of such a nature that one would sell the goods of a hundred worlds to buy the wine but that only those who have experienced the feeling of love can understand.³

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.262.

2. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.187.

3. Ibid., pp.187-8.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf hints at a similar type of sacrifice. This may have been the reason why he chooses stories where the heroine gives her life for her love.

This idea serves a double purpose in his poetry. In the first place it implies that any kind of true love demands selflessness and devotion to the beloved and he shows through his poetry that his heroines do possess the characteristics which are required for love. Moreover, from the Ṣūfī point of view the prerequisite for love is self-sacrifice and self-renunciation. These qualities are displayed by the heroines of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.

نڪو سَنَدُو سُورَ جو ، نڪو سَنَدُو سِڪَ ،
عددُ ناهِ عِشَقِ ، پُجَاهِي پاڻِ لُهي .

There is no end to the sorrows
nor any limit to the quest

The love is fathomless,
it (i.e. love) knows its own depth.¹

Our poet believes that love is an inexhaustible treasure, the depth of which it is beyond the power of a person to measure. Thus the seeker who enters the valley of love, is

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.278.

overpowered by divine love, and becomes impatient to attain divine union.

The third maqām: the valley of ma^crifa (knowledge)

According to ^cAttār ma^crifa is the third valley or maqām which the seeker enters after love. The hoopoe describes its vastness to the birds, saying that it has no beginning nor end. The lover should possess enormous strength and endurance to cope with this immeasurable distance. As all birds do not fly alike, so they attain results according to their ability. In a similar way individuals vary in their capacity for spirituality. Some may reach the 'mihrāb', others may be content with the idol. To a true sālik who is not pre-occupied with self, but is in search of the divine friend, such secrets are revealed, but anyone who is negligent, should not expect better results.¹

The hoopoe encourages the birds to get up and search for the friend and even rebukes them for their negligence, saying:

How long will you stay as you are, like a donkey
without a halter.²

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., pp.194-195.

2. Nott, op. cit., p.108.

Cf. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.195.

For the attainment of divine knowledge there are certain conditions for the sālik. He has to overcome his faults and weaknesses and give up sleep. Then only can he attain knowledge, which is like a lamp, which can illuminate a gloomy place and guide the sālik.¹

As mentioned earlier, the hoopoe discusses this maqām in a long theoretical discourse which he then illustrates with anecdotes. On the other hand, ma^c rifa. (knowledge) in the Risālo would appear to be the fifth maqām, which comes after detachment and bewilderment.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf makes Sasuī speak about the ways of attaining the maqām of knowledge. She blames herself for faults like negligence and sleep. She says that it is because of her lack of knowledge and other weaknesses that she has lost her husband. In a lyrical song called Vāī given below she says:-

غفلت یار گنوايو ، ہڑي ! جیڈیون !

کنہ کریان آئون ؟ گھ تئو ؟

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.196.

سُتَيْسِ تان ساڻ وڻو ، اُتَيْسِ تان ڏُڪُ آئيو ،

ڪِنه ڪريان آئون ! ڪه ٿو ؟

پُڇان پوءِ پنھوءَ کي ، عبتُ تان اُن ڪاٿيو ،

ڪِنه ڪريان آئون ؟ ڪه ٿو ؟

ھوٽَ ھلندي جا ڪئي ، سا مون ڳالِ سُٿاريو ،

ڪِنه ڪريان آئون ؟ ڪه ٿو ؟

O friends! through negligence I lost my beloved

What shall I do? what happened?

The caravan left while I slept, and I was
confronted with sorrow when I woke up.

What shall I do? what happened?

It is useless that after eating food, I ask after
Punhū

What shall I do? what happened?

What did my beloved say while leaving, let me
hear it

What shall I do? what happened?

The fourth maqām: the Valley of Detachment

In Manṭiq al-Ṭair this is the fourth Ṣūfī maqām and the

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.289.

hoopoe is seen explaining its conditions to other birds. It tells them that in order to attain this maqām they should give up worldly desires and the pursuit of the useless things of the outer world and should seek the essential things of the inner world.¹ The hoopoe informs them that this valley is the discovery of their own resources. It is the valley of lightening and power, which will burn everything else, including their external world. When they enter the valley they should give up uncertainty, heedlessness and apathy by renouncing inner attachments, then they will reach a certain stage of development, after which they will become self-sufficient, which will lead them to a higher level of spirituality.²

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf this seems to be the third valley or maqām. For Sasuī and Suhnī it is not a matter of knowing or learning from someone else, but of personal experience. When they set out in search of their respective beloveds, they have to give up every possession and detach themselves from homes, families and friends. Sasuī and Suhnī have to proceed on their own without stopping, as they are conscious of the vastness and hardships of the journey.

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.200.

Nott, op. cit., pp.110-11.

2. ^cAttār, op. cit., pp.200-202.

The poet advises Sasuī on how to detach herself from human weakness and worldly desires.

لائي خنجرُ ، لا ، جو ، هيءَ ! خچرکي هٿُ ،
مَدَنِ جيون ، سَبَدُ چي ، وٿون سڀ وڪڻُ ،
پيرُ پروري کڻُ ، تہ هلڻُ م هوري وهين .

Kill your mule (baser soul) with the dagger of
" لا " لاءِ " la "

Detach yourself from everything that causes you
to be tempted by desires, says Sayyid

Step forward, with great care, then it will be
easy for you to proceed.

Or again he says:²

هورنِ هاڙو لڳهڻو ، مُني ! مُوسَ چڙي ،
' لا ' سين اتي لڏي ، رڪينَ ، رساڻي کيچ کي .

O unlucky one! give up self-adornment, and cross
the Hāro.³

1. I.e. No - or None other than God.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.311.

3. The name of a mountain.

Take *the "lā D"* with you, and nothing will help you
to reach the ¹Kech.²

Through these heroines Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf points out that one can only penetrate the secrets of the spiritual path, by detachment. When the seeker is able to do so, he becomes self-sufficient and able to advance to a higher level. He can thus attain Unity.

The fifth maqām: the Valley of Unity

This is the fifth valley in Manṭiq al-Ṭair. Here again the hoopoe offers guidance to the other birds about this valley. It tells them that what appears to be multiplicity is in reality Unity. In fact, unity is not different from multiplicity. The variety of colours, shapes and forms and numbers have no existence of their own multiplicity is just appearance and only unity exists. I and you have no significance, but they are both one and the same thing. Only a squint-eyed person sees duality when there is only one Being.² The traveller who reaches this valley, loses every feeling of sadness or joy. I

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.311.

2. The name of a town in Baluchistan, which was the home town of Punhū, Sasūi's husband.

3. ^CAttār, op. cit., p.206.

Nott, op. cit., pp.114-115.

and you and duality are all lost or merged in unity. Thus existence and non-existence are one and the same Being.

In the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, this appears to be the sixth valley which Sasuī and Suhnī reach during their journey, before annihilation. Here again Sasuī and Suhnī learn the characteristics of this maqām not by didactic discourses but by personal experience. While searching for Punhū and Mehar they realise the unity within themselves, discovering that what they seek is no other than themselves. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's poetry seems to suggest that although a basic unity already exists in the world, the seeker nevertheless has to attain the realisation of it. This realisation of unity can be achieved only from within.

وہمَ ورسا یاسِ ، نات پنہو آئون پاڻی ھئی ،
پاڻی وجائیم باھجو ، پئی پریان جی پاسِ ،
رتی علم نہ راسِ ، تارا پستی پری جی .

I was mislead by my doubt (i.e. due to ego)
otherwise I was Punhū (beloved) myself.

By being with my beloved, I gave up my ego.

Without understanding the beloved, knowledge is
of no value.¹

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.293.

In the above verse Sasuī is blaming herself, saying that it was her own ego which stood as a barrier between her and the beloved, who was not far from her.

As Sasuī symbolises the seeker, our poet is critical of the seekers who are misled by their own misconceptions, and do not try to see within. This internal perception is possible only if the seeker has purified himself and seeks within:

پہی جان پائی ، کیم روحِ رہائی ،
تہ نکو ڈنگر تہہ ، نکا کیچینِ کائی ،
پنہون تیس پائی ، سسئی ، تان سور ہئا .

When I merged within myself and conversed with
my soul.

There remained no mountain, nor any need of the
Kechī.²

As long as I was Sasuī I suffered,
thus I became Punhū myself.

In the above verse Sasuī discovers that what she has been seeking far off is nowhere but within herself. A seeker has to search within to attain the divine beloved.

1. People of Kech, reference is made to Sasuī's in-laws.

2. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.292.

In Mantiq al-Tair ^cAttār says that as long as the seeker is conscious of his separate existence, he will be faced with the problem of good and evil. His lower soul will trouble him with pride, ego and self-love which are the enemies of the seeker and will lead him away from the right path.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf comments on the theme in the following words.

پاڻ پٽڙو پاڻ کي ، سُڻي کير سنڀال ،
وڃان جو وصال ، سوتان هٽي هين جو .

Listen and take care, for your ego is the veil

The barrier to wiṣāl (i.e. the meeting between God and man) is one's own self or ego.²

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf believes that God is not far away. The seeker has only to overcome his weakness and purify his heart to find God within himself.

تُون ڪا ڪاڻي پاء ، وَنِي ۾ وصال جي ،

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.206.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.356.

دوپينائي دُور ڪري ، مَترَفَتَ مَلاءَ ،
سُپيريان جي سُونَهَن ۾ ، رُخنوڪوَن رِهاءَ ،
اَڪ اَشهَد چاءَ ، تہ مُعَلِماني ماظِنين .

You should wear that collyrium in your eyes
which will bring you wiṣāl (i.e. unite you
with God)

By giving up doubt (shirk) cheerfully attain
ma^crifa.

You should not have any uncertainty regarding the
beauty of the beloved.

When you attain the righteous sight (self-
realisation)

Then only can you become a true Muslim.¹

Once the seeker attains self-realisation he learns that
there is only one ^uunity, that of God and the seeker himself is
not distinct from that ^uunity. In that state the seeker proclaims:

”مُون“ مُونِهين ۾ سَبَّجِي ، مُونِ كِي ”مُون“ جُڳاءَ ،
مُونِهين جي ساڃاءَ ، مُونِهين مَنجھان ”مُون“ ٿئي ،
اُنِهين اِئن جُڳاءَ ، اُنِ كِي اِئن نہ چَوَظو .

1. Ādvaṇī, op. cit., p.355.

The real 'Self' is situated within me,
Therefore I can say I¹
Therefore I have the right to say I.
That I is entitled to claim Unity.
You (i.e. common people) must not say that.²

The sixth maqām: the valley of bewilderment or astonishment

According to ^cAttār, bewilderment is the sixth maqām and he mentions two types of bewilderment. The first type occurs when the seeker is confronted with sorrows. He finds himself sighing and lamenting, and does not know the reason for it, nor can he find a way out of such a situation. It is then that he becomes confused and bewildered.³

The seeker finds himself completely lost and it is beyond his reason to understand his own feelings. Belief and unbelief have no longer any importance to him.

As for the second type of bewilderment, it is caused by awe. The seeker is perplexed at the sight of unusual things to which he finds no logical answer. In this context, ^cAttār tells

1. I.e. self-realisation leads to the realisation of God.
2. Advānī, op.cit., p.357.
3. ^cAttār, op. cit., p.212.

the story of a slave who while asleep is taken to the palace of a king, where he is surrounded by beautiful girls. The princess who admires his beauty spends the night entertaining him and then before dawn he is made drunk and brought back home. In the morning when he wakes up, he cannot understand what has happened to him during the night. He is full of amazement and wonders if what has happened is a dream or reality.¹

When the birds reach this valley they lose their senses. They are bewildered and are no longer conscious of their actions and feelings. In this valley they are overtaken by innumerable sorrows, because of separation from the beloved.

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, bewilderment seems to be the fourth maqām on the Sūfī path. After detaching themselves from their family and friends, Sasuī and Suḥnī find themselves all alone without any companion or support. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf comments on this stage of bewilderment in the following lines:

1. ^cAttār, op. cit., pp.216-217.

لوچان ٿي لاحتہم ، هاديء لہان نہ حد ،

سُپريان جي سونهن جو ، نڪو قد نہ مد ،

هت سڪنُ بي عدد ، هت پرين پروا نہ ڪو .

I am searching in infinity

But I cannot find the limits of my guide¹

The beauty of the beloved is beyond length and
breadth

Here yearning is beyond measure,

But there the beloved does not care about it.²

In the above verse the poet is referring to the dependence of the seeker on God, on the one hand, and His seeming to be beyond any limitations on the other hand.

In another verse the helplessness of the seeker is again expressed by the poet.

حوصلو حيرتہم ، ڪري ڪين درڪ ،

جو حُسنَ سَندو حق ، سو ڪورُ پروڙي ڪين ڪي .

1. By guide the poet means the beloved or God.

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p. 345.

The strength of bewilderment is not known to
intellect

The beauty of ^{the Divine (God)} Truth cannot be understood by the
blind.¹

Sasūī has to pass through deserts and mountains. She finds herself bewildered both by her unfamiliar and vast surroundings and by the sorrows of separation from her beloved. Nevertheless she does not seem to give up hope of seeing her beloved. She exclaims:

آذتراچا ، آهرا ، دنگر کي ڏاڪا ،
کيتم آه عجيب کي ، سڪ منجها ناڪا ،
بيشي هتيڪي هوت کي ، ڪوڪ وڃي ڪن کي ،
منهنجو وس واکا ، ٻڌل ڪم پروج جو .

The mountain has crooked and difficult steps

I am sighing out of longing for my amazing
beloved.

May my beloved hear my call.

Calling out is under my control,
but it is left to ^{the} Baloch to hear my call.²

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf gives a powerful illustration of

1. Ibid., p.351.

2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.335.

bewilderment in the story of Suhñī. When her unbaked jar begins to disintegrate in the middle of the river and she is surrounded by dangerous creatures in the water, she is bewildered at the sudden shock. In spite of this she is hopeful and is seen struggling to fulfil her promise with Mehar.

گورا بڻي پارَ ، هيون حيرتَ مِ پڻو ،

وهان تہ ويرمَ ٿي ، نيہَ مِ پوءِ نهارَ ،

وجان تہ واگو ٿي ، پاڙي پوءِ پجارَ ،

هُتِ رَٿي وِعدِي وارَ ، هِتِ سوٿون تدينمَ سرتيون .

Both sides being fateful, my heart is in a state
of bewilderment

If I stay back, I will be liable to accusation
by love

If I decide to go, then that will be echoed and
will give the neighbours a chance to gossip

On the one hand it will be a breach of promise
and on the other hand my friends will torment
me with their taunting. ¹

In another verse the poet expresses his amazement at the
courage of Suhñī.

1. Gurbukshāñī, op. cit., p.269.

دهشت دم درياه م ، جت جايون جانارن ،
نڪو سندو سير جو ، مپ نه ملاحن ،
درندا درياه م ، واڪا ڪنو ورن ،
سجا بيترا بار م ، هلئا هيٺ وڃن ،
پرزو پندا نه ٿي ، تڙو منجها تن ،
ڪو جو قهر ڪنن م ، وئا ڪين ورن ،
اتي اٿا تارن ، ساھو ا سير لنگھاء تون .

There is havoc in the river, the home of the water
creatures

None knows the limit of it (water) even the
sailors do not know the extent of it.

The blood-thirsty creatures of the river have
charge about.

The very ships sink right into the deep waters.

Not a strip (of ship) is visible

Not a plank has come to the surface

The tyranny of the whirlpool is such that who ever
enters, one never re-emerges.

O Sahar! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep
water.¹

The seventh maqam: the valley of annihilation

In Mantiq al-Tair the hoopoe continues its discourse by

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.260.

speaking of the valley of annihilation. This is the seventh and final maqām, according to ^CAttār. For Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf this is also the final stage on the Ṣūfī path. Both poets seem to have similar views on this maqām. The hoopoe tells the other birds that when the seeker reaches this stage, he has to give up his ego or 'greedy self' for then only can they achieve their goal.¹ While referring to the last valley of deprivation and annihilation, the hoopoe expresses its inability to describe. It says:

The essence of this valley is forgetfulness, dumbness, deafness and distraction, the thousand shadows which surround you disappear in a single ray of the celestial sun. When the ocean of immensity begins to heave, the pattern on its surface loses its form, and this pattern is no other than the world present and the world to come.²

In the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf one finds the same idea expressed. The poet reminds his heroines that in order to meet their beloved they must annihilate their smaller self to attain union with the whole:

1. ^CAttār, op. cit., pp.219-220.

2. Nott, op. cit., p.123.

مَري ، حَيُّ ، تَمَّ مَاطِيين ، جَانِبَ جَوِ جَمَالُ ،
تَيِّينَ هُنْدًا حَلالُ ، حِي پَنَدِ اِهائي پارِيين .

Die first, then live, then you will attain the
beauty of the Beloved.

When you follow that advice then only will you
be accepted.

After the seeker gets rid of his baser self and loses consciousness of the material world, all illusions disappear. Losing one's identity is like a drop of water which becomes part of the whole ocean. The hoopoe describes the characteristics of this valley to the other birds in the following words:

The seeker by renouncing his identity and his apparent annihilation has attained immortality in God.

Shāh ^CAbd al-Laṭīf also speaks of a similar unity, which is attained by the seeker after annihilating one's base desires and one's ego. When he is able to do so all differences disappear, just as the waves merge to form part of the ocean:-

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.314.

لَعْرِينِ لَكَ لِبَاسٍ ، پَالِي پَسَلُ هِبْكَوَرُو ،
اُونهي تِه عميقَ جي ، واري چِذَ وَمَاسَ ،
جَتِ نَاهِ نِهَآيَتَ نِيَهَ جي ، كُوهُ اَتِ پَنهِي كَاسَ ،
تَرُونِ جي تَلاَسَ ، لَاهِ تَ لَاتَنَ لَبِ تَيِينِ .

The waves appear in numerous forms or attires

On perceiving water, it is just the same

Never think about the depth of the ocean.

Where there is no limit to love,
annihilate all your desires

When you stop searching for the place of safety

Then only can you meet your beloved.¹

After travelling through dangerous forests and crossing rugged mountains, Sasuī attains self-realisation. She discovers that the veil which has separated her from her beloved is in fact her own ego and attachment to the material world. When she succeeds in detaching herself from such things she finds Punhū within herself.

سوئي گُطُو سَالُ ، سوئي دُورِيِينِ ، سُسِي !
كُذَه كُنِيِينِ نَه كُتُو ، جُلُي مَنجَهَا جَالُ ،
پُچُ پَرِيَانِ كَرُ پَالُ ، تَه تُونِ تَنَآيِينِ لُهِيِنِ .

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.278.

Sasuī! you are searching for the same (person)
whom you are carrying with yourself.

None attained realisation by wandering

Ask yourself about the beloved and you will find
him. ¹

Similarly Suhnī searches and longs to meet her Mehar.
Our poet gives her advice about how she can attain her
beloved.

بائی مے کچھ بائی سین ، وسیلا وسار ،
لڑ لنگھائی ، سُھٹی ! پرتِ وجھندیہ پار ،
سی تڑت لنگھندیون تار ، اُکندی اگہ جن سین .

Never take ^{your} ego with you, give up every kind
of protection or shelter.

O Suhnī! your true love will help you reach the
other side of the deep waters

Only those will cross (i.e. the deep sea), who
hold steadfast love as their guide. ²

Our poet comments further:

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.288.

2. Ibid., p.257.

گھڑو یگو ، مُنڈا مُنی ، وَسِیلا وِنا ،
تھان پورہ سُنّا ، سُهطِی سَدّ مِہارَ جا .

The vessel broke, and the woman died,
and the protective methods were destroyed

Then only Suhṇī heard the call of Mehar
(i.e. attained union).

It is important to note that there is a significant difference between ^cAttār and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf in this maqām. Whereas the birds reach their desired goal in their life-time, the heroines attain union with their beloved only after death.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.257.

CHAPTER 5

JALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ AND SHĀH ʿABD AL-LATĪF
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THEIR POETIC IMAGERY

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273 A.D.) hardly needs any introduction. Because of the alarming political conditions in Balkh, Rūmī's father Bahā' al-Dīn fled with his family in 1219 A.D., visiting several Islamic countries and finally settling in central Anatolia (Rūm). Bahā' al-Dīn was invited to Konya by the Saljuq ruler and given the honour of a place to preach and teach there. Rūmī inherited his father's interest in Sūfism associating, like him, with leading Sūfīs of the time. After his father's death Rūmī took up his father's religious office, teaching and preaching from 1234-1244 in Konya and wearing the traditional turban and gown of orthodox religious scholars. Later, he became a prominent Sūfī and a spiritual leader in his own right.²

In 1244 Rūmī met a wandering dervish, Shams al-Dīn of Tabrīz, whom he perceived as the perfect image of the Divine Beloved and spiritual guide. After the mysterious disappearance of Shams al-Dīn, Rūmī directed his affection first to a goldsmith named Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb and, after the latter's death in 1258 A.D., to Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan (Chalabī). It was on the latter's advice that Rūmī composed his famous Maṣnavī

1. Arberry, A.J., Discourses of Rūmī London, 1961, pp.3-4.
Cf. also Nicholson, R.A., Translation of Eastern Poetry and Prose, Cambridge, 1922, p.125.
2. Arberry, op. cit., pp.3-4.
Cf. also Schimmel, A.M., Mystical Dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill, 1975, pp.311-12.

in six volumes, the contents of which he addressed to Husām al-Dīn who wrote down what was said.¹ ~~.....~~ *The first work of Rūmī was of course* the Dīvān-i Shams, a voluminous collection of lyrical poems.

After this brief sketch of Rūmī's life, we may now turn our attention to the relationship between Rūmī and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. The latter was a declared admirer of Rūmī, acknowledging his indebtedness to him in his verses and referring to him directly on a number of occasions. For example Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf says:

طالبُ كَثْرُ ، سُنَهَ سَرُ ، اِي رُومِي جِي رِهائِي ،

پهرينِ وِجائِي پائِي ، پَسُ پوءِ پَرِينِ كِي .

The seekers are many. Divine Beauty is the origin
(of everything),

This is the pleasant conversation of Rūmī

First of all lose yourself, then seek the beloved.²

He goes on to say:-

1. Arberry, op. cit., pp.6-8

2. Shāh Mānī, op. cit., p.125.

طالِبُ كَثْرٍ ، سُنَّهَ سُرِّ ، رُومِيَّ جَوَّ آهِي ،

تاڙي جي لاهي ، تـمـنـجـهـمـ مُـشـاـهـدـو ٿيـي .

The seekers are many, (Divine) Beauty is the origin (of everything)

Rūmī has said so.

Remove the veil, then perception will be within.¹

There are altogether six such couplets in the Risālo where our poet refers directly to Rūmī.² There are also a small number of verses which seem to show the direct influence of Rūmī, as for example in the case of the image of the reed used in the following verses:

جِنِّ عَا عَانِي عَانَه ، لُسَنَدِي لِاتِيُونِ كَرِي ،

اچي پئي اوچتي ، کڙڙڙ پريان جي دانہ ،

ويج ! تڏيپين گهه بانہ ؟ سور هيپن کي سامهان .

Like a segment of reed, it tells the tale of its being cleft.

It cries because of the flickering pain of the beloved.

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.125.

2. Ibid., pp.124-25.

Physician! why do you cauterise my arm
when the pain lies in my heart?¹

It must be admitted that the idea of the reed and other images used by Rūmī are not new. For example, as Schimmel points out, the reed image is found in the Ḥadīqa of Sanā'ī which originally came from a Greek source, i.e. the tale of King Midas.² What seems highly probable, however, is that Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf came to know these images from his knowledge of the work of Rūmī.

In this chapter we shall make a detailed comparison between the imagery used in the poetry of Rūmī and that found in the Risālo of Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf. As far as Rūmī's imagery is concerned, Schimmel has already devoted a major part of one of her principal works to that topic. We will therefore rely on Schimmel for an analysis of Rūmī's imagery³ and pay more detailed attention to that of Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf.

The sun

The image of the sun is universal, although each writer

1. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., pp.1079-80.
2. Schimmel, A.M., The Triumphal Sun: A study of the works of Jalal al-Din Rūmī, London and The Hague, 1980, p.37.
3. Ibid., pp.59-210.

uses it in his own way. Rūmī, however, pays special attention to the concept of the sun. He uses the image primarily as it is used in the Qur'ān as possessing the Divine attributes of glory and majesty and having great miraculous powers.¹

In Rūmī's poetry the sun represents perfection and hence is a symbol of God, who is loving and compassionate to man and the whole universe. Rūmī is full of admiration for the sun and its powers, whether constructive or destructive. In his work the destructive aspect of the sun is intended for the benefit of mankind, for God is the knower of secrets.²

For Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, the sun has two distinct sides, one positive and the other negative. The positive aspect includes its radiant beauty which is evident to everyone. In Sur Mūmal Rāḥo, the beauty of ^aKāparī is compared to that of the morning sun, which is red like blood or a ruby:

سُجَّ سِيَّاطِي جَا كُرِي ، سَامِي سَائِي رُو ،
اچي رِي عَطْرِي ، مَنجھا مَغْتِ هُو ،
سا تَدِيكَارِي هُونِ جُو ، جَنانِ لاهُوتِي لَعَلِ تَنُو .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.61.

2. Ibid., pp.61-62.

'The colour of the swāmī's face is red like
the early morning sun.

The sweet fragrance of perfume comes from
his crown

Show us the place where the Lāhūtī has become
red.¹

In the same sur, the swāmī's beauty and radiance are
compared to that of the sun:

سُجُ سِيَاهِي جَا كَرِي ، سَامِي سَائِي وَنِكَ ،
سَهِي نَه سَكْهَان سَاكُ سَنَه ، تَه جِي رَايِن جِي رَوْتَقُ ،
سَه رَتَائِيِن لَاكُ مَه ؟ كِي تَنَائِيِن پَائِن پِيكُ !
سَنَدِي سَوِيَل سَكُ ، كَبَرُ كَوْرُون جَهْلِيُون .

The colour of the Swāmī is like tomorrow's morning
sun.

I cannot bear the radiance of the sun for a second

Did he colour his face with lākh² or paint it
with pān?³

The love of Soḍhal⁴ stands full to the brim.⁵

1. ShāhVāṇī, op. cit., p.707.

2. A kind of red colour, which does not fade away.

In the above verse, the Swāmī's radiance is so great that one cannot bear it. The implied answer to the question as to how he made his face red is that it is all thanks to the light of love.

Rūmī also speaks of the radiant light of the sun, which has the capacity to purify stone by its heat and to transform this insignificant substance into a precious ruby. The sun treats the stone harshly, but the poet justifies this action which, in his view, is for the benefit of the stone.¹

Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf is not as fond of the sun as is Rūmī. In a couple of verses, as seen above, he does speak of the beauty and radiance of the Swāmī in terms of the sun, an analogy which also has its spiritual implications, but such verses are not as frequent as in Rūmī's work.

For Rūmī the sun represents diverse things. On the one hand, it stands for God and also for the Prophet Muhammad, who is the source of light and blessing in this world. On the

Cont'd: 3. A betel leaf, which is stuffed with spices and eaten after food, it makes the mouth red.

4. I.e. Mūmal, whose caste was Sodhā.

5. ShāhWānī, op.cit., p.708.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.70.

other hand, ~~the sun~~ ^{of course} the sun also stand for Shams al-Dīn of Tabriz, who in Rūmī's estimation represents the Perfect Man. Rūmī sees the Divine Light and Beauty and the glory of the Prophet as being combined in his beloved Shams al-Dīn. After the latter's death, Rūmī sees a reflection of that light he calls Ziyā' in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and later in Ḥusām al-Dīn.¹

In the case of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf the sun does not symbolise the Perfect Man or the Prophet. Moreover, in various surs about Sasuī such as Ābrī, Ḥusainī and Ma'zūrī, the sun is depicted as unsympathetic and heartless, having no compassion for the already dejected Sasuī. For example, while Sasuī is forced to travel through the rugged mountains, the sun heats the mountains and thus burns her feet:

وَدَاوَلْ وَطِڪَارَ جَا ، جِتَ جَاوُو ، جُمُرُ ، جُرُ ،

ڪوسا تپن ڪڪرا ، هي دمدم تپي ڌر ،

ويچاري ڌي ور ، پير نه لهي پري جو .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.62-63.

There are the tall trees of Waṅkar
and mountains like Jāo, Jamār and Jar.¹

The stones and concrete have become hot, and
the earth is burning with heat.

The poor one is wandering, unable to find the
footprints of her beloved.²

Elsewhere, the poet has Sasuī accuse the sun and the
other elements of taking her beloved away from her. Thus she
considers them as her enemies:

اَنْ وِیْرِ ، اَوْخَارَ وِیْرِ ، وِیْرِ تِیْتِمِ تِیْرِ ،
چَوْتُونِ وِیْرِ وَا تِیَو ، جِه لَنَّا پُنْهَو پِیْرِ ،
پَنْجُونِ وِیْرِ سَجِ تِیَو ، جِه اَلْهِي كِی اَوِیْرِ ،
یَهِوْنِ وِیْرِ چِپَرُ تِیَو ، جِه سَوَانِ نِه كِنَّا سِیْرِ ،
كَسْتُونِ وِیْرِ چَنْدُ تِیَو ، جَو كَرْتُونِ وِیْرِ وِیْرِ ،
وَا هِیْرِ جِی وِیْرِ ، چِلُونِ كَرِیَانِ چِپَرِیْنِ !

The camels are my enemies, so are the camel-men,
my brothers-in-law are also my enemies.

The wind which has blown away the footprints of
Punhū has become my fourth enemy.

1. These are the names of mountains.

2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.388.

The sun which by setting delayed me has become
my fifth enemy.

My sixth enemy is the mountains, which have not
kept their path straight

The moon which has not risen early is the seventh
enemy

When the birds settle down
I rush through the mountain.¹

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf does not like these elements which display qualities of brute force and hardness because they cause miseries to the weak.

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf prefers the light of the moon to that of the sun, considering it soothing and full of comfort. The poet depicts the moon as the go-between for lovers to whom they disclose their secrets and from whose company they derive comfort:

ناميندي نهارَ ، پهرين سج پرئين ٿي ؛
آئون جي ڏيئڻ سنيها چئج چنڊ ! اڳار ،
ساجن ! سڀ چمارَ ، اکيون اواهنجي آسري .

1. Shāh ^vanī, op. cit., p.505.

As you arise, first of all you must look at
my beloved.

Give him the numerous love messages that I am
going to give you.

O moon! tell him, sweetheart! all my life
my eyes will be waiting for you.¹

It should be said that the full moon in rural areas where there is no electricity, has great importance because it brings cheerfulness. It illuminates the whole environment with its cool soothing light cast over the trees, rivers and everywhere. It is common practice for weddings to be arranged on the fourteenth day of the moon's cycle, and for lovers to meet at the full moon. In other words the moon has great romantic significance in everyday life. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf has a lover express his views on the moon in the following lines:

اڄُ پُٺِ اِجائِي ، چوڏهِي ماہَ چنڊَ جي ،
مُونَ گهرِ مُونَ پرينَ جي ، اڇلُ جي وائي ،
مُونَ گهرِ وائِي ، پيئي ڪامَ ڪرنَ ۾ :

Tonight it is bright, because it is the fourteenth
day of the moon

1. ShāhVānī, op. cit., pp.170-1.

My beloved is due to come to my house

In my house there is jubilation, but the envious
ones are embittered.¹

To sum up, Rūmī expresses great admiration for the sun, attributing to it double implication; it is the source of nourishment, for humans as well as trees and grass, an attribute which it shares with God. Similarly it is the radiance of Shams al-Dīn which is the source of his inspiration and happiness. Just as, without the light of the sun nothing can survive in the darkness, so, without Shams al-Dīn for Rūmī there will be only spiritual darkness and death.¹ It is clear that for Rūmī the sun is a much more powerful image than it is for Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf.

Water

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī makes extensive use of the image of water. As Schimmel has shown, the image of water is found in the works of many Muslim poets because of its prominence in the Qur'ān. In their poetry water represents the origin of everything, including the very existence of human life. In addition it serves as the source of sustenance for every living creature.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.161-2.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.63.

Following the tradition of several of his poetic predecessors, Rūmī expresses his views on the Divine Nature or Essence of water. According to Rūmī it has numerous functions serving, at times as a blessing and Divine mercy in the form of rain, and at other times bringing the wrath of the Almighty on sinners, causing misery, disaster and death.¹

In the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, the image of water appears continuously and seems to have been greatly favoured by him. It occurs extensively in four surs of his Risālo, namely, Sur Sārang, Srīrāg, Samuḍhī and Suhṇī. Although references to water can be found in other surs, these are less extensive.

In the above mentioned surs water is dealt with on different levels. Unlike Rūmī whose thoughts are sequential, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's are presented in a seemingly haphazard manner. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's style is distinctly non-narrative and non-sequential ⁱⁿ by comparison with the ~~thorough~~ narrative form of Rūmī's poetry.

Most of the meanings which Rūmī associates with water are taken from the Qur'ān. For example, he says that the function of water is to purify and sanctify sinners. Moreover,

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.75-80.

water symbolises Divine Mercy or rahmat brought about by the Prophet Muḥammad and the Saints. But the same water which may be a blessing can also bring destruction to the infidel.¹

When suggesting the religious connotations of water Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf follows the same Sūfī tradition as Rūmī. In this respect the ideas of the two poets correspond.

In the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf there are a number of verses which refer to the Prophet Muḥammad. For example the poet says:

روضي تان رسول جي ، ڪنو وڃڙين وارو ،
پريائون پير پئي ، نظر سين نارو ،
هادي ! پر حڪم سين ، هي تر تاسيارو ،
نرمل نظارو ، پئي پساو پاھجو .

Flashes of lightening have started from the tomb of the Prophet.

They have approached flashing and filled the spout² (with water).

At the command of the guide, because this place has been thirsty.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.76-80.

2. The spout for conveying rain-water down from the roof of the house.

The beloved has manifested his sanctified splendour.¹

In the above verse there is a suggestion of the blessing of the Prophet Muhammad. It seems that our poet is suggesting that both the rain and the well-being brought about by it, have been brought about at the command of the Prophet. Just as the Prophet of Islam is considered by the Muslims to be the raḥmat al-^cālamīn, so too the rain possesses this quality of bringing prosperity to the whole world. This may be one of the reasons why when he thinks about the rain, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is reminded of the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad. Schimmel has also pointed out this similarity between the characteristics of the rain and those of the Prophet Muhammad.²

Rūmī speaks of the "ocean of inner meaning" and the outside world. He calls the sea by different names, such as 'the water of Life' or an 'ocean of Unity', which has immeasurable depth. The outside forms which one sees around are straws. They have no significance and hide the actual sea.³

1. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., p.960.

2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, p.258.

3. Schimmel, A.M., The Triumphal Sun, p.77.

In Sur Sāmūdhī and Sur Srī Rāg¹ Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf speaks elaborately on different aspects of the sea. On the one hand, he refers to the amazing vastness and depth of the sea, which conceals within itself numerous secrets and Divine attributes. It symbolises the ocean of divine love and knowledge. If a seeker is able to attain even a drop of it, it will suffice for a lifetime. He expresses this idea in the following lines:

سِوَا كَرِ سَمُنَدِ جِي ، جَت جَرُ وَهِي تُو جَالُ ،
سُنِين وَهِن سِيرُ مَ ، مَالِطُكَ ، مَوِي لَالُ ،
جِي مَسُو جَرِي مَالُ ، تَه پُو جَارَا ! پُرِ رَتِيِين .

Worship the sea, where water is flowing in
abundance

Hundreds of precious pearls and rubies are flowing
in its midst.

Even if you can get a portion of it,

O worshipper! you will have received your full
share.²

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.191-279.

2. Ibid., p.200.

تاری وانہ تراز کی ، منجھا موج ، ملاح !
دانهون کن دریاہ جیون ، اونہی جا آگاہ ،
سونهن جی صلاح ، وٹ تہ ویر لنگھی وجین .

O sailor! sail your boat away across the waves

The knowledgeable warn against the dangers of
the deep sea.¹

Take the advice of the guide, so that you may
cross the tide safely.²

In connection with the same image of the sea being equated with the world, Rūmī³ and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, in the tradition of their Ṣūfī predecessors, use the symbol of the pearl and oyster. Both employ it with its Ṣūfī implications, comparing the life of the sālik to that of the oyster. Although the oyster lives in the sea it does not taste the sea water.⁴ Consequently, it is rewarded with a pearl. In similar manner a sālik who lives in the world but does not become involved in it, is rewarded with Divine Grace. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf expresses his views thus:

1. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses the word river in the verse. This he does frequently to fit the rhyme scheme.
2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.230.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.79.
4. *It only tastes a drop of rain.*

سڀ سمنڊين سڀي ، اهر آساروڻ ،
باڙو پيبي نه ، ٻيڙي ، منو مه لڳوڻ ،
ماڻڪُ تي مڙيوڻ ، جنءُ تنگ ڪڍيائين تار ۾ .

The oyster is born and lives in the sea,

But has hopes on in the clouds.

It does not drink the salty water, nor does
it touch fresh water

It receives a pearl because it remains thirsty
within the deep waters.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf who lived in a rural area saw the distress, which lack of water caused to every living creature. Rain was desperately needed by everyone in a pastoral and agricultural society. The very existence and well-being of all organisms depend on water. The following verse reveals this:-

سارنگ کي سارين ، ماڙهو مرگ ، ميهيون ،
آڙيون اهر آسري ، تارا توارين ،
سڀون جي سمونڊ ۾ ، نئي سج نهارين ،
پلر پيارين ، نه سنگهارن سک ٿي .

1. Shāh wānī, op. cit., p.830.

Human beings, deer and buffaloes all long for the rain.

The wild ducks hope for the cloud,

Whilst the cuckoo is also crying.

The oysters in the sea wait every morning for it.

Let the countrymen drink the rain water and become content.¹

Such a scene must have moved the poet who pleads and prays for rain on their behalf:

سارنگ ! سار لهيج ، الله لگ اجين جي ،
پاهي پوچ پئن م ، ارزان ان ڪريج ،
وطن وسايج ، ته منگهارن مڪر ٿي .

O rain! in the name of God, look after the thirsty ones

Let there be plenty of water on the ground,
to make the grain cheap.

Let the country flourish, and
the countrymen become prosperous.²

In the same sur the poet goes on to give a contrasting description in which the places and creatures are the same but

1. Shāhvaṇī, op. cit., p.965.

2. Ibid., pp.964-5.

the rain has brought cheerfulness, and rejoicing:

مُنْدَ تِي مَنَدَلْ مَنِدِيسَا، كِي اُوهِرُنْ اَوِيْ ،
چَاچِرِ تِي چُنِنِ مِ ، مِيهُونِ جَرِنِ مَوِكْ ،
سَرِهِيُونِ تِيُونِ سَنگَهَارِيُونِ ، پَرِيو پَارِنِ طُوَقْ ،
مِيهَا ، چِيپَرْ ، فَنگِيُونِ ، جِتِ تِيْنِ سَپِي تَوِكْ ،
لاهِبِنِ مَتَانِ لَوِكْ ، تُولَايِي جَا تِيَهَرَا .

It is the season (of rain) the feasts are arranged,
and the clouds of rain have sent showers.

The foam has drained into the lower spots of
grassy-land, and the buffaloes are cropping
plenty

The countrywomen are happy and making garlands
of flowers.

Gourds of different types, cucumbers and mushrooms
are all in abundance

The days of suffering are over. ^۱

Our poet portrays a picture of the countryside after the
rain, and its resultant wellbeing:-

1. ShāhWānī, op. cit., pp.971-72.

بَرَوْنَا، تَرَوْنَا، وَنِيُونُ تُرَابُونُ ،
بِرَهْ جَوِ پَتِنِ نِي ، كِنِ وَلُوژَا وَايُونُ ،
مَكَلُّ پَرِينِ هَتْرَا ، سَنگَهَارِيُونُ مَایُونُ ،
سَارِي تَدَهْنِ سَامُهِيُونُ ، بُولَایُونُ رَایُونُ ،
بَانِهِيُونُ # پَایُونُ ، پُکِي سُهْنِ پَاهِجِي .

It has rained in the barren plains, in the Thar
desert and even in the valleys.

At the break of day one hears the sound of
churning.

The nomadic women are content having their
hands full of butter.

They are busy milking different types of buffaloes.

The maid-servants and the ladies of the house
are in high spirits in their thatched cottages.¹

This is the positive aspect of water in the poetry of Shāh
^cAbd al-Latīf. The poet also, however, presents its destructive
aspect. Rūmī gives examples from religious sources, where the
water of the Nile which was a boon for the Israelites proved
destructive, bringing wrath, poison and death for the infidel
Egyptians.² In contrast, the examples given by Shāh ^cAbd
al-Latīf are not from religious sources, but from folk stories.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.963-4.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.76.

In Sur Suhṇī our poet describes the turbulence of the river and the destruction it causes:

دَهَشَتْ دَمُّ دَرِيَاةٍ هَمْ ، رَجَتْ جَايُونَ جَانَارِنِ ،
نُكُو سُنْدُو سِيرُ جُو ، مَيِّ ذِ مَلَاخِنِ ،
دَرِنْدَا دَرِيَاةٍ هَمْ ، وَاكَا كَثُو وَرِنِ ،
سَجَا بِيژَا بَارِ هَمْ ، هَلِنَا هِيكَ وَجِنِ ،
پُرزُو پِنْدَا نِ رِيِي ، تَخْتُو مَنجَهَا تِنِ ،
كُو جُو قَهْرُ كُنِنِ هَمْ ، رِنَا رِكِينِ وَرِنِ ،
أَتِي أَلْتَارِنِ ، سَاهَرُ ! سِيرُ لَنَكْهَاءِ تُونِ .

There is havoc in the river, the home of the water
creatures

None knows the limit of it (water) even the
sailors do not know the extent of it.

The blood-thirsty creatures of the river hurl and
charge about.

The very ships sink right into the deep waters.

Not a strip (of ship) is visible

Not a plank has come to the surface

The tyranny of the whirlpool is such that who ever
enters, one never re-emerges.

O Sahaṛ! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep
water.¹

1. Shāhvaṇī, op. cit., p.299.

Apart from the above-mentioned images of water, Shāh Abd al-Latīf like Rūmī makes other references to less obvious forms of water; in particular, the water of the eyes or tears. Sometimes he has the lover challenge the rain saying that if it had learned from the lover, it would never have stopped raining (shedding tears).

وَسَلُّ الْكَلْبَيْنِ رَجَاءً ، جِي هُنْدَ سَكِينِ مِيهَ ،
تَه هُونْدَ رَاتُونِ رَدِيهَ ، هَسِ بُونْدَنِشُونِ نَهَ كَرِينِ .

If you had learnt raining (shedding tears) from
the eyes, o rain,

Then you would not have stopped drizzling day
and night.¹

Elsewhere he says:

اَكِنِ كِي آهِيَنِ ، وَذَا وَجَهَ وَرَهَلُ جَا ،
مَنْدِي بِيْنِيُونِ مَامَرُو ، جِهِيْتَرُو نَهَ لَاهِيَنِ ،
جَنَهَ سِي كَكَّرِ اَيَمِ ، اَلْمِيُونِ آهِيَنِ ،
جَهَرُ قَرُّ نَهَ لَاهِيَنِ ، وَسَنِ سَانُوْلِي مِيهَ جَانِ .

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.961.

The eyes have several ways of fighting
They pick a quarrel and will not give up
Like the clouds in the sky, they have loaded
themselves (with tears)
They never stop drizzling, and pour down like
seasonal rain.¹

Animals and Birds

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī refers to numerous animals and birds in his work. Most of them are concrete examples taken from his everyday experiences. Certain of them have some association with Qurānic or religious themes or have already been used by other Ṣūfīs before him in a spiritual context. There are other images of animals and birds which are mythological in character, but are used by the poet to point to some Ṣūfī or moral lesson.²

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also uses animals and birds but not as many as Rūmī. Like Rūmī, his imagery is also taken from the birds and animals he sees around him, although a few are from a mythological Islamic source.

Schimmel draws attention to Rūmī's treatment of the camel. Although it is an ill-natured animal, nevertheless, with

1. Shāhvāni, op. cit., p.999.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.93-95.

training it can serve man well. Rūmī likens the camel to the human body, which may symbolise man's baser aspects and instincts. Because of its bad nature the camel eats thorns, although it may be grazing in the garden of Iram.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also condemns the camel for its bad habits and sinful nature:

أَلْهِ بَدْمٌ وَوَلَّ جَاءَ ، مَانُ مَكْرِيُونُ بِحَرِي ،
كَدَاتُورُو كَرَهُو ، لِحْنُو لِأَلِي كَاءَ ،
رَانُ مِي سَنَدِي مَاءَ ! مُونُ بَالِزْنُ بِكُوْرَهَا ، عَنُو .

I have fastened the camel to a tree so that it should eat the buds.

But the ill-natured camel is secretly eating the salty shrubs.

O mother! this camel has caused much distress to me.²

Here the poet may be interpreted as alluding to the animal instinct in human beings, which leads them astray. Schimmel also refers to this image of the camel used by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf as a stubborn camel-soul, which needs training

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.93-4.

2. Shāh ^vānī, op. cit., p.175.

to bring it to the right path.¹

On the other hand, our poet treats the camel elsewhere as a good friend and companion to human beings who is useful in many ways.² For example, he says:-

ميا ! تو مهار ، سچي پايان سون جي ،
چارين چندن چوتيون ، نايو ميندي ٿار ،
سندي پي پچار ، جي مون رات رسا هين .

O camel! I will adorn you with a golden rein
And feed you on sandalwood, and branches of
henna.

If only you can take me to the place
of my beloved tonight.³

Our poet even praises the camel in the following lines:-

تک لاکيو کرهه ، کورين ديني گدوم ،
اگر سونه تنوم ، مل مهانگو م چنو .

1. Schimmel, Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, p.178.

2. Shāh Wāḥī, op. cit., p.176.

2. Here the camel can be seen as the *انسان* or even *انسان* which has lost its original lowly qualities and is able to carry men to the Beloved.

1

The camel which is worth several thousands
I have bought for millions
It is worthy of my courtyard,
Do not say that it cost me a lot.¹

In Rūmī's work "the cow or ox symbolises the body or the carnal soul which has to be slaughtered; and those who 'worship fodder' are comparable to the cow and will die like asses".² Sometimes he uses the sea-cow to symbolise the lower soul - nafs^c amāra, which is transformed by Divine grace into the soul at peace, nafs mut ma'inna. Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf, by contrast, uses cows and buffaloes to symbolise the prosperity and happiness for country folk:

موتی ماندای جا ، پری کبائین پر ،
وچون وصل آئیون ، گووان کھی کر ،
میھون پالی مرادیون ، تذا پرن تر ،
وقدی اوہ آئیون ، پنی لانی قر ،
ساری اچو سوا میھون ، تبن کیر سجر ،
سالی وانین ور ، پریون پرچل جون کیون .

It has started raining, and building up edges

1. Shāh Wāḥidī, op. cit., p.184.

2. Schimmel, A.M., The Triumphal Sun, London, 1980, p.96.

1. In Sur Khambhat, the poet has used the camel to symbolise the lower soul nafs^c ammāra, which once trained is capable of achieving a higher goal. Therefore it should not be under estimated.

Delightedly flashes of lightnings have come
bringing rain with them.

The buffaloes graze at leisure in the cool pastures
with udders full of milk, they have come
having calves behind them.

One who is the supporter of the lonely women
comes to make friends with them.¹

Elsewhere again cows are mentioned with reference to
rural life, where people notice the change in the behaviour of
cows, because of the rain and plenty of grass:

وَسِي تَدَه وَس ، مُنَد مَرَوِي مِيَه جِي ،
كَتَرِن كِيَتَا جِدِيَا ، جِي مَرِيُونُ تِي مَس ،
گَاہَا مُتِي گَعَس ، مُكُ نَه كُنَدَا تَدِيَرَا .

When it rains, it brings prosperity, in the season
of rain.

Those stubborn ones (cows) who would not allow
themselves to be milked, have given up their
abstinence.

The calves on their way are no more suffering nor
weaklings.²

This verse depicts the environment of a countryside, with

1. Shah Wani, op. cit., pp.981-82.

2. Ibid., p.961.

plenty of green grass that seems to have grown as the result of rain. There is no implication of cows being associated with the lower soul nor does it seem to have any other spiritual interpretation.

Rūmī uses the images of the pig, horse, ass, wolf, cat, mouse and dog, all to represent the concept of nafs or sensual lust. Sometimes, however, he says that when these animals are trained they can carry their owner to his goal. "Even the pig can reach a place superior to the Lion of the Sky (the Zodiacal sign Leo) from trying one sip of this wine".¹ Rūmī also mentions the dog with reference to the Seven sleepers in the Qur'ān.²

Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf does not mention as many animals as Rūmī, but he does speak about some of them. For example he treats the dog in the same manner as Rūmī does:

كُنْتُ كَرْتِي هَذِيونَ ، جَوَانِمِرْدِ جَكْرُ كَاءِ ،

الدُّنْيَا جِيْفَةٌ وَطَلَّأَهَا كَلَابُ ، أَي هِيْبِن سِيْن لَاءِ .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.97.

2. Ibid., pp.97-102.

the true hero

The dog chews bones, *but* eats *his* liver (*ie suffers silently*)

"the world is a corpse and those who yearn for it are dogs." This you should understand. 1

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses the image of the horse and the lion in Sur Kedārō in connection with the bravery of Imām Husain. Moreover, the lion is used as a title for ^cAlī in a number of places:

گھوڑو گھوڑ پلاٹو ، مٺين زين تڙي ،

علي شير پٽن کي ، ايسو سڏ کري ،

قضا ڪنہ تڙي ! جنہ امر الاهي آيو .

The bridegroom² made ready the horse
by putting the saddle on it.

^cAlī, the lion, stands and calls his sons.

How could the predestined waver?

This was the command of God.³

So neither the horse nor the lion are used by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf to represent the carnal soul, nor have these images as many connotations as in the work of Rūmī who uses them in

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p. 459.

2. I.e. Husain.

3. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p. 931.

both senses. Rūmī distinguishes between the worldly lion which seeks prey and the lion of the Lord that seeks freedom and death. He even alludes to ^CAlī as God's lion. Rūmī is fascinated by the lion's majesty and power and compares Shams al-Dīn to a lion or a panther who is the master of all lions, and lives in the forest of the lover's soul. The lion is likened to the Beloved or the Perfect man.¹

Apart from actual animals, Rūmī refers to imaginary animals like Burāq and Duldul. The former is mentioned with reference to the Prophet Muḥammad who is said to have ascended to heaven, into the Divine Presence on a burāq. The burāq is described as the animal of love, a winged horse, which is in contrast to the baser soul. Rūmī makes Shams al-Dīn ride the swift burāq of love. The duldul is mentioned as ^CAlī's riding animal, a noble, white mule.²

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf also uses these animals in similar contexts. For example about duldul he says:

کَرَمَلا کُکُورِي ، دُلْدُل رَتَا پِيرَ ،
سُون دُنْدِي شِيرَ ، مَتَاء سَجُ مُرَكُونُ .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.105.

2. Ibid.

Karbala became coloured (red); the feet of the
duldul became red,

While the lion¹ kept attacking until the sun went
down.²

Rūmī mentions several other animals, including the elephant which is interpreted on the one hand as the lower qualities or body "which are subdued by the lion 'heart' or the miraculous soul-birds".³ On the other hand, the elephant is equated with the seeker, like whom it is ever yearning for its original home India. Only a strong animal like an elephant can dream about India, which is said to be the spiritual land. Rūmī speaks of spiritual Hindustān, to which Ibrāhīm b. Adhām returned after breaking his worldly chains. Bāyāzīd Bistāmī's encounter with Khizr is again compared with elephants seeing India.⁴

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not refer to any of the Sūfīs mentioned above in the context of the elephant, nor does he mention the elephant in captivity yearning for its home, India. Nevertheless he does speak of chains which the soul breaks

1. I.e. Husain.
2. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.941.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.107.
4. Ibid., p.108.

with one pull, to free itself to return to the beloved:

مَوَّ نِيَّرَ تَدَةَ تَاوَلِيُون، بِنْدَرَهَ پَنْدَهَ پِيَاَس،
جِدِهَ سَجَلِي يَارِ پِيَاَس، چَرَكَه چَنَابَتِيَن هِيَكْرِي .

It was tied with hundreds of chains,
ten shackles and fifteen ropes.

When it recollected the beloved,
it broke them all with just one pull.¹

This reminds one of Ibrāhīm b. Adhām breaking worldly chains but there is no reference to him. In the above verse, the subject is ambiguous. It either refers to the camel, which is more probable, because the usage is in Sur Khanbhāt where the poet has already mentioned the camel, or this is a direct reference to the soul.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf refers to the elephant in the context of the story of the blind man and the elephant. As Schimmel has pointed out, this story was used by Abū Hāmid al-Ghazzālī, then by Sanā^cī, and later by Rūmī.² It is most probable that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf came to know about this image from Rūmī. He comments on it in the following words:

1. Shāh Wāṣṣī, op. cit., pp.182-3.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.39.

مُني هائي تي ماڻرو ، آڇي رڪڻو آندڻ ،
مناڙين هٿن سين ، اکين ڪين پسن ،
في الحقيقت فيل ڪي ، سڄا سڄاهڻ ،
سنڌي سردارن ، بهيڙت پيا ڪري .

The blind ones have begun to argue over the
dead elephant.

They cannot see it, but they feel it with
their hands

In reality, the people with sight can only
perceive it.

It is the sight of the chiefs¹
that makes us see things.²

The elephant is mentioned in a number of other places in
his work, as for example in Sur Bilāwal and Sur Keḍāro where
Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf talks of a battlefield where horses and
camels are used.

With regard to bird imagery Rūmī speaks of the rose and
the nightingale's longing which reflect his own yearning in
separation from Shams al-Dīn his beloved.³ In the work of
Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf the imagery of the rose and the nightingale

1. I.e. spiritually-guided or knowledgeable people who can help others on the path
of spirituality.
2. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, op. cit., p.1008.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.114-15.

common in Islamic countries as well as in India, is not found.

Rūmī refers to several birds and insects, as having religious significance. For example he describes the bee, which feeds on pure, sweet honey as in the Qurʾān. The bee is likened by Rūmī to the believer who is nourished by Divine light. There is also reference to ants, in relation to Solomon. They are described as small earthbound creatures, which are afraid of the power of love. He even mentions the snake saying that if the 'ant' which represents lust is not killed, it will become a snake.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf rarely describes birds and insects in the manner in which they are treated in the Qurʾān. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf also refers to snakes, describing them as extremely dangerous creatures, whose bite immediately kills the person.

سَنَّا پانءَ مَ سَپُ ، سُڪا جَنِينَ پِيٽَ ،
تَنِينَ جِيءَ جِهِيٽَ ، جَنگنَ کي جوکو ٿِي .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.108-109.

Do not consider snakes as being weak,
with tapered stomachs

Their attack can be very dangerous
even to brave ones.¹

Rūmī speaks of the pigeon, comparing the fluttering of its wings to a lover's heart, when he approaches the beloved. A pigeon that lives on the roof of the beloved is considered to be more precious than anything in the world. A pigeon that lives in the sanctuary in Mecca attains eternal life.² In the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf the pigeon is not mentioned directly. However, the birds referred to in Sur Kedāro as taking the message to Medina about the death of Ḥusain can be assumed to be pigeons.³

Rūmī does not like the crow at all, calling it ugly and dirty. He considers that it lives on unclean food, although it can be trained to give up its bad habits.⁴ In general, Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf seems to be fond of the crow, although he also sometimes calls it dirty because it lives on filth. Nevertheless, the crow image is used by our poet because of its popularity among the village women, who give their messages to crows for their beloveds. The rural women address the crow in words of

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.1220.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.120.

3. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.936.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.118.

endearment because it brings messages from their beloved:

ڪانگلَ قَرِيبَنِ جا ! آجي وائي وڻ ،
نو ڇو ڀوءَ بهارَ جي، مُشڪِ ڪثُورِي مَٺِي ،
آجي عَجِيبَنِ جو اورانگهه اڳڻ ،
توڪي پسي تڻ ، سُونِيئا صافُ تپي .

Kangal¹ of my beloved! come and bring me the
message (of love)

In you is the smell of spring, and great quantities
of musk fragrance

Come (since) you have crossed the courtyard of the
beloved.

A look at you makes all pains and aches disappear.²

In contrast Rūmī does not have such words of endearment for a crow, which according to him, distracts lovers and disrupts their union. The rooster, on the other hand, is highly praised by Rūmī, as it calls man to prayer. It is a punctual bird and reminds one of one's duties.³

2. ShāhWānī, op. cit., pp.1198-99.

1. Kāng means crow in Sindhī. The addition of al as a suffix makes it a word of endearment. Since the crow is the messenger of love here, it is addressed in loving terms.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.121.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also comments on the crow's negative aspects and bad behaviour.

سو ڪانگُ مَر قاصِدُ ڪَرِ ، جو سدا ڏُونڊِي ڏُونڊِي ڪِي ،
ڪي ڪندو پهنجي پيٽي جي ، ڪي ويندو دوستن دَرِ ،
جِي جي ٻوليائي ”ٻَر ٻَر“ سو نيا پا ڦيئي رهيو !

Do not make the crow your messenger,
who always searches for filth.

Will it satisfy its stomach or will it go to your
friend's house?

He whose speech is brr brr¹
what message can he take (for you)?²

Rūmī is fond of the hawk or falcon, which he conceives as the symbol of the highly born soul. Although the hawk is a bird of prey, killing and eating other small birds, Rūmī nevertheless praises it, saying that it has to teach other birds a lesson. Then he gives an example of a Ṣūfī master who, out of necessity, has to be harsh to his students.³ It seems that the poet believes that the use of strength and even cruelty is

1. I.e. the sound of the crow, which he considers very annoying and unpleasant to hear.

2. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., p.1202.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.117.

permissible in certain cases.

There are references to the hawk only once or twice in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf.¹ His choice of bird to represent the pure soul is the swan which he considers a gentle, pure and beautiful bird. Sometimes he uses the swan and peacock as synonymous, because of their beauty and special qualities. According to him the swan eats only pearls.² He says:

اڪڙيون اوڙاهه ۽ اُڀو تڪي تار ،
پٿون جي پاتار، هنج تئين جو هيرتون .

It stands and searches in the depth of the sea.

The swan is used to the particles (pearls)
which lie at the bottom (of the sea).³

He contrasts the swan with the seagulls, waterfowls, herons, crows and other birds which he considers as unclean because they live on filth and fish. He comments:

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., p.1222.

2. Ibid., p.1209.

3. Ibid., pp.1209-10.

ماھیکِ چوھر جن جو ، ہنجِ حُضوری سی ،
چلر ۾ چھنب ہٹی ، مچی کین نہ ای ،
لوک نہ لکنا تی ، جیلاہ یوٹن بگھن لدنا .

Their food is precious stones; the swans belong
to that species.

They never put their beaks in the filth,
to eat the fish.

They cannot be distinguished from the common
folk, because they mix among the 'waterfowl'.¹

Rūmī also describes different types of waterfowl or ducks,
saying that they do not belong to the earth and that they
should therefore go and swim in the Divine Sea.² As already
mentioned, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf warns the swan not to keep
company with such birds, because they are unclean and will
bring a bad name to the swan.³

Here one cannot overlook the difference of approach of the
two poets. Although dealing with the same topic, i.e. the
human soul, their presentation is quite different. There is a
display of masculine strength in the hawk symbol used by

1. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., p.1217.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.122.

3. Shāh^vānī, op. cit., pp.1212-13.

Rūmī, whereas the choice of the swan by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf reflects his gentle and non-violent character. It seems that Pīr Ḥusām al-Dīn Rāshidī must have thought about this aspect in both poets when he commented in one of his presidential speeches on the anniversary of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf:

In the Maṣnavī of Rūmī there is no such tenderness, (softness خرمى) and gentleness (لطافت) as one would find in the Risālo. It is as gentle and soft as pure silk, which is pleasant to the touch.¹

Like Rūmī, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses bird imagery to express Ṣūfī ideas:

سو بگي سو بچرو ، سو سُر ، سوئي هنج ،
پيهي جان پروڙو ، مون پهجو منجه ،
تدیل جو ڏنجه ، سو ماري تو منجه ڦري .

The bird, the cage, the reed and the swan
are in reality one.

When I delved down within myself I realised
that what is hurting my body, that hunter is
roaming around within.²

1. Rāshidī, Pīr Ḥusām al-Dīn, Latīf Salgrāh Makḥzan, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, No.3, p.13.

2. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.1219.

Rūmī refers to the crane along with the stork, crow and raven, who cannot appreciate the laments of the nightingale. He likens it to the common people, who cannot understand the songs of lovers and saints.¹ Thus the crane for Rūmī is an insignificant bird. In contrast, for Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf it is worthy of praise.

It is interesting to see how Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf transforms Rūmī's idea of the elephant's dream of 'spiritual Hindustān' to the dream of the kūnj or crane, who is reminded of its chicks on the Roh mountain;² in one of the verses our poet comments:

اُتَرَ دِي اَلَاپُ ، خَالِهَانَكُونُ كُونُجُ كَرِي ،
پيرين پسي منجه خواب ، وهاطي وايون كري .

Since yesterday, the crane has been calling in the north

Because she has seen the beloved in a dream,
she is crying at that late hour.³

Here, one can say that the crane in the poet's work

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.116.
2. Shāh ^Wanī, op. cit., p.1263.
3. Ibid., p.1264.

represents the seeker, who is ever longing for his eternal home. Our poet uses Roh instead of Hindustan as the spiritual home.

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf also praises birds for their unity among themselves, since they fly in groups, and our poet recommends that people should learn from them the lesson of unity:-

وگِرَ کِئُو وَتَنِ ، پَرِتِ نَه چَنِنِ پَالِ مِ
پَسُو پَکِیَرَنِ ، مَاتَرَهِنَانِ مِیثُ گِھٹُو .

They fly in flocks, and never break their love
among themselves.

Look at the birds. There is more friendliness
among birds than human beings.¹

This verse strongly suggests that the ideas expressed in Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf's poetry were not confined to Sūfism alone.

Rūmī refers to a number of imaginary birds like the humā and sīmurgh, which are mentioned by earlier Sūfīs. Some of the names of birds he mentions are also found in the

1. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., p.1263.

Qur'ān, such as the ^d huhūd, hoopoe and others.¹ There are no references in the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf to such exotic birds, which are not found in Sind.

Apart from the animals and birds mentioned above, Rūmī mentions the crocodile which represents this world, which is always ready to eat the greedy person who is never satisfied.²

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf speaks of crocodiles, alligators, and different types of fish which are all ready and waiting to tear Suhnī to pieces. Here again the reference is to a local story.

گھڑی گھڑو هتِ ڪري ، الاهي نهارِ !
جنگد جُرڪي وات ۾ ، سِي کي سيمار ،
چوڙا پيٽرا چڪا ۾ ، لڙ ۾ لڙيس وار ،
لکين چھٽيس لوھڻيون ، ٿيليون ٿرنيون ڌار ،
مڙيا مڇ هزار ، پاڻا ٿيندي سوھڻي !

She entered with an earthenware jar in her hand,
and relying on God.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.108.

2. Ibid., p.112.

Her leg was in the mouth of jarko,¹ and her head
went to the alligator

Her bangles were bent in the mire,
and her hair was floating in the muddy water

Hundreds and thousands of fish (lohinyūn)² and
other dangerous sea-creatures from far away,
assembled around her

Thousands of crocodiles gathered; thus Suhnī is
going to be torn to pieces.³

Apart from the animals and birds already mentioned,
there are references in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf to
other birds which are typically local birds of the poet's
country, such as the bābīho (i.e. the desert bird), tāro⁴ (a
desert cuckoo) and the chīho⁵ and others.

Images from daily life

Rūmī and Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf both use everyday imagery
to symbolise the spiritual concepts. At times their images are
more or less of similar nature, but one notices a marked

1. A large freshwater fish.
2. River fish.
3. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., p.288.
4. Ibid., pp.957, 969.
5. A small bird with red spots.

contrast in them. Rūmī's imagery is mostly urban, and that found in the poetry of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is predominantly rural. Given the different environment of the two poets this is not surprising.

Rūmī likens the world to a millstone and man to wheat, which out of necessity needs to be crushed. The fact that the grains suffer and are crushed under the millstone is a necessary requirement for them to be transformed into something valuable.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also believes that a lover has to suffer in order to attain a higher goal. He gives the example of a kiln, which must burn patiently day and night, without allowing heat to escape so that the required results may be achieved:

نِبِهْ، نِهائِينَءَ جَانِ ، دَكْبُو كَوُهْ نَمِ دِي كَبِينِ !

جَرَّ جِپَرِي چَدِّي ، تَوَجَّ بَجْنَدَا عِنِّءَ !

تُونِ پُلُّ كَرِيچِ تِنِّءَ ، رَجْنَهْ كُنِيَارَ كَرِنِ كَمِ سِينِ .

Why don't you hide your love like a kiln?

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.135.

If the flames escape, then how will the pots
be baked?

You should do the same, as the potters do
with their work.¹

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf refers in another context to the beating and smelting of iron by the blacksmith. The iron goes through much affliction, at first being put in the furnace, and then being beaten out, receiving hard blows. All this suffering is inflicted by the beloved, who in this imagery is the blacksmith. This image symbolises the necessity of man's suffering in this world at the hands of God, who in His greater wisdom makes men suffer for their own betterment.²

Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf speaks similarly of charcoal. He admires the patience of charcoal which twice undergoes the process of burning with patience:

هِيَ پَرِ اَگَارِنِ ، پَذَاهِنِ بَرِي جِي ،
هِي كُورِي كَانِيَا ، بِنُو دُوتِي مَنجِه دُگِنِ ،
پَاهَا ! نُهَارِنِ ، مِيژِي رَكْنِيَا مَجَّ لَنِي !

1. Shāh ^vānī, op. cit., pp.1045-46.

2. Ibid., p.111.

It is the tradition of coals that they burn twice
Once they are burnt in the furnace
then they burn again in the fire
The blacksmith himself gathers them
and puts them in the flame.¹

Again in his choice of imagery, Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf concentrates on rural areas where he must have seen the wood being ^{cut} out and burned in a flaming pit to be smothered into charcoal.

Rūmī speaks of the waterwheel which makes a shrieking sound, symbolising the lover's complaints and lamentation.² Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf also speaks of the waterwheel but not of its sound. He refers to the water drawn by the waterwheel, and the sand which is mixed in it. He compares the inseparability of sand and water to the inseparability of the lover's soul from the beloved:

جنہ سے کُوہی نار ، وہن واری گباڈان،

ہیڑو پریان تار ، نہیریانس نہ نہیری

The same way as the water which is drawn from
the well by the waterwheel flows mixed with
sand

1. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, op. cit., p.111.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.136.

My heart, no matter how much I try, cannot be separated from the beloved.¹

Rūmī writes *several times* about bathhouses (ḥammām) and bathing. He describes the need for bathing and the enjoyment of a hot bath. He also refers to bathers' pleasures and pictures on the walls of the bath houses which he describes in *some* detail. He uses the image of the bath for the purpose of expressing the concept of spiritual cleansing and purification.² Although his intention is to use this image for Ṣūfī purposes, at the same time his choice of imagery reflects the urban life of Turkey and Iran. The bath houses in these two countries are of special significance. The bathhouse is not only a public place to wash in, it is also a place to meet friends and neighbours, to gossip and relax.

There are a few references to the ḥammām or hot bathhouse in the work of Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf. Here the image is used negatively:

جوگیترا جہان مہ ، ہنا منجہ حمام ،

آراما آرگت تہا ، اودا نہ آرام ،

کیائون قیام ، آئون نہ جیندی ان ری .

1. Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf, op. cit., p.1044.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.133.

The yogis in the world were as if in a ḥammām★
They were far from rest and they did not approach
the rest.

It is tragic, I cannot live without them.¹

Elsewhere he says:

جَدَائِيْ جَو جَامُ ، دَنَائُونُ دَكِّيْ كِي ،
مَنْكَلُ مِنْهِي مَنْ هِ ، بَارُو هَوْتِ حَمَامُ ،
أَرْكُ تِيُو أَرَامُ ، حَاكَلُ بَسِي عَانَدَا جَو .

They gave to me, the suffering one, a cup of illness
They set alight the stove in my heart,
and the beloved lit the ḥammām
place of mind
The rest vanished, after seeing the lock of hair
of the beloved.²

From both these examples, it is clear that this is not an original image from the poet's own experience but that he may have borrowed it from Rūmī. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is aware of the existence of bathhouses but his feelings towards them are different from those of Rūmī. This reflects the difference of climate between Turkey and Sind. The hot bath which is

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.1103.

2. Ibid., p.412.

★ He probably means fire of ~~hammam~~ not water.

enjoyable in the former, is associated with the fire of torture by our poet from Sind. Although Rūmī and Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf both liken the world to a ḥammām, in Rūmī one notices the heat only after leaving the bath but enjoys it while one is inside. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf also speaks of the world as a ḥammām but the yogis or true sāliks suffer the torture and heat of the world while they are in it, not after leaving.

In rural areas, such as the one where Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf lived, bathing was either a private matter carried out at home or an activity engaged in on the river's edge or at the well by poor people. So there is no concept of bathhouses or ceremonial baths in the work of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, unlike in the work of Rūmī. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases one does find an example of a *washing place* as in the folk story of Mūmal, a rich princess. Here the poet depicts the life-style of the privileged classes.

جِه تَرِ دَوڑُون ، تُونِ ، چوئا چَنَدَن چڪَ عَنو ،

اچَن پَوَنَرِ پَنپولِئا ، پاھِي تَهين پُون ،

راوَل رَتو رُون ، ڪو وَهُ لُگرو اَسْنين .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.133.

At the washing place, where the friends (girls)
wash their long hair full of musk.

The black bees are intoxicated and fall
into that water.

The princes who have savoured their fragrance
shed tears of blood.¹

In order to illustrate the secrets of spiritual love, Rūmī describes in the most intimate detail the sensual relationship between husbands and wives in their private bedrooms. Then he compares such worldly union of man with spiritual union, concluding that the former requires a 'bath' because of pollution whereas the spiritual union does not. He even exhorts man not to involve himself in sexual relationships because this will wear him out but to seek love with the divine spirit.

Similarly Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf takes images from daily life, and from his own environment to express Ṣūfī ideas. He refers to lovers and beloveds by using folk stories. He does not, however, describe in detail their relationship on a sensual level, nor does he mention their bedrooms. In referring to his heroines' longings for their lovers or husbands, he does not describe or comment on any physical contact between the couple. This is in contrast to Rūmī's manner. On certain

1. Shāh-wānī, op. cit., p.720.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.131-32.

occasions Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does mention the bed, but, it is the empty bed which she sees deserted that makes the heroine cry:

رُئَان تِي ، رَاهَا ! هَنْدَ نِهَارُو حَجْرَا ،
پيئي كه كُتُن تِي ، تَنَا پَلَنگ پَرَاهَا ،
دَرِيَايِي دُورَا تَنَا ، وَرَ رِي وَهَاهَا ،
جَايُون ، گَل ، جِهَات ، وَلِ تُو رِي كُنْدِيَسِ كُن سِين !

Ranā! I am looking at the bed and the room
and crying

The cots and the bedstead have become dusty
and worn out.

The pillows are lying useless and dusty
without the husband.

What shall I do with these houses, flowers,
musk and trees without you?¹

On rare occasions the poet mentions the beloved lying beside him in bed, but here again he does not go into details.

He says for example:

اَكُل تَا زِي ، بَهَرِ كُنْدِيُون ، پَكَا پَت سُهَن ،
سُرْهِي سِيحَ ، پَاسِي پَرِين ، مَرُ پِنَا مِيَه وَسِن ،
اَسَان پَرِين ، شَال هُون پَرَاهَرِ دِيَهْرَا .

1. Shāh wānī, op. cit., p.747.

In the courtyard are horses, and outside are
(buffaloes with) twisted horns.

And the courtyard may be adorned with a
thatched roof

Sweet fragrant bed, having the beloved beside (me)

Let the rain keep raining

May the days for me and my beloved be equal.¹

This is an idealised, romantic picture in which there is an emphasis on fragrance and rural prosperity and calm.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf lived in an agricultural country and it is not surprising that he should use farming images in his poetry unlike Rūmī. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf comments on the preparation of the peasants, when there are signs of rain:

اچُ پُلّی اُترَ پارَ تَی ، تاڑی کِی توار ،
ہارن ہرَ سنیاہیا ، سرہا ثنا سنگھار ،
اچُ پُلّی مُنہجی یار ، وسَلّی جا ویسَ کیا .

Even today tāro² have been calling on the
northern side.

1. Shāh-wānī, op. cit., p.963.

2. The desert cuckoo, whose call farmers take as a prediction of rain.

The farmers have prepared their ploughs,
and the countryfolk are cheerful
Today my beloved has worn the dress of rain.¹

The imagery of food

Rūmī, like other Muslim poets, compares the lover's heart and the torture of separation to the kabāb.² Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf follows the same tradition, saying that the test of the true lover is to make his liver and kidneys into kabāb. According to him, love is not a child's game. It demands the sacrifice of the heart and every part of the body and soul.

هَيءَ هَيءَ ! وَهِيَ هَاءٌ ، مَن مَّ مَحْبُوبِي جِي !
جيرا جوشِ جَلَانِيَا ، بُوڪِنِ پَرِي باه !
پَسُو مَجَّ مَنَاءُ ، جِي وَيَسَاهُ نُو وَسْهُو !

Alas, alas! within the soul is the deep and
secret cry for the beloved

Out of passion the liver burns,
and the kidneys also blaze in fire

Look at the flames over me, if you do not
believe me.³

1. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.957.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.138.

3. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.103.

There are several verses of this type in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf where the lover's suffering in separation is compared to that of an organ on the fire. But there are other verses where he describes the lover's body being cut into pieces in the manner of a butcher. Here again, the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf resembles that of Rūmī, who similarly compares the beloved to a butcher, who sells hearts and heads.¹

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf expresses his views on the topic as follows:

كُفِّنَ ۽ كُونِينَ ، اَيَّ پَرِ سَنَدِي سَجَلِينَ ،
سُورِي چَا تَهِيو سُرِين ، دَنِيَّ تَدِيهَالِي تَدِين ،
وِينَا وَرَهُ وَتِين ، اءُ وَايُوژْنَا وَهَاء تُون .

They call and slaughter.

This is the custom of friends

The beloveds hang lovers on the gallows and daily
cauterise them

They distribute the misery of separation.

Come wounded one! and buy it (misery) from them.²

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.141.

2. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.85.

From this example one can deduce that there is a slight difference between Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf and Rūmī. For Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf the beloved is not only a butcher but is even more cruel than that, since he or she constantly inflicts torture on the lover. The lover is so devoted that he not only withstands that treatment but even buys the treatment from him.

Here it seems that both poets are alluding to mystic asceticism, saying that what people might consider cruel, is in fact a sign of God's pleasure with the seeker, whose patience and loyalty he is testing.

Although Rūmī constantly emphasises the importance of fasting and eating less in order to achieve spiritual advancement, he nevertheless describes in great detail the dishes which may be found in the kitchens of the upper classes in Konya. He describes every type of dish from main meals like biryānī, sambusa, several meat dishes and roasted game to sweet-meats like ḥalva, paluda, qaṭā'if and many more. Each of these dishes of course symbolises the spiritual experiences of a lover, in such a way that worldly pleasures are compared to spiritual pleasures, showing the superiority of the latter. It is interesting to notice that Rūmī compares the sweetness of Shams al-Dīn to a variety of sweet-meats. He even speaks of various types of fruit and vegetables mostly

available in the city.¹

These references to rich exotic dishes indicate the influence of social environment on the poet. Being a city dweller and having close contacts with the high strata of society, his food imagery naturally reflects their way of life.

The treatment of food imagery in Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf is in marked contrast to that of Rūmī's. His imagery is not from the upper class kitchen or the food prepared there but it is taken from the life of the poor people. One of the dishes he mentions is the pullāo, offered to Mārūī by ^cUmar in the fort (where she is imprisoned). This also she rejects by expressing her preference for her simple food:

اَلطَّيْنِ كِي چاڙهين ، ٽٽ ڏيهاڻي ، سومرا !
ستا ڪنو ، سيد چي ، سائون سڪاين ،
منجها لنب لطيف چي ، چائر ڪنو چارهين ،
پلاءَ نه پارين ، عمر ! آراڙي سين .

Sumra! daily they bring duth² and cook it.

They dry the green grass in abundance

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.139-149.

2. Wild grass and its grain.

From lumb¹ says Latīf, they cook grains like rice
C Umar! they never prefer the pullāo² to (the food
prepared from) grass.³

Shāh C Abd al-Latīf gives a picture of rural life showing how the peasants survive on the flowers and fruits of scanty wild shrubs. In spite of their poverty they are quite content and grateful to God for providing them with rain water to drink and abundant bushes, trees and shrubs to serve as their source of survival.

His heroine Māruī takes pride in her simple way of life and proudly tells C Umar about her peoples' well-being as follows:

تَنِ وَهِيْنِ وَيَتْرِبْجَنِ مِهْ ، سُدَائِيْنِ سُكَارُ ،
چُنْدِيُو ، اَلْطِيُو چَا رَهِيُو ، سُنْدُو تَدُوْنَرِنِ تَارُ ،
جِنِ جُو وَيَرِنِ سِيْنِ وَاپَارُ ، سِي تَدُوْتِي هُوْنِ نَهْ تَدْبُرَا .

The resourceful countrymen are always blessed
with plenty (food).

We pick the branches of capers and pluck the
fruit and cook it.

1. Wild grass.
2. Rice prepared with meat.
3. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.807.

Those whose dealing is with trees and plants,
those Dothi¹ are never feeble.²

Elsewhere the poet makes Māruī depict the environment in which she and her people live and enjoy life. She is cheerfully thinking of the days of her freedom, when she will go back to live again with her friends in the countryside: وائي :

ويترچن ڏي ويندي ، عمر ۾ آئون ماروئڙن ڏي ويندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
سگر ساهيڙين سين ، ساڙيه منجه ستيندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين
انا ميه ملير ۾ ، ڏاڳا ڏهر ڏوندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
عمر ۾ انهن تديه جا ، ڪوڏر ڦوٽ ڪريندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
گولون گولڙن جيون ، جهي سال جهتيندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
ڪوڪڙ ڪنڊيرن ۾ ، ڦوڪنو ، ڦڪ پريندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
عیدن ٻرادن تي ، ڪه مانڌاڻون ڪيندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .
پسي ڪائي پيت ۾ ، ڏونرا ڏن ڏيندي ،
تديه تادا ائين پکڙين .

1. Countrymen who eat duth, i.e. wild grass and its grain.

2. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.808.

Vāi

(I) shall go to my countrymen,

^CUmar! I shall go to my Mārūāṣā¹

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

Along with my friends, I shall collect sinṅar²
in my home town.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

At the time of the rains in Malīr, I shall wash
my tattered, coarse clothes.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country.

^CUmar, I shall eat the wild fruit of that country

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

I shall pluck the round fruit of the gōlārā³ creeper
and catch it with a bounce.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

I shall take the dry fruit from the storage vessel,
blow it (to clean it) and eat handfuls of it.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

At the time of the ^CĪd and festivities, I shall eat
the khih⁴ and māndhāno⁵

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country

I shall eat the flower of the caper and pay its
fruit as tax

1. Country folk of Mārūī.
2. The pods of a tree called Kando, which are eaten by poor people.
3. A creeper which grows wild in Thar. Its fruit is eaten by the poor.
4. A kind of grass used for fodder.
5. Another species of grass.
6. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.824-25.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country.

Rūmī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf both stress the importance of spiritual wine. Rūmī quotes several references from the Qurʾān, likening wine either to Sharāban Ṭahūran, which will be the reward in paradise, or to the kaṣar which is again a fountain in paradise. He speaks of spiritual wine which has the power to remove all pain and misery from men's hearts. Besides this, it has many mystic qualities so that who ever drinks it is enclosed with Divine experience.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf also refers to this wine, likening it to the Ṭahūra promised in the Qurʾān:

و ائني ؛
وَتَانَ وَجُ مِ مُونُ ، مُهَجَو تَوْنَهِيْن تُونُ ، كَوْنَه سَلِي كَو بِيُو ،
تَوْن تَدِهَانَكُر مَجْهِنِيْن ، جَدِه كُن فَيَكُونُ ،
وَتَانَ وَجُ مِ مُونُ .
أَهْلِي رَسِجِ أَحْمَدَا ، إِلْبَان سَوْرَهِي پُونُ ،
وَتَانَ وَجُ مِ مُونُ .
رَسِجِ مُحَمَّدَ كَارَهِي ، جَتِي هُونَك نَه هُونُ ،
وَتَانَ وَجُ مِ مُونُ .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.149-150.

أَلِهٌ هِنَ أُمَّتَ جُو ، أَهِيْن تُونِهِيْن تُون ،

• وَتَان وَجُ مَ مُون

رَدِجْ كَا كَتَ لَطِيْفَا كِي طَهْوَرَا مَنجَهَا تُون ،

• وَتَان وَجُ مَ مُون

Do not go away from me, for me you are the only one, none else will hear it.

Since (the time you said) "Be" and it "Became" from that time you are within me.

Do not go away from me.

Ahmad! help me in trouble, on the narrow path which lies ahead

Do not go away from me.

Where there will not be a sound¹

Help me, O Muḥammad!

Do not go away from me.

You are the guide of these believers, you are the only one

Do not go away from me.

Give a cup of Ṭahūra to Latīf

Do not go away from me.²

1. This is probably a reference to the grave.

2. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.1096.

The fact that in this vāī Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf is actually asking for heavenly wine is significant. His treatment of this image is ambivalent. Elsewhere in his work he comments that such rewards of paradise and heavenly wine are hindrances on the path of love. For a real lover of God these are insignificant things. What is important for him is the presence of God, i.e. wiṣāl:

، پي مَ طهُورَا ، وانُ اور انگهي اوريان ،
، وچان جي وصالِ کي ، سي سڀ اُجورا ،
حاصلُ حُضُورا ، سي جي سڀ ٿيبي .

Do not drink Tahūra (wine of paradise),

You must go further than this.

Such rewards are merely in-between,

and are only hindrances for the meeting

(i.e. with God - wiṣāl).

Everything will be attained by the presence of
Sammā.² 1

The above verse reminds one of Rābi^Ca al-^CAdawiyya, who is not concerned about paradise and heavenly rewards, her

1. Shāh ^{vāī}, op. cit., pp.1281-82.

2. This is a reference to Sammā, a king, ^{Tamachi} but here it means God.

love for God being for the sake of love.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf makes a distinction between spiritual wine and worldly wine. Spiritual wine, he says, cannot be bought for money, but whoever buys it with his life will be very fortunate. Another characteristic of this wine of love is that it kills whoever drinks it. He says:

جي ائيني سڪَ سُرڪَ جي ، تہ ونہ ڪلاڙن ڪاتي ،
لاهي رڪُ لطيفُ جي ، مٿو وٽِ ماتي ،
نيڪَ ڏيئي پڪَ پي تون ، گھوٽَ ! منجھا گھاتي ،
جو ورنہَ رهاڻي ، سو سِرَ وٽِ سُرُو ساھنگو .

If you are longing for a sip, then go to the
wine makers,

Cut off your head and lay it beside the wine jar,
O bridegroom! swallow a sip of this strong, thick
wine.

That (wine) which intoxicates brave youths
is cheaply attained in return for your neck.²

Rūmī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf both speak of "the magical

1. Smith, Margaret, Rābiʿa the Mystic and her Fellow Saints in Islam, Cambridge, 1928, pp.98-99.

2. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.74.

quality of this wine of love and the Divine cupbearer".¹ Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf speaks of wine and its intoxication in the following words:

وَتَّ وَتَّ وَتِّيَّ مَ ، مَتَّ مَتَّ مَنَدُّ بِشَو ،
قَدْرُ كَيْفَ كَلَاژَ جَو ، بِبَاكِنِ بِشَو ،
اَجِنِ دُرُسُ دُكَانَ تِي ، كَنَدُّ قَبُولُ كِنُو ،
سُرْهًا سُرُ دَنُو ، اَجِكِنِ سُرُكُ سَيِّدُ جِي .

Each cup and each jar of wine has a different
taste

Only those who drink know the worth of the
intoxication of that wine

They come straight to the wine shop
accepting (the condition of giving) their neck

They are delighted to taste a sip, says Sayyid,
and to give their lives.²

On a more mundane level there is, however, another aspect of the treatment of the image of wine by Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf. He points out the dangers of wine-drinking and blames the wine-seller for exploiting young people and being even the cause of their death.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.151.

2. Shāh^c Latīf, op. cit., p.119.

مَوَكِّي چَوَكِي نَه تِييِ ، اَصَلِ اَوِيچِي ذَاتِ ،

وَتَبِيوُنِ دِيئِي وَاتِ ، مَنَارَا جِه مَارِثَا .

The wine-seller cannot be beneficial,
Because he is basically of a low caste,
By giving cups (of wine) to young people
he has killed them.¹

Both Rūmī and Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf make a distinction between ordinary drinkers and those who are spiritually intoxicated and who therefore long for more wine. To sum up, it can be said that the two poets treat the image of wine in more or less the same way.

Historical and geographical allusions

In the work of Rūmī, one finds numerous allusions to a long list of personalities from Islamic sources. He *mentions* the Prophet Muḥammad, *as well as* the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and *also* narrates some stories attributed to each companion of the Prophet. He also relates certain anecdotes about the Sunnīs and Shī^cites, and the martyrs of Karbalā'.²

1. Shāh^wānī, op. cit., p.117.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.184-85.

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf does not narrate any story about the Prophet or the four companions, but he refers to the Prophet Muḥammad as a blessing to mankind in a number of his verses. There are only a few verses in the whole of the Risālo where he mentions the companions of the Prophet, whereas the whole of Sur Kedāro¹ is dedicated to Imām Ḥusain and other members of his family, who were treacherously killed by Yazīd in Karbalā'. Like Rūmī² our poet speaks about Imām ^CAlī as the lion of God and his sons and the bravery of Imām Ḥusain and other princes, who fought on the battlefield. He also pays tribute to them for their ~~many~~ qualities, such as uprightness, patience and courage in standing up against an enemy more powerful than themselves. For example he says:-

ڪر بلا جي پٿر مه خيما ڪوڙيائون ،
جهيڙو يزيد سامهون ، جنهي جوڙيائون ،
مه نه موڙيائون ، پسي تاء ترار جو .

They fixed their tents in the battlefield of
Karbalā'.

They stood against Yazīd and
devotedly engaged themselves in the fight

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., pp.921-948.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.185.

At the sight and heat of swords,
they did not retreat.¹

Rūmī speaks at length about other personalities of early Islamic history. He refers to the representatives of different schools of thought such as Jabarites, Qadarites, and Mu^ctazilites. He uses one particular religious group in his poetry - Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, the 'Pure Brethren', as a symbol of spiritual purity and loyalty.²

On the other hand, one does not find such references in the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. This may be because his audience consisted mainly of illiterate rural people who would not have understood his allusions. His themes are, therefore, simple, being taken from everyday life.

Rūmī also makes reference to figures from Islamic history like the Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd. He even speaks of the Saljuq ruler Sultan Sanjar (d.1157), representing him as a model ruler. He uses the name Sanjar, with those of other ancient rulers, as well as some heroes of pre-Islamic Persian mythology like Suhrāb, Rustam and Kaikavūs.³

1. Shāh^wānī, op. cit., p.926.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.187.

3. Ibid., p.187.

In the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, there are no references to figures from Islamic history nor to rulers contemporary with the author, such as the Kalhoṛā king of Sind or the Mughal rulers of India.¹ But he does praise the rule of Sāmā and Sūmrā who were kings of Sind. The above mentioned two Sindhī dynasties existed hundreds of years before Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. Most of his heroes are local and from Sind. He remembers rulers for the various good qualities they possessed, and commemorates them for being true to the local traditions of Sind.

In Sur Bilāwal the altruism of Jādam Jakhīro² (a Sāmā ruler) is put to the test by the ladies of the Sūmrā royal family, who request him to give them Sām or protection. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf praises Jakhīro for giving Sām or protection to ladies. Sām is the best example of altruism in Sindhī society. The weaker party or person takes Sām from a stronger person. Giving Sām implies taking an oath to stand by that person irrespective of the consequences. In most cases women take Sām with a strong trusted man who can protect them from danger. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf praises Jādam Jakhīro for sacrificing his own life and interests to those of others, to honour the Sindhī

1. At the time of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, Sind was a vassal state of India. ^{Mughal}

2. Ādvānī, op. cit., p.459.

tradition of Sām:

علاوالدين آيو ، كطي چل چگير ،
كهن كين همئو ، كان جهلندو كير ؛
سوئين مام كني ، ابري كنو اڻ پير ،
هو مهائين مير ، پر مستورائين مارنو .

Sultan ^cAlā al-Dīn came along with his army.

None dared (to face him). Who is going to face the arrows?

Abro mounted the camel, because he gave the Sām.

He was the brave leader, but was killed because of the women.¹

In the above verses Jakhīro is referred to as Abro, who afforded refuge to the Sūmrā ladies and gave his life while defending the honour of these women and keeping his promise.

The poet admires Jakhīro's generosity and addresses him thus:²

1. Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.1285-6.

2. Ibid., pp.1286-7.

آبرو اڳاهن ۾ ، پتر جهلو پارِي ،
سمي سوالين کي ، ويله وساري ،
منه مني جگرو ، طاماعن تاري ،
بيجي سي پارِي ، جي عاجز آجورن ۾ .

Abro is the great support amongst all the others

Because of the demands of the petitioners

Sammā has even forgotten to take rest.

The honoured lord is the protector of all
those who have hopes (in him).

He looks after those who are under his protection,
and those who are helpless and destitute.¹

Jām Tamāchī, a Sammā ruler, is another historical figure from Sind's past commemorated by our poet for his true love for Nūrī the fishermaid. He refers to various events associated with his rule. For example, the poet points out that, after marrying Nūrī, Tamāchī exempts all the fishermen from paying taxes, and proves his generosity by helping them out in times of troubles. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf also congratulates him for making a low caste fishergirl his queen, thus breaking the rigid rules of his society. He praises Jām Tamāchī in the following words:

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1286-7.

ڪاڇُ جَنِينِ جو ڪِکِيُون ، مالَ جَنِينِ جا مڙ ،
سَٽِي سِينِي سِيءُ ڪِنَا ، هِيءُ جَنِينِ جا هڙ ،
ڄامُ ! پَرِيءَ لَڏَ ، سانگِيَنَ جي ، سِيءُ ڇِي .

Their food is stinking fish, their only property
are rafts

Sammā has made as his in-laws those who are very
weak (i.e. poor)

O Jām! says Sayyid, everything belonging to these
countrymen (i.e. the fishermen) is under your
protection.¹

Most scholars have attributed a Ṣūfī interpretation to this, as to other stories in the work of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf. It is argued that the theme of humility and sincerity and God's preference for those who are meek and submit to his will is reflected in this story of Jām Tamāchī and Nūrī. The king's choice of a poor girl as chief queen, rejecting the royal queens is an expression of God's disapproval of human vanity. Such an interpretation cannot be refuted. Nevertheless, it is also important to bear in mind that this particular story, as others in the Risālo, is remarkable for its local colour and significance.

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., p.859.

With reference to cities mentioned by the two poets, Rūmī speaks of a number of Islamic cities in his work. Apart from his homeland, Khurasan, he names Baghdad, Damascus, Istanbul, Bukhara, Samarqand, Mecca and many other cities. He describes each of them in respect of their religious significance.¹

References to cities like Mecca, Medina, and Karbalā'² in the Risālo are to be expected since these are immediately associated with the Prophet Muḥammad and Imām Ḥusain. Otherwise, there are ^{not} many fewer references to Islamic cities than in the work of Rūmī. There are a few exceptional cases, such as the occasion when the poet speaks of lightning in the rainy season and prays for the well-being of the whole world. In that verse he mentions a number of countries and cities which are outside Sind, such as Istanbul, Samarqand, Rūm, Kabul, Qandahār, Delhi, Deccan, China and others.³ Generally speaking, however, his references to place names are mostly local. Towns and villages are named with a description of their importance and the type of crafts practised there.

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.189-192.

2. ShāhWāṇī, op. cit., pp.921-48.

3. Ibid., p.980.

Allusions to Ṣūfī history

Rūmī refers to many well-known figures from the early history of Ṣūfism, such as Junaid, Shaikh Bistāmī, Shaqīq al-Balkhī, Ḥallāj and others. Rūmī believes, however, that Shams al-Dīn was superior to all these Ṣūfīs, even including Ḥallāj and Bistāmī.¹

There is some controversy over the exact Ṣūfī allegiance of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. In any case, the only prominent Ṣūfīs mentioned by him are Ḥallāj and Rūmī himself.

Rūmī does not mention explicitly the name of Rābi^Ca although he refers to her story, attributing it to a Ṣūfī who sat in the middle of a garden putting his head on his knees and contemplating God.²

There is no direct reference to Rābi^Ca in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf either, but it can be argued that he

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.198-208.

2. Ibid., p.200.

According to this story Rābi^Ca was sitting inside her house when her maid-servant called her and asked her to go out and admire the glory of spring. To this she answered that the gardens and fruit were within her heart.

alludes indirectly to her in verses scattered in his Risālo, especially in Sur Sasuī Ābrī, where he advises Sasuī to look within herself for her beloved, saying:

جو تون دورين دورِ ، سدا آهي ساڻ تو ،
لالن لاءِ ، لطيف چي ، منجهي تي ، معذور !
منجها پنء پرورِ ، تو منجه آھين تڪيو .

He for whom you are seeking far off is always
with you.

For (you) sweetheart, says Latīf
discern within yourself, o blind one,

Draw the signs from within,
because his resting place is within you.¹

Or in another place he says:

ووڙيم سڀ وٽائڻ ، يارَ ! ڪارڻ جتَ جي ،
والله ڪل شيءِ محيط ، اڻ آرياهي اُھڃائڻ ،
سڀ م پنھو پاڻ ، ٻيو ناهِ بروجَ ري .

I have searched everywhere for the friend Jat

'Everything is surrounded by God'

1. ShahWani, op. cit., p.393.

This is the sign of Āryānī
Punhū is in everything
There is none other than Baloch.¹

Reference has already been made in this chapter to Sur Bilāwal² and to the poet's stressing that the reward of Paradise is not of any importance. In the same sur there are a number of other verses which convey a message similar to that of Rābi^ca. The poet says:³

كونه أت كوهيارُ ، جيت تو ، يوري ! يائيو ،
پنڈُ مَ كَرِ بھارَ تَی ، وُجُودِی وھكارُ ،
دارِنا يائِجِ دارَ ، پُجُ پريان كَرِ پائِ تون .

Kohiyār⁴ is not there, where you thought
(he would be) o ignorant one!

Do not walk towards the mountain,
Your own being is the mountain
Consider outside things as outsiders,
Ask for the beloved from yourself.

1. Shāh-wānī, op. cit., p.392
2. Ibid., pp.1281-82.
3. Ibid., p.391.
4. Reference to Punhū, resident of the mountain.

Rūmī speaks highly of Ḥallāj and defends him against the accusations that he was a heretic. According to him Ḥallāj was misunderstood, because by saying "I am God" he was actually denying his own existence and affirming that only God has existence.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also believes that Ḥallāj was wrongly hanged. He therefore comments:

جَرِّثْرِيكَ تَوَارَ ، وَوَيْ تَيْلِي وَابِي هَيْكَرِي ،

سَيِّبِي شَيْءَ ثَنَا ، سُورِي سَزَاوَارَ ،

هَمَّ مَنصُورَ هَزَارَ ، كَهْرَا جَاژَهَنُو جَاژَهَنِي ۹

The current in the stream, the water, the land,
and every tree is speaking of the same thing.

Thus all these things are destined for the gallows
and punishment.

All these in thousands, are all Mansūr

Which of them is going to be hanged?

Yet another verse conveys this meaning:

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.205.

2. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.350.

سَيِّتِ بَجَارَ پَرِيں جِي ، سَيِّتِ هَوَتَ حُضُورُ ،
مُلُكُ مَيَّو مَنُورُ ، كُھِي كُھَنَدِهَ كِينَرَا ؟

Everything is speaking about the Beloved.

And the Beloved is present everywhere

The whole country (i.e. the world) is Mansūr.

How much of it are you going to slaughter?¹

From both the above-mentioned verses it is evident that our poet supports Ḥallāj; every living and non-living creature shares oneness with God. Their claims are not therefore different from those of Ḥallāj.

Another probable reason for the support given by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf to Mansūr Ḥallāj is that in his youth he witnessed the execution on similar grounds of a Ṣūfī, Shāh ^cInāyat of Jhoke (d.1133 A.H.). This event is said to have left a lasting impression on Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf and evidently motivates and colours his description of Ḥallāj's death. Although there are no direct references to Shāh ^cInayat's death, a number of verses in Sur Rāmkalī are said to have

1. Shāhvaṇī, op. cit., p.351.

been composed by the poet in memory of Shāh 'Ināyat. This verse may have been said on that occasion:

آڇ نه اوطاڻن مه، سندي جوڳين ذات ،
ساري سناين ڪي ، رنم ساري رات ،
• مون تن جنين جي نات سي لاهوتي لڏي ويا .

The yogis are no more in the uṭāq today

While longing for the Sannyāsīs I have wept all
night

About whom have I been thinking? Those Lāhūtīs
have gone away.

There are several verses in the Risālo, especially in Sur Kalyān and Yeman Kalyān, where gallows, daggers, poison and other methods of killing are mentioned by the poet. The true lover, however, according to our poet, does not only welcome death but rejoices in it, because it is the prerequisite of love:

سيڪڻ ۽ سوري هتي اکر ، هپڪڙي ،
وهڻ واترين تي ، ڪارڻ ضروري ،
• بنهين جي پوري ، جي ڏني ري نه ٿيبي .

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., p.1160.

Cf. Wafāī Dīn Muhammad, Lutf al-Laṭīf, Karachi, 1951, p.72.

Longing and gallows are both the same word¹

The necessary condition for both is to sit and wait
on the wayside

Both are satisfied by nothing less than giving up
life.²

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and Rūmī both share therefore a similar attitude towards Ḥallāj. Rūmī goes further, however. In spite of all his admiration for Ḥallāj, whom he compares to Shams al-Dīn, Rūmī nevertheless comments that Ḥallāj was less than an ant, because he did not recognise Shams.³ Moreover, he says that Shams was superior to Ḥallāj because he reached the rank of the beloved, whereas Ḥallāj still remained a lover.

Images of Music and Dance

Rūmī is very fond of music and dance, in spite of the objections to them by orthodox religious groups. Music and songs are persistent images in his work.*

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, as has already been mentioned, is also an ardent lover of music regardless of criticism by

1. In Sindhi the words for longing and gallows both start with an S.
2. Shāh-wānī, op. cit., p.143.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.209.
4. Ibid., p.210.

religious people.

For Rūmī, Shams al-Dīn may be called the inspiring figure, whose love leads him to a love of poetry, music and dance. He sings in praise of Shams al-Dīn when they are together and sings in separation from his beloved.

The love and torments of pain which Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf experiences because of separation from his lady love Sa^c īda Begum takes the form of poetry. This ishq mājāzī is said to have been the source of inspiration for his poetry, and his love of music. After his return from journeying with ^{the} yogis he sings his verses in lamentation at the separation. His sorrows in separation can be said to have burst out in cries of pain through his poetry, which are in the form of bait, dohīrā, vayūn and kāfiyūn which he sings to a musical accompaniment with his followers.

After spending three years with yogis and returning home, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf begins to sing in heart-rending verses, recalling their company:

مُو سِي تَدِنَا مَاہ ! جَنِينِ تَدِنُو پَرِي کِي ،
رَہِي اَچِي رَاتَرِي ، تِنِ جُنْگِنِ سَنَدِي جَاء ،
تَنِينِ جِي سَاچَاء ، تَرَهو تَنِي تَارِي ۛ

O mother! I have seen those who saw the Beloved
One should stay a night at the place of those
brave ones. (i.e. in their company).

Their acquaintance can serve as the raft in the
deep (water)

Here the poet longs for the yogis because they know
certain divine secrets and have seen the Beloved. He continues
in a similar vein:

وَاجَعًا وَبِرَائِكِينَ جَا ، مَوْنٌ وَتِ وَدُو مَالٌ ،
مَقَالًا مَهْدًا تِيَا ، كَوْنِيهِ وَتِينَ قَالٌ ،
حَاصِلٌ جَنِينَ حَالٌ ، اَكُونُ نَهَ جِينَدِي اَنْ رِي .

The sounds of the music of vairāgīs are great
wealth for me

Their attributes are beyond speech,
there cannot be any argument about it.

Those who have attained the state of intoxication,
I cannot live without them.²

In the work of Rūmī there are references to several
musical instruments: the reed flute, rebeck,
clarion, drums, trumpet, tamborine, chang or small harp,
tambūra, barbat, mūsīqār and others.³

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.1054.

2. Ibid., pp.1105-6.

3. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.212-14.

The image of the reed-flute in his work is of great significance. In the words of Schimmel:

the most famous expression of this love of music is the eighteen introductory verses of the Mathnavi, commonly known as shēr-enev.¹

Rūmī expresses his feelings of pain and suffering in separation from Shams al-Dīn, complaining like a reed-flute which is separated from its origin, and longing to go back to its source.²

In some of his verses Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses the same symbol of the reed flute, crying in separation from its beloved. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf adjusts the image in his work, making Sasuī cry like a reed, longing for Punhū. The verse given below seems to echo Rūmī's verses about the flute:

وَدَيْتِلِ نِي وَايُونِ كَرِي ، كُنْتِلِ كُوكَارِي ،

هَنْ پَن پنہجا سارنا ، هي هنجون هَدَن لَه هاري

The *separated one* (lit. cutoff) one speaks

The slaughtered one complains

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.210.

2. Ibid., p.211.

That (reed) longs for its origin

This one (Sasuī) sheds tears for her beloved.¹

Elsewhere the poet expresses a similar idea in terms of the imagery of another musical instrument, namely the Sārangī:

رُجْنٍ مِ رَثِّ تِي ، كَرَّ سَارِنِگِي سَا زُ ،

اِي عِشَقَ جَو آوَا زُ ، مَا وَهُوَ رُكْنِ مُنَدَّ تِي .

There is a cry in the wilderness,

like the tune of sārangī,

It is the call of love,

people have attributed it to the woman.²

With reference to Rūmī's influence on Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, Schimmel has pointed out this image of the reed flute in the work of our poet. She has rightly commented that the cry of the reed flute for both poets represents the soul's longing for its heavenly home and divine beloved.³

With reference to the chang (little harp), Rūmī likens its sound to lamentation lovingly played at the command of the

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., pp.485-6.

2. Ibid., p.492.

3. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, pp.165-66.

Beloved.¹

The chang and its magical powers are mentioned in Sur Sorāṭh. In this sur the musician Bijal represents the spiritual master and Rai Diyāch is a rajā, a true seeker, who is generous and fair in his dealings. This harp has such power that it elicits life from the body of all those who hear it: 1

جاچڪُ جھوناگڙهه ۾ ، ڪو عطا ئي آيو ،
تہ ڪاميلَ ڪڍي ڪينرو ، ويهي وڃايو ،
شهرُ سڄوئي سُرَ سين ، تندڻ تپايو ،
دايوڻ دريمانديون ٿيون ، باين پاڏايو ،
چارڻ ئي چايو ، تہ ماري آهي مگڻو .

Jājik a talented musician came to Jhūnāgarḥ,

That perfect one took off his harp and started
playing

The tune from the strings set the whole city on
fire

The maids in the house became restless and the
queens pleaded

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.216.

2. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., pp.892-93.

The musician made his harp say,
that the minstrel is the killer.

The harp played by Bijal has such an enchanting influence on Rājā Rai Diyāch that he calls the minstrel to his palace and offers him all his wealth, horses and elephants. Bijal, however, rejects everything and continues playing.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf describes how the spell of the harp makes the Rājā agree to Bijal every wish:

ڪي جو ٻيجل ٻولئو ، پني ويهي پان ،
راجا رتولن ۾ ، سباطو سلطان ،
” آءُ مٿاهون ، مڱڻا ! مقابل ميدان ،
گهريان لڳ ، لطيف چي ، تنهجي قدمن تان قربان ،
مٿوهي ، مزمان ! هلي آءُ ت هت ڏينء .

What the minstrel Bijal sang at dawn
The Rājā was in his palace, this (music) soothed
the Sultan.
Come forward minstrel, without hesitation
I will present hundreds of thousands
Says Latīf, may I sacrifice myself at your feet
O guest! come here, and I will present you my
head.¹

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., pp.899-900.

It seems that Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf uses the image of Bijal to represent the Perfect Man. His music makes the Rājā, the sālik, aware of his separation from his primordial home. Moreover, it makes him restless and his soul feels trapped in the cage of his body, which becomes impatient and restless, eager to return to its eternal home. Thus he pleads with the minstrel to free him from this cage:

”وَيَسِرُّ، تِي سُرَهُو، مَ كِي آءُ، مَ ڳاءُ،

جاڳڪ ! ترمٽاءُ، مُلڪُ، مَرَوِي گهوريان .

Cut my neck, and be cheerful, do not come and
sing more

O Jājik let me sacrifice the whole country to
you.¹

After offering the minstrel his head, the Rājā seems to think again and realises that what he has offered is nothing in comparison to the music of the harp. So he regrets what he has said:

”سوءُ سِرِنِ پائي، جي تَنَدُ پَر ابرِ توريان،

اَتَلِ اوتاهمِ تِيبي، جيڏاههَ بيجلُ پرائي،

مڪطون هڏُ آهي، سرَ مَ سِجَلُ ناهِ ڪِي .

1. ShāhWāñī, op. cit., p.910.

When I put a hundred heads on one side of the
scale

And a single string on the other side

It will be overweighted on the side where Bijal
has played.

This is a mere bone (i.e. head): it has no value.¹

Then Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf sums up the sacrifice and
benevolence of the Rājā, saying that it has no limits.

Thus, when the minstrel *cuts* the Rājā's head off, the
poet becomes aware of how all seemingly different things can
become one. He says:

تیني پریچنا پالی ہر ، تند ، کتارو ، کند ،
”تہ جھوٹی ناہ کی ، جو تو ، چارلی اکتو پند ،
ای شکر الحمد ، جنہ متو گھریوہ ، ملکا !

Three things met, the string, dagger and neck all
became one

O Chāraṇ! none can equal you
because you came all the way

Thank God that you minstrel only asked
for a head.²

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.903.

2. Ibid., p.910.

Rūmī calls samā^c "the nourishment of the soul".¹ Samā^c is considered the chief characteristic of the Mevlevi order. Rūmī himself used to take part in samā^c, either in his own home or at his friends' houses where regular meetings were held. It is said that once Rūmī danced with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb embracing him. Later, this dance was institutionalised in the Mevlevi order.² Although it is agreed by scholars who have written about Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf that he was fond of music and samā^c in his poetry there appears to be no clear reference to samā^c.

Gardens

Let us turn now to the treatment of the image of the garden in the poetry of Rūmī. Like many of his predecessors he compared the worldly garden with that of heaven.³ Living as he did in Konya, he was no doubt more directly inspired by the beautiful gardens he saw in that city, the sweet smell of which made the whole atmosphere fragrant.

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, there are not many references to gardens, such as one would find in cities like

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.217.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp.82-83.

Konya, because unlike Rūmī our poet came from a rural background. A rare example of the image of a garden is found in Sur Mūmal Rāno, where a garden in Kāk¹ is mentioned thus:

اَلْکُونُ ، دَاکُونُ ، سِرْکَنْدَبَ شَاخُونُ ، جِتِ چوکا چندن کَوُتَرِ ،
مِي سِي مَاطِيَا ، جِتِ نَه پَرِنِ پَوُتَرِ ،
کُنْشَارِيُونِ ۽ کَوُتَرِ ، کَاهِ تَه پَسُونِ کَاکِ جَا .

Where there are walnuts, grapes, branches of
sandalwood, and pleasant lotus flowers and
sandalwood.

The camel has reached that place, where not even
the black bee can hover around.

Proceed, so as to attain the maidens and the lotus
flower.²

More often, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf praises the beauty of
nature in general and not gardens in particular. One finds
romantic lines where our poet portrays an exquisite countryside
in spring. In Sur Kāmōd, for example, he describes a scene on
the Kīnjhar lake in the following lines:

1. The home town of Mūmal, who was the heroine of one of the folk-stories.

2. Shāh Vānī, op. cit., pp.713-14.

هَيْكُ جَرِّ ، مَتِي مَجْرُ ، كَنْدِي كَوْنَرِ تَرِنِ ،

وَرِي وَاهُونَدِنِ ، كَنْجَهْرُ كَثُورِي تَيِي .

Below, the clear water is flowing, above is a cluster of greenery.

On the bank the lotus flowers are floating.

On the arrival of spring, the Kinjhar is full of musk fragrance.¹

In the case of Rūmī the colour, shape and position of each flower is interpreted as having religious or romantic significance. For example, the rose stands for absolute perfection, and alludes to the Qur'ānic rose-garden, with reference to Abraham, who was thrown in a fire, which turned out to be not a fire but a rose-garden. The violet, in Rūmī's work, symbolises an ascetic who sits meditating, whereas the waterlily, which appears to be restless on the foam, symbolises the lover. In this way Rūmī associates flowers and fruits with certain aspects of human life.²

In contrast to the work of Rūmī, there are not many specific references to flowers in the Risālo. This difference no

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.867.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.88-92.

doubt results from the different environments of the two poets. The flowers mentioned by Rūmī, with a few exceptions, are not found in the Risālo, and the flowers and blossom of wild plants mentioned by Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf are those found in the countryside of Sind and commonly used as food for the rural poor.

Generally, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not speak of flowers.

A rare example is the following:

ڪوٽر پاڙون پاتار م ، ڀٽون ڀري آڪاس ،
پنهن سنڌي ڳالهي ، رازق انڊي راس ،
ته عشق کي شامس ، جه محبتي ميٽرنا .

The roots of the lotus flower are in the earth
and the black bee flies in the sky

The Nourisher provides for the needs of both.

Thanks to the love, which has brought the lovers
together.¹

In the above verse, it is evident that the poet is referring to the secrets of God, who can bring two unlike objects together in love. The lotus and the bee are not only of different species, but also one is associated with water and

1. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., p.1215.

the earth whilst the other's abode is high in the air and sky. Because God wants them to meet, He provides them with the opportunity. Thus, two opposite things are united through a common bond, which is love.

Far more typical than the above verse are the following lines in which Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf makes Mārūī say:

عَمَرَ ! أَنهين ذيهَ جا ، ذوثينِ ذنمِ ذسّ ،
وليون ، ولى قلاريا ، لئُرُ نَليو لسّ ،
أثرو وجهن أهرين سندا ثوهن ثسّ ،
مبوا ، مَجْرَ ، مَليون ، مَبَ كا چكنِ چسّ ،
مازِي وَهي مَسّ ، مَليو ويندي مَارُوي .

^cUmar! the countrymen have told me of (my) home
that the creepers and the trees have blossomed,
that lots of luler¹ have grown there.

They are bringing baskets full of bitter gourds
and collecting them in the barns.

They are savouring all the fruits, mañur² and
honey

I can hardly stay in the fort,

1. A vegetable which is grown wild and eaten.
2. Pods of the Kandu tree.

Māruī will go to Malīr.¹

Quranic Imagery

In Rūmī's works, whether the Maṣnavi or the Dīwān, one finds numerous words, phrases, and sentences from the Qur'ān, either quoted in the actual Arabic or translated into Persian. Rūmī was well versed in Arabic, so he did not find it difficult to fit Qur'ānic verses or Prophetic traditions into his own work. Sometimes he uses them for religious purposes. At other times these verses are inserted into his ~~poetry~~ poetry.²

In her chapter on the Islamic background of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Schimmel discusses the Qur'ānic references in his poetry in some detail.³ Another scholar, Mīrzā Qalech Beg, had earlier examined this aspect of the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, giving examples from the Qur'ān and the Risālo.⁴

It would therefore be superfluous to go into details here. A few prominent examples of parallel and contrasting references to the Qur'ān in the imagery of Rūmī and Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf

1. Shāhwānī, op. cit., p.807.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.173-74.

3. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, pp.236, 262.

4. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Ahwāl Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, pp.94-113.

will therefore suffice.

Like Rūmī, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses certain words, phrases and sentences from the Qur'ān and hadīs, thus following the tradition of his predecessors. Some words and phrases recur more often than others in his work; for example:

'Be' and it 'Became' (3/47)

Am 'I not your Lord" (7/172)

"Yes you are" is the soul's answer.¹

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf makes Mārūī repeat this over and over again to remind ^cUmar that her love for her people and Khetsīn is eternal, so it is useless for him to try to change her opinion.

”اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ، جَدَّه كُنَّ بِسُورِمْ ،
” قَالُوْا اِبْلِيَا قَلْبَ سِيْنِ ، تَدَّه تِيْتِ بِجِيْرِمِ ،
تَهِيْنِ وِيْرَ كِنُوْمِ ، وِيْحْنُ وِيْرِيْجِيْنِ سِيْنِ .

When I heard,

"Am I not your Lord",

They said

"Yes you are", I said there and then
with my heart.

At that moment I made a promise (of love)
to my countrymen.²

1. Shāh ^wānī, op. cit., pp.767-69.

2. Ibid., p.767.

Elsewhere Māruī says:

نَکَا " کُنْ فَبِکُونُ " هُنِي، نَکَا مَوْرَتَ مَاہَ ،
نَکَا سُدَّ شَوَابَ جِي ، نَکُو عَرَضُ گُناہَ ،
هَبِکَايِ هَبِکُ هُنِي ، وَحْدَانِيَّتَ وَاهَ ،
لَکِبَانِيْنِ ، لَطِيْفَ جِي ، اُتِ بَگْجَهَانْدَرِ بَگْجَاهَ ،
اَلْبِيْنِ ؕ اِزْوَا حَ ، اَهَا سَاچَاہَ ، سُبْرِيْنِ !

(God) did not say 'Be' nor had (the world) come
into existence,

Nor was there the face of the moon.

There was no knowledge of reward yet,
nor was there any concept of sin.

Everything was in a state of Unity,
all in One

At that moment, says Latīf (she) understood
the secret (of love)

O beloved! my eyes and soul have
(only) that perception.²

There are a number of sentences and sūras from the
Qurʾān and the tradition to be found in Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf's
work; for example:

1. ShāhWānī, op. cit., p.769.

2. Ibid., p.770. Sura 16/50.

- Q L1: 21. . ۱ . وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ .
- Q LIII: 9 . ۲ . فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى .
- sufi hadiṣ . ۳ . لَا مَقْصُودَ فِي الدَّارِينَ .
- sufi hadiṣ . . خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ .

Rūmī "compares the perfectly beautiful face of the beloved to a masterfully calligraphed copy of the Koran". Then he goes on to describe and compare the flawless beauty of the friend, which reveals the creative beauty and power of God, as the Qurʾān reveals the power and wisdom of God.*

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not compare the beauty of the friend to the Qurʾān but likens the face of the beloved to the niche of the mosque.

مُهْ مِحْرَابُ پَرِي جُو ، جَامِعُ سَيِّ جِهَانُ ،
اَدَامِي اُتِ وِسُو ، عَقْلُ ۽ عِرْفَانُ ،
سَيُونِي سُبْحَانُ ، كَاَدِي وِجِي نَيْتِيَانُ .

The face of the beloved is the niche (in the mosque)

The whole world is the mosque

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p. 409 .

2. Ibid., p. 1135

3. Ibid., pp 136, 407.

4. Schimmel, op. cit., p.175.

All intelligence and knowledge disappear there.
Everywhere is God. Where shall I go and start
my prayer.¹

Schimmel has pointed out that Rūmī, like other Sūfī poets, refers to the *semi-legendary* personalities mentioned in the Qur'ān. He either narrates stories about them or makes some references to them, such as Noah's ark, David's making of iron coats, King Solomon and the genies and Bilquis the queen of Sheba, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the Prophet Muḥammad and others.²

Following the tradition of his predecessors, Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf does refer to these prophets, but not as frequently as Rūmī. Moreover his references to them are short, or take the form of brief quotes at times from the Qur'ān or hadīṣ. For instance, he draws a contrast between Moses and Iblīs, Khalīl and Āzar:³

مُهْ تَر مَوْسِي جِهَرَو، عَادَت مَر اِبْلِيسُ ،
اَهَرَو خَامُ خَبِيثُ ، كَدِي كَوهُ نَمِ چَدْبِين ۹

In appearance (your face) is like Moses,
but your habits are like Iblīs

1. Shāh^wānī, op. cit., p.1138.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.176-82.
3. Shāh^wānī, op. cit., p.1016.

Why don't you get rid of such wicked or impure
a character?

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also makes an allusion to Abraham
Khalīl, and to his father Āzar, again showing a contrast
between a believer and non-believer.

واني

مُهَ مَنجِهَ خَلِيلُ ، اَنَدَرِ اَازَرُ اَهِيِن .
سَدَّ مَ هَكَرِ رِصَحَتَ جِي ، اِجَا تُونِ عَلِيلُ ،
اَنَدَرِ اَازَرُ اَهِيِن .
نالو ناهِ نِفَاقَ جُو ، رَجِي رَبُّ جَلِيلُ ،
اَنَدَرِ اَازَرُ اَهِيِن .
مُهَ مَ مُسْلِمَانُ تُونِ ، قَلْبُ تَانِ قَلِيلُ .
اَنَدَرِ اَازَرُ اَهِيِن .
وَالِيَّ جِي رِصَالَتَ هِ ، دُئِي نَاهِ كَدِيلُ ،
اَنَدَرِ اَازَرُ اَهِيِن .
اِلا اَبْدَالِ اللُّطِيفُ جِي ، سَچُو رِڪَاجُ سِيلُ ،
اندر اذر اهيِن .

In appearance you are Khalīl,² whereas,

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1009-10.

2. I.e. Abraham, whose title was Khalīl, i.e. the friend of God.

(You are) Āzar¹ within.

Do not wish for health, because you are still ill

(You are) Āzar within.

There is no doubt about the
greatness of God.

In appearance you are Muslim,
but your heart is small
(narrow-minded and impure)

There is no doubt or argument required for the union
with the Master.

(You are) Āzar within.

O God! says ^cAbd al-Latīf, help me to be sincere

(You are) Āzar within.

It is noteworthy that Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf combines the Qurānic allegories with his own local references. For example in the Vāī given below there are five quotations from the Qur'ān, including one on the Prophet Muḥammad's ascension to heaven and nearness to God. The other alludes to Moses, who could not stand the light of God and fainted. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf uses these quotations to describe the Sannyāsīs and Ādesīs, in order to attribute divine qualities to them.

1. I.e. Abraham's father, who used to make idols, ^{which were smashed by} unlike his son.

مونا طورِ سينا سندا سناسين ،
سجده ۾ ، سيد چي ، گوڙا گوڙين ،
”فَكَانَ قَابُ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ“ ، تا نانگا اينء تمن ،
”كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ“ باقي ڪين بچن ،
”اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ“ ،
تا اهڙي پري پرين ،
”خَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا“ ، جوگي جنگ جتن ،
”مَازَاعَ البَصَرِ وَمَا طَعَا“ ، اهڙي روش روشن ،
مشاهدو محبوب جو اتي آڏين ،
ري پڪل ري سڪل ، ري رسال وهن ،
ري پري ، ري ٻولڻ ، تا اهڙي چال چلن ،
سيد چي سندن ، تون ڪل پڇين ٿو ڪهڙي !

The knees of the Sannyāsīs are like Mount Sinaī.

The Gaudriyya are in prostration says Sayyid.

And ^{he} was at a distance of but two bow-lengths, or even nearer.¹

The Nangas bend this way.

All that is on earth will perish.²

Nothing will last.

God is the protector of those who have faith,

From the depths of darkness. He will lead them forth into light.³

They are following that tradition.

And Moses fell down.⁴

The brave yogis burn in it.

1. Q.LIII:9.

2. Q.LV.26.

3. Q.II.257.

4. Q.VII.143.

(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go
wrong (Q.LIII.17) they follow that path.

There the Ādesī perceive the beloved.

Without perception, without hearing, without
attaining they sit there.

Without walking, without speaking, they follow
that path.

Why do you ask about their condition
says Sayyid.¹

Divine Calligraphy

Rūmī uses the letters of the alphabet as images representing human characteristics. He compares these letters with human physical characteristics. For instance, alif symbolises the slender figure of the beloved. The same letter alif also stands for God, His Divine Unity, sincerity, and uprightness, which are beyond qualification, and finally His Divine Essence. Rūmī describes alif in various ways, and then deals with all the other letters attributing to each certain characteristics depending on its form and shape.²

Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf also uses this imagery but he employs

1. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., pp 1135-37.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.163-64.

fewer letters for that purpose. Like Rūmī, he seems to be particularly fond of the letter alif, using it in various ways and ascribing to it a number of characteristics. For example here he uses it to explain the meaning of a certain hadīṣ:

سا سِيَّ سَارِيَّوْنُ ، اَلِفٌ جِهَ جِي اَبَّ هِ ،
لَا مَقْصُودَ فِي الدَّارَيْنِ ، اِنَّ بِرِّ اُتَّوْنُ ،
سَكْبَرُ سَوْنَّوْنُ ، اِنَّا رَسِيْلًا رَحْمَانَ رَسِيْنُ .

They recollected that line, which has alif at its beginning.

"I don't want anyone but you in this life and hereafter", this is what they say.

They chose the narrow path, and became happy with the Benevolent.

This verse refers to a Sūfī hadīṣ, which explain the inseparability of God and man, and the first promise of man to God.

Elsewhere, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf refers to a number of the characteristics of alif. First of all, alif stands for God (Allāh), Divine Unity and the key to all knowledge. He suggests:

1. Shāh Wāṣṣī, op. cit., p.136.

اڪر پڙه اَلِفَ جو ، وَرَقَ سَيِّ وَسَارِ ،
اندر تون اُجارِ ، پنا پڙهنده ڪيترا .

Read the letter alif and forget the rest of
the pages.

Purify yourself. How many pages
are you going to read?¹

In the above verse the poet suggests the manifold qualities of the letter alif. Because it is straight and perpendicular, it is said to symbolise sincerity and uprightness. Being so important it is regarded as the source of knowledge, so that after acquiring alif one may ignore the rest of the letters. He says:

هَلَايَ هَيِّينَ ۞ ، اَلِفَ سَنَدِي اَوْزَ ،
نه ڪتابن جي ڪورَ ، منجهائي معلوم ٿي .

Draw the line of alif in your heart,
and you will attain (the knowledge) of
thousands of books from within.²

1. Shāh Wāṇī, op. cit., p.129.

2. Ibid., p.131.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, like Rūmī, remarks on the difference between Aḥmad and Aḥad, that is between the Prophet Muḥammad and God on the basis of the ḥadīṣ qudsī:

أَخَذُ ، أَحْمَدُ بِأَلِفٍ ، وَجَانِ مِيمَ فَرَقُ ،
أَهِي مُسْتَفْرَقُ ، عَالَمُ إِنْهِيَ كِبَالٍ .

The difference between Aḥad and Aḥmad is just
mīm,

The world is immersed in that thought.²

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf also uses the image of the letter lām in relation to alif, illustrating the relationship of lover and beloved by reference to the combination of these two letters.

كَاتِبًا لَكَيْنِ جِنَّةٍ لايو لَامُ أَلِفًا سِينِ ،
أَسَانِ سَجَلُ تِنَةٍ ، رَهِيو آهِي رُوحٍ .

In the same way the calligrapher writes
putting lām attached to alif,

So too my beloved lives in my heart.

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.132.

2. Ibid., p.130.

Rūmī and Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf both refer to the divine tablet, on which the calligrapher, who is God himself, inscribes the destinies of human beings. Rūmī also mentions that the name of Shams al-Dīn has been inscribed in the book of love from pre-eternity.¹ In a similar way Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf also refers to this tablet with reference to his heroines, in particular Suḥnī, Māruī and Sasuī. He attributes their suffering to its having been pre-destined by virtue of being inscribed on the divine tablet. For example, Māruī is heard complaining:

قَسَمَتَ قَيْدُ قَوِيُّ ، نَاتَ كَبِيرَ آجِي هِنَ كَوْتِ مَرِي
اَلْهِي لَكْنِي لَوْحَ جِي ، هَنْدُ تَدِيكَارِيْمِ هِي
پَرِجِي كِيَنَ پَهَنُوَارَ رِي ، جَانِ ، جُسُو ۽ جِي
رَا جَا ! رَا ضِي تِي ، تَهَ مَارُنِ مِلِي مَارِي .

My destiny has imprisoned me,
otherwise who will come to this fort?
That which was written on 'the tablet'
has led me to this place
Without the shepherd, my life, body
and heart cannot lie at rest

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.169.

O master, give your approval, that
Māruī may see her Mārū.¹

Weaving and Sewing

The symbolism of weaving is very old in the history of various religious systems, and has been used in poetry throughout the ages in different parts of the world. Rūmī uses this imagery in various contexts and in different ways to express Ṣūfī concepts.² Nor is Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf an exception to the poetic tradition in his use of the image of weaving and spinning.

Rūmī sometimes speaks of the lover, who weaves satin and brocade out of his lover's blood to lay beneath the beloved's feet. Elsewhere he refers to the green velvet and silk dress promised to the faithful in paradise, but contrasts it with the dress of love which is more valuable. Indeed, Rūmī mentions a number of expensive woven materials such as satin, embroidered silk and others.³ All examples given are of high quality material which only the rich upper-class society could afford to wear. Rūmī's choice of image in this respect is dictated by the urban society in which he lived.

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.770.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.157.

3. Ibid., pp.157-160.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not speak of any of the expensive cloth mentioned by Rūmī. In Sur Kāpāitī, references are made to the spinning of yarn and coarse cotton. The 'finest' cloth mentioned by him in this respect is fine muslin.¹

While referring to the yarn woven by women spinners, he comments:

سُكُّ اُنَيْنِ جُو سَقَرُو ، جِي پَرِ مِ پِجَائِينِ ،
آوازُ آرَتَ جُو ، سَاهَ نَه سَطَائِينِ ،
لڪايو ، لَطِيفُ چِي ، ڪنڀرو ڪتائين ،
جِي ماڻِڪَ موتائِينِ ، نَبِ مُلُ مَهانگو اُنِ جُو .

Those who spin secretly, their yarn
has great value

They do not let themselves even hear
the sound of the spinning wheel.

Latīf says, they spin secretly and tremble.

Even when they reject precious stones,
their (yarn) is more valuable than it.²

In the opinion of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, yarn spun devotedly and sincerely becomes more valuable than precious stones. On

1. Shāhvānī, op. cit., p.1187.

2. Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.1186-1187.

another occasion he comments on coarse material:¹

مَحَبَّتَ پائی مَن مہ ، رنڈیا روڑیا جِن ،
تین جو صرافین ، اَل توریوئی اگھائیو .

Those who have spun coarse material out of love
the merchants accepted theirs without
measurement.

In this verse again, love is emphasised, not the material. Even if the thread or cloth produced is coarse, it will be accepted, provided the seeker or spinner works on it with love.

Sur Kāpāitī is full of advice to spinners and weaver-women, who are asked to do their job sincerely, with devotion and humility, so as to achieve better results.² The poet repeatedly stresses the importance of deeds and actions, pointing out that without action and hard work nothing can be achieved. For example, the poet chastises the spinner thus:-

1. ShāhWāñī, op. cit., p.1186.

2. Ibid., pp.1181-90.

ڪٽڻ جي ڪان ڪرين ، ستي ساهين هڏ ،
صبح ايندءِ اوچتي ، عيد اُهاڙن گڏ ،
جت سرتيون ڪندءِ مڏ ، اُت سڪندي سينگار ڪي .

You are not spinning, but you are sleeping,
laying aside all thoughts of danger.

In the morning at the arrival of the ^cĪd,

You will be among the naked.

When you are called by friends,

You will be yearning for adornment.¹

This verse has two levels of meaning. On the one hand, the sālik is warned of the brevity of life, that he is wasting time, that the Day of Judgement will come soon, and that he will regret his heedlessness. At the same time it is possible to interpret this poem as referring to daily rural life as the poet must have known it. He must have come across the women spinners, some of whom were inattentive. He therefore chooses this particular image, knowing it to be familiar to his audience, to warn them of the importance of being attentive in daily affairs, in order to achieve their goal.

. In Sur Kāpāitī, the poet speaks of a merchant who buys yarn from these women. He warns that the merchant will reject

1. ShāhWāñī, op. cit., pp.1182-83.

the yarn if it is not of good quality but has faults because it has not been woven with love and devotion.¹

Here the reference to a merchant may imply a murshid or God, who does not like carelessness.

In Rūmī's work, a tailor is the term used to represent God, man being represented as a piece of silk cloth. It is the tailor who decides the cloth's fate just as it is God who decides whether or not to convert the infidel into a pious man.² In other words, in Rūmī's system of thought, man has little choice but to do what God destines for him.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf also refers in his work to the omnipotence and will of God in shaping men's destiny, but there is also evidence of man's responsibility for his own spiritual progress, symbolised by the spinner's choice to heed the poet's advice to be vigilant and hard working. If they produce good fine muslin then they will be rewarded by the merchant. The poet says:

تُنْبَائِي تَا كِيدَ رِسِينِ ، جَنِينِ پِجَايُو پِاؤُ ،
لَمِي تَنَدُ ، لَطِيفُ چِي ، هَلِي تَنِ هَتَاؤُ
مَلَمَلِ مَنجَهَا مَاؤُ ! جِي سَكِيُونِ تَنِ سُونُ كِنُو .

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.1182.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.161.

Those who have cleaned the cotton carefully
and spun even half a pound.

Keeping the thread smooth throughout,
says Latīf,

O mother! Those who weave muslin
will obtain the golden reward.¹

Pastimes ^{of} and the great

Rūmī like many other Persian poets follows the tradition of his predecessors, drawing on images from the games which were played among royalty and high and middle-class society. He uses images from different games such as chess, nard, backgammon, polo, as symbols with a mystical interpretation. It is interesting to note, however, that these games were associated with high-class society.²

Using the terminology associated with each game Rūmī describes the hopelessness of the situation in which most players find themselves during the game. The position of these players symbolises the hopelessness of most human beings in their spiritual progress.

In the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf one does not find

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.1187.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.69-70.

imagery relating to games intended for royalty and upper-class people. Although some games like chess and backgammon were known to people in Sind, as these games were associated with city life and its leisures, it is not surprising that the poet of rural Sind does not mention them in his work.

This suggests something in the poet's personality which is less interested in the pursuits of the rich and more concerned with the dire struggle for existence on the part of the poor:

پاڙي ناهِ پرورَ ، تہ کا راتِ رنجائي گذري ،
بانڀڻِ پروچنِ جي ، گھائي وڌي گھورَ ،
هڪ سسئي پنا سورَ ، وٺا پٽيندا پاڻ م .

The neighbours are unaware,
that someone has spent the night in distress.

Bābhan¹ has been wounded by the stare of Baloch.²

One of them was Sasuī, the other was sorrow,
both of them were beating (their breasts) in
grief.³

1. I.e. to Sasuī, who belonged to the Hindu Bābhan or Brahman class, but was adopted by a potter.
2. I.e. Punhū.
3. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.634.

Here the poet suggests that matters have come to such a pass that even neighbours who once cared for one another, have given up looking after each other's wellbeing.

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf must have seen for himself the nomadic tribe called Oad in Sind who build other people's houses but have no place in which they themselves may settle down. Nor were they ever certain at any time of earning their livelihood. He comments on their condition in the following lines:¹

چِنَلِ چَچَ هَتَنِ مَ ، کُلَنِ کَوَدَارَا ،
پورهنِي خَاطِرِ پَاهِجِي ، اُتَنِ سَوَارَا ،
اوَدَ بہ وِجَارَا ، لاکا ! وِجَنِ لَدِئُو .

They have tattered winnowing fans in their hands
and carry spades on their shoulders.

For the sake of labour, they wake up early in
the morning.

Lakha!² the poor Oad are migrating away.

Rūmī, on the other hand, appears to dislike villagers, although he sympathises with them. This attitude is in marked contrast to the caring and sympathetic treatment of the rural

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.1274.

2. Name of a caste.

poor in the work of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.

Images of sickness

Rūmī seems to have had some knowledge of certain diseases and of their symptoms and causes.¹ He uses these terms symbolically to illustrate the spiritual experiences of the lover or seeker. He speaks of illnesses such as fever, colic, delirium, saudā' and ṣafrā':

the illness of black gall and yellow bile, i.e. melancholic choleric temperament and their results are external signs of the lovers.²

Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf does not name any disease in this way although he, like Rūmī, mentions the suffering and pain of lovers. This agony which the lover must go through, is a major disease, and has no cure, unless the beloved treats him or her. Our poet describes the symptoms of the lover in the following words:

جان عاشقِ مٽي رٿُ ، تان دعويٰ ڪري مَ نيہ جي ،
سائو مہُ ، سُنہَ لٽي ، سِڪَڻَ اِي شَرَطُ
نہ ڪي گوٽِ گَرُ ، مٿا سِرَ سودا ڪري .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.153.

2. Ibid.

As long as the lover is healthy, he should not claim to be in love.

Longing is the condition (i.e. of love) with a pale face and his beauty gone.

Nor has he money or belongings,

In addition, he gives his life in exchange.¹

Rūmī often mentions ~~op. cit.~~ dropsy, because its symptoms resemble the lover's thirst for the beloved. He who has dropsy is never satisfied, no matter how much water he or she drinks.²

A similar idea is also found in the work of our poet. Like Rūmī, Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf speaks of the thirst of the lover, who, no matter how much water he or she drinks, still remains thirsty. In the verse below he speaks of Suhṇī, and expresses her feeling:

ڪامان ، پڇان ، پڇران ، لڇان ۽ لوچان ،
تن مه تنس پرين جي ، پيان نه داپان ،
جي سمنڊ مه ڪريان ، توه سرگيائي نه ٿي .

I have been agitated in pain, cooked in grief
and am searching.

1. Shāh ~~waṇī~~, op. cit., p.142.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.154.

My body is so feverish because of my beloved, that even when
I drink I am never full (satisfied).

If I proceed (to drink) the sea,
that even it will not be a sip.¹

Rūmī speaks of a 'canine appetite' or voracity. Such
hunger he ascribes to the lover, in his state of spiritual
longing or hunger.² Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf speaks of hunger in a
different way. In contrast to Rūmī, the yogi in the poetry of
Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf representing the seeker, enjoys hunger and
wandering about in this state:

قوت کتر ایا کاپڑی ، بگ جھلیائون ہو ،
وئا نیرانا نیگری ، جوگی منجھا جو ،
اوسر آجا او ، ائی گوندر گڈنا .

The Kāparī are weary of food, they hold the
aroma of hunger.

The yogis left the site without breakfast

They are without possession and free and are
met by sorrow.³

Rūmī refers to a cure for the eyes as sorma (collyrium),

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.330.
2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.154.
3. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.1150.

suggested by the physician. This image represents the role of the spiritual guide who opens the eyes of worldly men so that they see and understand what is good for their soul.¹ Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf, unlike Rūmī, does not refer to many medicines, but there is, however, a rather negative reference to sorma (collyrium) in the Risālo:²

سُرمونِ سیاہی جو ، رتنِ کِی رِہاء ،
کانی کارائی جی ، مڑسِ تِی مِ پاء ،
اَکِنِ مِ اَتِکاء ، لالائی لالنِ جی .

Black collyrium befits women

Being a man never apply black kānī.³

You should put in your eyes the redness of
red (spiritual love or intoxication of divine love).

however like Rumi

Elsewhere *he* speaks of kānī, which will make the wearer see the Truth:⁴

تون کا کانی پاء ، ونینِ مِ وصالِ جی ،
دُبینائی دُورِ کِری ، معرفتِ ملہاء ،
سُپیریانِ جی سونہِ مِ ، رُخنو کونِ رِہاء ،
اَکِ اَشہدَہِ چاء ، تہِ مُسلمانیِ ماہِیینِ .

1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.155.

2. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., p.1017.

3. A thin round rod of silver or pewter with which collyrium is applied to the eyes.

4. Shāh^{wānī}, op. cit., p.1017.

You should apply the kānī of union (wiṣāl)
to your eyes.

Cast aside duality, and attain ma^crifat

There should not be a fault in the beauty of the
beloved

When the eye witnesses (the divine light)
then you will attain true Musalmanī.¹

Rūmī speaks of the method of a physician who diagnoses diseases of the heart by feeling the pulse. Rūmī is thus no exception to the many Persian poet who use this image. The first story of Rūmī's Maṣnawī is the best example. Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf speaks of the pulse in a slightly different way. Although the pulse similarly conveys the secret of the heart, in the Risālo the pulse is not felt by the physician. Instead, he describes how the pulse thinks of the beloved every second. The pulse's throbbing is compared by our poet to the harp:

رڳون ٽيون ربابُ ، وڃن ويل سيعم ،
لڇڻ ڪڇڻ نه ٿئو ، جانب ري جبابُ ،
سوئي منڍدم سڀرين ، ڪيس جه ڪبابُ ،
سوئي عينُ عذابُ ، سوئي راحت روح جي .

The veins have become a harp (ribāb),
they play all the time

1. The state of being a real Muslim.

Absence from the beloved is just anguish without
a sound

The beloved (who has made of me kaḥāb) will heal
my wounds

He is the actual cause of suffering and he is
the source of appeasement.¹

Rūmī names certain medicines each of which is supposed
to cure a certain disease. For instance, he often refers to the
mixture of honey and vinegar as treatment for a liver
disease.² Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf rarely suggests any medicine,
focussing rather on the physician. He says that medicines like
sāthar³ and gruel will only cure if the right type of doctor
treats the patient:

اور دُگندو اُو تَبِي ، هَادِي جِه حَبِيبُ ،
تِيرُ تَفَاوَتْ نِه كَرِي ، تِه كِي كُو طَبِيبُ ،
رَهْمًا رَقِيبُ ، سَائِرِ صِحَّتِ سُبْرِينِ .

His pain will disappear, whose guide is the
beloved.

The physician's treatment cannot cure him at all.

The beloved is the guide, the preserver, and even
the medicine (sāthar).⁴

1. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.81.

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.155.

3. The leaves of a certain plant used as medicine.

4. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.80.

Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, like Rūmī, refers to the ^{worldly} physician's inability to treat the lover. For him or her the beloved is the only remedy. Sometimes the patient prays not to get well so that the beloved may stay near him for treatment.¹

Elsewhere, our poet refers to the beloved as a physician, who cuts the limbs of the lover, tortures him and then heals him as well:

وَدِي جَنِ وَدِيَسِ، وَرِي وَبِحِ نِي سِي تَنَا،
نُرْتُ بَدَاثُونَ پَتِيُونُ، رُوَزِ كِنَاثُونَ رَايِ،
هِيَرَا ! تَنِيَنِ پَايِ، گَهَارِ تِ گَهَايِلُ نِ تَبِيَنِ.

Those who have wounded me have become my
physician

They soon put on bandages, and made me well
again

O my heart! stay with them, so that you may not
get hurt.²

The image of disease in the work of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf is associated directly with that of love. The cause of suffering and pain is the beloved and he is the one who can cure the patient. Here the beloved may be understood as the spiritual guide or God Himself:

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.101.

2. Ibid.

تُون حَبِيبُ، تُون طَبِيبُ، تُون دَارُونِ كِي دَرْدَن،
تُون دِيْبِن، تُون لَاهِيْبِن، ذَاتَرِ اِ كِي دُكْنَدِن،
تَدَّه فَكِيُونُ فَرُقُ هَكْنِ، جَدَّه اَمْرُ هُو اِنِ كِي.

You are the beloved, you are the physician

You are the cure of pains.

O Giver! you are the giver and you are the curer
of suffering

The medicines will only then cure,

When you command them to do so.¹

Conclusions

Rūmī and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf shared a common Islamic background. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was an admirer of Rūmī. It is therefore not surprising that there are certain significant similarities in their works. This has already been pointed out by scholars. Indeed, Nabī Bukhsh Baloch has written two articles about Rūmī and Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf.² In his second article he draws attention to two main similarities in their works, i.e. the use of folk stories and the love of music.³

1. Shāh Wānī, op. cit., p.92.

2. Baloch, N.A., Shah: The Rūmī of Pakistan, Poet Laureate of Sindhī, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.30-37.

While comparing the Risālo and the Maṣnavī he comments on the poets, saying:

The two great saints, each with a sphere of his own, are joined in a common vision, having a unity of purpose, and are often using (sic) the common forms (in stories, imageries, for example) as the means for one and the same end.¹

Schimmel in her work Pain and Grace, with reference to the Islamic background of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf, has traced some similarities between the work of our poet and Rūmī.²

U.M. Daudpōta does not agree with scholars on the similarities between Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf and Rūmī. As he comments in one of his papers:

It is indeed amusing when we read the statements of scholars like Trumpp, Qalech Beg, Gurbukhshānī and Sorley that Shāh's mystical poetry was largely influenced by Rūmī, Hāfiz and Jāmī. Shāh's form of verse is absolutely his own and its content is no less original.

Cont'd: 3. Baloch, N.A., "Maulānā Rūmī and Shāh ^CAbdul Latif the Saint Poet of Sind", Sind University Arts Research Journal, Hyderabad Sind, 1972-3, vols.XI & XII, pp.62-79.

1. Ibid., p.70.

2. Schimmel, A.M., Pain and Grace, Leiden, 1976, pp.

... Here and there we may catch glimpses of Rūmī and others in his thought, but that does not mean that he has consciously borrowed his ideas from them... All mystical writings are the record of one spiritual experience and are pervaded by a single overpowering emotion. This accounts for the similarity of ideas and diction used by the mystical poets all over the world.¹

Pīr Husam al-Dīn Rāshidī seems to have held the same opinion as Daudpotā regarding the two poets. He also does not think that there is much similarity between them, and points out two differences as already mentioned elsewhere.²

A close observation of the imagery in the works of both poets in this chapter has revealed that there are certain differences in their treatment of similar images and that sometimes parallels between the imagery of the two poets are

1. Daudpotā, U.M., "Shāh Latīf and Rūmī", Poet Laureate of Sindhī, Hyderabad Sind, 1961, pp.

2. Rāshidī, op. cit., p.12.

Rāshidī mentions two basic differences between the work of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf and that of Rūmī, saying that there is no tenderness (نرمي), (لطافت) nor patriotism حب الوطني in the work of Rūmī as one notices in the Risālo of Shāh^c Abd al-Latīf.

absent. These differences in approach may be explained by reference to several factors mentioned earlier, namely:

Physical and social environment.

Local culture.

Personal approach to life.

The physical environment of Rūmī was different from that of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. Rūmī was born and brought up in Iran and Turkey and travelled through Muslim countries, visiting many cities which had religious significance for Muslims. His references therefore are mostly to those Islamic cities and places he visited. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf was born and brought up in Sind. He travelled in and around Sind, so his references are to the local cities, villages, mountains and valleys either of Sind or neighbouring states. Our poet lived in a mixed society of Muslims and Hindus and he even travelled with yogis, visiting Hindu places of pilgrimage along with local Muslim Ṣūfī centres.

As far as social environment is concerned, it should be noted that Rūmī lived in Konya. In addition, the social group in which he moved around was different from that of Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf. Shāh ^cAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, lived in a small town Kotrī, then ^{moved} to Bhit Shāh a small village on a hill. Although he had some learned and Ṣūfī friends who were from Sind, he lived among poor rural peoples, Hindus as well as

Muslims. They were mostly illiterate simple people who were attracted to him for his tolerant nature. They understood his simple songs of love, unity, and non-violence. Therefore they gathered around him, irrespective of their religious differences.

Since the audience of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf came from rural areas and were uneducated, he used simple themes, with which they were familiar. Unlike Rūmī he seldom gives examples from Islamic history or literature, because his followers are not familiar with those events. Instead, he uses themes from local history and folk literature. For instance, while Rūmī takes the example of Ibrahīm Adhām, a figure from Ṣūfī history, to convey his idea of detachment from worldly power and honourable status for spiritual advancement, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf uses the example of a swamī in Sur Mūmal-Rāṅo, who gives up his royal status and becomes a wandering ascetic.

Their choice of historical figure is also influenced by the local culture of their respective countries. For instance, Rūmī chooses heroes either from Islamic history or pre-Islamic Persia. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, in most cases, speaks of the past rulers of Sind whom he commemorates for their special virtues in keeping with certain Sindhī traditions.

There are, of course, exceptional examples where the two poets have used the same personalities from Ṣūfī and Islamic

history. One example is both the extensive reference made by both to the Prophet Muhammad, to Imām Husain and his family and Mansūr Ḥallāj. Both agree that Ḥallāj was wrongly executed. Nevertheless, Rūmī expresses his preference for Shams al-Dīn rather than Ḥallāj.

Differences in the personality or personal approach to life of the two poets are also reflected in their works. As we have seen earlier, Rūmī's favourite image is the sun. Its power, masculine strength and even harshness in certain cases are acceptable to the poet, because he believes that for purification it is necessary. The sun also symbolises his beloved Shams al-Dīn.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is not very well disposed towards the sun, although he uses the same image. In his work that strength is disliked by him and considered as an oppressive power, in contrast to the delicate smooth moonlight which is preferred by our poet.

Again, from among animals and birds, Rūmī chooses the hawk to symbolise the pure soul. Although it is a hunter bird, Rūmī interprets the killing and wounding inflicted by the hawk as necessary for the purpose of purification. The choice by Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf of the swan to represent the pure soul reflects the tenderness of his nature.

Another difference in their personal characters is reflected in Rūmī's frankness in discussing the intimate relationship between husband and wife. He even refers to the grief of the eunuch and mukhannath (a term used for a male prostitute)¹ in his work as a symbol of the seeker's grief in his attempt to expound Ṣūfī ideas. Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf, on the other hand, seems reluctant to mention anything related to physical contact or sensual relationships. Although he does refer to the heart burnings and suffering of his heroines in separation from their beloved, there is always a distance between the lovers, even when they are supposed to be together. This may reflect his own personality or his audience who might have misunderstood his work if he had used such symbolism.

Apart from these environmental, social, cultural and individual differences, there are some technical dissimilarities in their work as well. Being a scholar as well as a poet Rūmī clearly attempts to be as systematic as possible in his writing. Probably for this reason he adopts a narrative style. The style of Shāh ^c Abd al-Latīf is more distinctly lyrical, with less attention being paid to logical development. Since his folk stories are well-known, he comments only briefly on the dramatic theme, because he can assume that the audience is

1. Schimmel, op. cit., pp.131-132.

familiar with the events in these. There are thus certain noticeable formal differences in the style of the two poets.

APPENDIX

SEMI-HISTORICAL AND FOLK STORIES
IN THE POETRY OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF

In the poetry of Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf one comes across references to nine semi-historical and folk-stories. The poet does not narrate these stories in his poetry, but refers to them as assuming that his audience will be familiar with them, because of their popularity in Sind.

Of these nine stories eight are based on local themes, either from Sind or other neighbouring states in India, now in Pakistan, like Baluchistan, Rajasthan, Punjab and so on. There are seven stories mostly based on love and romance. The eighth story concerns the bravery of a handicapped fisherboy called Mōriro.

The ninth story refers to the Karbala tragedy. For some time it has been a subject of controversy as to whether Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf composed this sur or whether it was written by another poet but attributed to Shāh ^CAbd al-Latīf. Modern scholarship has tended to the conclusion that on linguistic evidence this sur was composed by him.¹

In view of the fact that the Karbala tragedy is a well known historical event, it has not been included in the appendix. Out of the eight folk stories, Māruī-^C Umar is also excluded from the appendix because it has already been

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., p.786.

discussed in the thesis at length.¹

The seven folk stories are as follows:-

- i. Suhñī-Mehār
- ii. Sasuī-Punhū
- iii. Sorath-Raī Diyāch
- iv. Līlā-Chanesar
- v. Nūri-Jām Tamāchī
- vi. Mūmal-Rāno
- vii. Morīro and the Shark.

1. See pp. 130-49.

SUHNĪ-MEHĀR

During the reign of Shāh Jahān (1627-1655), the Mughal ruler of India, there lived a wealthy potter Tullā in Gujrāt (Punjab) who was popular because of his beautiful pottery.

At the same time there lived an affluent merchant Mīrzā ^cAlī in Bukhārā who had a beloved only son, ^cIzzat Beg.

Having received permission from his father, ^cIzzat Beg set off on a business trip to India. He went to Delhi, visited Lahore and other big cities of India. When he reached Gujrāt, he heard about the skill of Tullā and his beautiful pottery.

He sent one of his servants to buy some fine pots from him. When the servant returned, instead of praising Tullā's pots, he began to praise the beauty of Suhnī, Tullā's daughter. ^cIzzat Beg became curious, so he went to Tullā's shop, bought some pots, and saw Suhnī with whom he fell in love.

On the pretext of buying pots, he began to visit Tullā daily, in order to have a glimpse of Suhnī.

When ^cIzzat Beg had used up most of his money, and his house was full of pots, he opened up a shop and started

selling at low prices what he had bought for high ones. Then he started buying pots on loan from Tullā which he could not pay back, as he had already finished all his money. Tullā started demanding money. Finally ^cIzzat Beg asked Tullā to employ him, so that he could repay his debt. In this way he had a chance to see Suhñī.

Tullā asked him to look after his buffaloes. Thus he became known as Mehār or Mainhwāl. Suhñī had fallen in love with him too, so they used to meet secretly.

When Tullā learnt about their love, he was furious and dismissed Mehār from his service. He married Suhñī by force to Dam. Suhñī never approved of this marriage and was always longing and yearning to meet Mehār.

Mehār became a yogi and sat on the bank of the Chenab river opposite the town where Suhñī lived. When Suhñī heard this, she used to swim across the river with the help of an earthenware jar every night to meet Mehār.

On one occasion Suhñī's sister-in-law saw Suhñī crossing the river. She told her brother about this and he taunted and abused Suhñī for her infidelity and threatened her, if she still continued the same practice. In spite of all this, nothing could prevent Suhñī from visiting her beloved.

One day her sister-in-law found her hidden jar and changed the baked one for an unbaked earthenware jar.

That particular night was dark and stormy, a night when sailors dreaded to sail across the river for fear of their lives. Suhñī plunged into the river with the unbaked jar. After a short while, the jar began to sink and it was finally submerged. Then Suhñī was left to the mercy of the waves. She could not swim for long as her limbs were exhausted. She began to drown and called for help. No one dared to risk his life to enter such a rough river except Mehār.

When he heard Suhñī's call he jumped into the river, to save her, but it was too late, and both of them were drowned in the river. As the story goes, Mehār caught the corpse of Suhñī in the water and breathed his last in that embrace. Thus the two lovers were united for ever.

In another version of the story, it is said that Suhñī lived on the west bank of the river Indus (in Sind) and her husband Dum lived on the East bank. When Suhñī married Dam, she had to cross the Indus river to go to her husband's town. On the way, the bridal party stopped to get some milk from Mehār who happened to be there with his buffaloes. As she drank the milk she fell in love with Mehār. Thus their love began. The rest of this version of the story is similar in

nature to the first one.1

1. Gurbukhshānī, H.M., Ruḥ Rihān, Karachi, 1933, pp.61-78.
Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.89-90.
Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.172-81.
Laxman, Kakmal, Folk Tales of Pakistan, New Delhi, 1976, pp.45-52.

SASUĪ-PUNHŪ

There once lived a Brahman called Na^cūn in a village near the bank of the river Bhambhore. Na^cūn and his wife had a great desire to have a daughter. After longing for years a beautiful girl was born to them. According to their custom, they asked astrologers to look into the horoscope of the child. They predicted that she would marry a Muslim and thus dishonour their family.

In order to avoid such a humiliation they put the child in a box and threw her into the river. The box floated and reached a town called Bhambhore, where a washerman named Muḥammad was washing clothes, with his friends. When he saw the box, he brought it out of water and opened it. To his surprise he saw a beautiful girl in it.

He took the child to his wife and named her Sasuī. They brought her up as their own child. She was loved by everyone in the neighbourhood, firstly because she was beautiful and secondly because she had a very pleasing personality. As she grew up, every one talked about her beauty.

In those days, caravans of merchants used to come to Sind, for the purpose of trade, mostly from Kech Makrān (Baluchistan). While passing through Bhambhore, some of the

caravan people mentioned the beauty of Sasuī to the prince Punhū.

Punhū was the son of Ārī Jām the ruler of Kech Makrān. Being a young man, and curious to see Sasuī about whom he had heard so much, he planned to go to Sind. He disguised himself as a merchant, arranged for a caravan, and left for Bhambhōre. The goods he chose for his caravan were perfumes, scents and other toiletries mostly used by girls.

As their caravan reached Bhambhore all the people rushed to buy goods from them. Sasuī was amongst those who wanted to see these wares. Punhū was fascinated by her rare beauty and fell in love with her. She too fell in love with him.

Sasuī requested one of her close friends to reveal this secret to her parents. With the help of one of Sasuī's friends, Punhū asked her parents for her hand.

At first Muḥammad the washerman refused to give his daughter's hand to a stranger, especially as he did not know his caste. Sasuī's friend assured him that Punhū was a washerman too. In order to prove this, Muḥammad gave some dirty clothes to Punhū to wash and asked him to hand them over to the customers.

For Punhū, who was a prince, this was an ordeal. He damaged his hands and tore the clothes apart while washing them. Sasuī secretly advised him to put a piece of gold in every torn garment and then to hand them over to the customers. This Punhū did very happily. When Sasuī's father asked the customers about Punhū's work, they praised him. Thus he was convinced that Punhū was a washerman.

Sasuī was married to Punhū and he settled with his in-laws washing clothes. When Punhū's friends returned to Kech they told Ārī Jām and his brothers that Punhū was doing such a menial job having settled in Sind. They were upset and angry. They sent him numerous messages but he did not listen to them. When Punhū's brothers saw that their father was getting restless for his son, they set off for Bhambhore promising to bring him back.

Punhū's brothers came as guests and stayed with Punhū. Sasuī welcomed them and did everything to please them. They tried to persuade Punhū to go back, but he refused saying that he could not leave Sasuī.

The brothers planned another tactic. While eating and drinking they deliberately made Punhū drink so much that he lost his senses. Sasuī was asleep, so they tied up Punhū on a camel's back and left Bhambhore at night.

When Sasuī¹ woke up in the morning, she discovered the deceit of her brothers-in-law. She cried, lamented and decided to leave Bhambhōre to follow Punhū on an unknown path.

She set off on the most dangerous road, all alone, passing through rocky mountains full of wild animals. She was determined to go to Kech for the sake of Punhū. Poets have narrated her pathetic appeal to her brothers-in-law, who had deserted her. She complained to the mountains, and even requested the sun to delay setting, so that she could follow the tracks of her beloved.

On the way she reached the Mabār Hills, where she saw a shepherd, who looked at her with evil intentions. According to the traditional sources she prayed to God to save her. So the earth parted and she jumped inside to save her honour, and the earth closed the door behind her.

When the shepherd saw this he repented and built a grave on the place where Sasuī had disappeared, and he settled there.

I.I. Qāzī describes Sasuī's death as follows:-

Just near Kech her delicate health gives way and she dies mysteriously in the mountains.¹

1. Qāzī, Elsa, Risālo of Shāh Abd al-Latīf, Hyderabad, 1965, p.247.

When Punhū became conscious, he was very worried and requested his brothers to set him free to go back to Sasuī but they did not listen to him. When they reached Kech, they handed him over to his father who was pleased to see him. Punhū, however, could not bear his separation from Sasuī. So his father permitted him to go back and bring Sasuī with him.

When he was crossing the same path which he had just passed, he saw a newly-built grave. He asked the shepherd who narrated the whole story.

He discovered that it was Sasuī's grave, whereupon he died of extreme grief on the spot. He was buried there in the same place. Thus the two lovers were united in death, and reached the place where nobody could separate them.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.79-90.
Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.125-26.
Shāhānī, op. cit., pp.171-175.
Laxman, op. cit., pp.56-62.

SORATH-RAI DYACH

Once there ruled a Rājā called Rāi Diyāch at Jhunagar in Kāthiwār. He had a sister who was childless. Once she visited a saintly man and asked him to pray for her to have a son. He told her that she would have a son, who would kill his uncle Rāi Diyāch. She was disturbed and told the saintly man that she would prefer to remain childless than to have a son like the one he had predicted.

After some time, a boy was born to her. Thinking about the saint's prediction she became worried. So she put the boy in a wooden box and threw him in the river. The box reached the neighbouring kingdom of Rājā Anī Rāi. A bard and his wife who came to the river bank to fetch water from the river saw the box and took it from the waves. They were very pleased to find a baby boy in the box. They adopted him as their own son and named him Bijal

They taught him to sing and play an instrument called the chang.¹ One day while he was passing through a forest, he heard melodious music coming from one of the trees. He saw birds and wild animals surrounding the tree to listen to the sweet music. When he looked up, he saw that the music was

1. The chang is a musical instrument similar to the fiddle.

coming from the dried intestines of a deer.

Bijal took these magical intestines with him and fitted them to his chang as strings. Thereafter when he played music he attracted animals and birds towards him. Thus he became very popular for his music.

At the time Bijal was born, Rājā Anī Rāi's wife gave birth to an eighth daughter. They put her in a box and threw her into the river. By chance the box floated to Rājā Rāi Diyāch's kingdom, where a pottery maker, Ratna, found it. As he did not have a child he was pleased to have a beautiful girl, and he adopted her as his child, calling her Sorath. She grew up to be a most beautiful girl.

When Rājā Anī Rāi heard about her beauty, being unaware of the fact that she was his own daughter, he asked Ratna for her hand in marriage. Ratna willingly accepted the proposal. When Rājā Rāi Diyāch heard this, he accused Ratna of not giving his beautiful daughter to him to be their own queen. Ratna never expected this proposal and he changed his mind, agreeing to marry Sorath to Rājā Rāi Diyāch.

When Rājā Anī Rāi heard this, he became jealous and he attacked the fort of Jhunagar laying siege to it for one full year without success. Being defeated he announced that anyone

who brought him the head of Rājā Rāi Diyāch would be rewarded with a full plate of gold coins.

The wife of Bijal who was fully confident of her husband's abilities took the plate of gold, and told the bearer that Bijal would fulfil Rājā Anī Rāi's wish very soon. When she told Bijal about it, he was unwilling at first, then agreed to it.

Bijal took his chang and left Jhunagar. When he came near to the palace of Rāi Diyāch he started playing a tune which pierced the heart of Rājā Rāi Diyāch. He told Bijal to ask for any reward he wanted. He offered him gold, precious stones, property, even his kingdom. But Bijal told him that he was no ordinary minstrel who yearned for material goods. He needed something which Rājā might refuse and for which he might be blamed for not being generous.

Rājā became impatient, but the tune played by the minstrel had such a magical effect on him that he was ready to sacrifice anything in the world. He promised Bijal that he would give him anything so Bijal asked for his head. Rājā smiled at his simple request, and told him that a head was a mere bundle of bones, from which he would not profit. Therefore he should ask for something valuable, but Bijal insisted on his head.

So, Rājā Rāi Diyāch took out his sword and cut off his own head to present as a mere gift to this great musician. Taking the head, Bijal rushed to Rājā Anī Rāi to receive his reward. When he reached the Rājā the latter abused him for killing such a generous Rājā. He asked Bijal to leave his kingdom immediately.

Bijal rushed back to Jhunagar, where he saw the funeral pyre where Sorath was performing her 'Sati' tradition. Bijal could not stand his conscience any more, so he also jumped into the fire and ended his life.

1. Gurbukshānī, op. cit., pp.96-124.
 Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.299-300.
 Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.881-885.
 Laxman, op. cit., pp.27-37.

LĪLĀ-CHANĒSAR

Rājā Chanesar was a well-known ruler of the Sūmrā dynasty who ruled Dewal (in Sind). He had a beautiful queen Līlā who was very fond of diamonds and jewellery.

Contemporary to him was Rāṇā Khanghār who ruled Lakhpat in Kutchh. He had an only daughter Kaunru, who was very beautiful and engaged to her cousin Utmādī. Being the only daughter of Rāṇā Khanghār and Mirkhī, too much love had spoiled her habits. She was haughty and proud of her beauty and was always worried about her looks.

One day, her friend Jamnī, who was the sister of Utmādī taunted Kaunru about her attitude, saying that she was behaving as if she was going to be the queen of Chanesar. Kaunru was hurt and told her mother that either she would have to marry Chanesar or she would commit suicide. Her parents became alarmed, but they were aware that Chanesar was married and loved his queen Līlā very much. Nevertheless they wanted to try their best to help their daughter.

After consulting her husband, Mirkhī and Kaunru disguised themselves as traders and left for Debal. There they managed to consult Jakhīro the king's minister and requested him to help them. He promised that he would persuade Chanesar

to marry Kaunru.

When Jakhiro spoke to Chanesar about Kaunru, the king lost his temper and told him that he should not talk like that in future. In Līlā's presence he could not even think about any other woman. Jakhiro offered his apologies to Mirkhī and Kaunru and told them that there was no hope, and that it was therefore useless for them to try.

Kaunru and her mother put on ordinary dresses to disguise themselves and went to Līlā's palace. There they asked Līlā to employ them in her service as they had abandoned their country because of poverty. Līlā felt sorry for them and employed them as personal servants. Kaunru was asked to arrange Chanesar's bed every day. Time passed without any hope of success.

One day as Kaunru was preparing the bed for Chanesar, tears dropped from her eyes. Līlā who had entered the room unnoticed, saw Kaunru's tears. She asked her the reason for the tears. Kaunru told her that at one time she had also been a princess and had lived a luxurious life like her. She told her that instead of using lanterns and lamps, she used to light her palace with 'Naulakha Har' (a necklace worth 900,000 rupees).

At first, Līlā was hesitant to believe her, but she soon became anxious to see that necklace. When Kaunru showed her, Līlā asked her for what price she was prepared to part with it.

Kaunru told Līlā that she would give her necklace free to her but on one condition. Līlā became impatient and asked for the condition. Kaunru told her that the necklace would be hers if she would just let her spend one night with Chanesar.

When Līlā spoke to Chanesar he did not approve of her idea. One day, Chanesar came home after a party and was heavily drunk. Līlā considered it her best opportunity and she allowed Kaunru into her bedroom.

In the morning when Chanesar woke up, he was shocked to see Kaunru instead of Līlā sharing his bed. He was very angry and was about to leave the room, when Mirkhī (Kaunru's mother) told him that Līlā had sold him to Kaunru in return for the 'Naulakhā Hār'. Chanesar considered it an insult and humiliation to be exchanged for a mere necklace.

As his revenge, he deserted Līlā and married Kaunru who had given so much sacrifice for him.

Līlā tried to apologise, cried and begged but Chanesar

refused to listen to her, saying that she had preferred jewellery to him and that he did not love her any more. Līlā after giving up all hope left his house and went to her parents. There she spent her days in misery, solitude and repentance.

Jakhiro who was the minister of Chanesar, was engaged to one of the girls from Līlā's family. But they refused to give her hand to him, after the fate of Līlā. The minister approached Līlā, who intervened, but asked him to bring Chanesar on his wedding, to which he happily agreed.

On the occasion of Jakhiro's wedding, Chanesar came along with the bridegroom party. Līlā with other girls welcomed the party with dancing and singing, but her face was veiled. Chanesar was pleased at their performance and he was especially fascinated at the dancing and the voice of the one whose face was veiled. Chanesar begged the girl to unveil her face as he could not tolerate the situation any more. As soon as Līlā opened her veil, Chanesar fell down on the floor and died. When Līlā saw this she also died. Thus the souls of the two lovers were united for ever in eternity.

1. Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.223-224.

Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.665-671.

Laxman, op. cit., pp.38-44.

Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.1-10.

NŪRĪ-JĀM TAMĀCHĪ

During the reign of Jām Tamāchī one of the great rulers of the Sammā dynasty, there lived a community of fishermen, ('Muhānās') around the Lake Kinjhar. These people lived in very unhygienic conditions, because of their poverty, and their profession. They earned their living by catching fish and selling them in the market. No one wanted to sit beside them because they smelt of fish. Their clothes were tattered and filthy and they were generally regarded as being the lowest of the low.

Amongst these untidy, ugly and evil-smelling people, there was an exceptional beauty, who in her appearance and behaviour seemed to belong to a high class society. Her name was Nūrī and she was indeed a real 'light'.

One day, Jām Tamāchī the ruler of Sind boarded a ship on a pleasure trip to do some hunting and fishing. By chance, he happened to see Nūrī, who was full of delicacy, and modesty and politeness. She was beautiful, but she was not proud. She was humble, courteous and loving.

King Jām Tamāchī was fascinated to see such a rare beauty among these fishermen. He fell in love with her and asked her parents for her hand in marriage. The poor fishermen were overjoyed at their relationship with the king, since even the ordinary people disliked and looked down on

them because of their low caste.

Jām Tamāchī exempted all of them from paying any tax. He presented the whole of Lake Kinjhar as a gift to the fishermen. Besides these, he bestowed huge gifts on them. As a result their standard of living was raised, and they started living a better life.

Jām Tamāchī had many queens when he married Nūrī but he loved her most especially for her modesty and humble nature.

One day he asked all his queens to dress up in their best clothes and to get ready. He would choose the most attractive one of them and would take her on an outing. Every one tried their level best and put on expensive clothes to look pretty. But Nūrī wore the ordinary dress which she used to wear before she became a queen. The other queens laughed at her foolishness.

When Jām Tamāchī came to make his inspection, he gave the verdict in favour of Nūrī. He was so moved by her modesty and by the fact that even after becoming a queen she had not changed. Thus he announced that she was his chief queen, and that he would take her for an outing with him.

∴ Ādvānī, op. cit., p.285.

Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.853-856.

Laxman, op. cit., pp.53-55.

Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.55-60.

MŪMAL-RĀNO

In the early 15th century, Rājā Nand ruled over Mīrpur Mathelo (a city in Sind). He had nine daughters, the most beautiful of whom was Mūmal, whilst Sūmal the eldest one excelled them all in wisdom.

One day the Rājā went hunting and killed a wild pig. One of the pig's teeth had the magical power to dry the water from the river bed. The Rājā with the help of this tooth dried the river bed and secretly buried all his wealth under the water.

A magician learned of this secret. When he heard about the Rājā's absence from the palace, he disguised himself as a beggar and passed by the palace lamenting and crying in a very pathetic voice. When Mūmal heard him, she took pity on him and called him to the palace and asked him the reason for his misery. He told her that he was suffering from an acute type of disease which could only be cured if he had a pig's tooth. Mūmal remembered that she had once seen such a tooth in the possession of her father. Being unaware of its magical power, she searched for the tooth, found it and handed it to the beggar who left the palace blessing her.

One day when the Rājā wanted to check his wealth, he searched for the tooth but could not find it. After inquiring

from his daughters, he learned that Mūmal had given it away to a beggar. The Rājā was very angry and was about to kill Mūmal when Sūmal her wise sister intervened and told him that she would find him as much wealth as he had lost.

Sūmal was an expert in magic and she took her sisters to Landāno (a town in Jaisalmer) and built a beautiful palace there called Kāk-Mahal, on the bank of the river Kāk. Everything in that palace was based on deception and sorcery. On the gates of the palace she stationed terrifying lions, which groaned and howled as a traveller entered. Around the palace a moat was constructed, which was shallow but its bottom was set with mirrors which gave the illusion of great depth. The pathway from the palace gate to Mūmal's chamber was so confusing that no one could find their way.

Sūmal then made a proclamation that whoever wanted to marry a beauty such as Mūmal, had to cross the Kāk-Mahal and win her as his bride. All the young, wealthy princes, lords and kings wanted to try their luck. So many of them came with lots of wealth. After losing everything they left bewildered. When a contestant entered the palace he was terrified by the frightful atmosphere. The maid-servant Nātar who was supposed to guide the traveller, very cleverly left him in a confused state. In the meantime Sūmal's robbers would come and rob him of all his possessions and he would be left

to run away to save his life.

In this manner the daughters collected much wealth and gave it to their father.

During that time, Hamīr Sūmro ruled Thar (Sind). He had three good friends who were his ministers as well. All of them were very fond of hunting and enjoying themselves. One day as they went hunting, they saw a yogi in the forest, sitting alone under a tree. They greeted him and asked him why he was sitting in such a deserted place.

The yogi heaved a sigh and told them that he had once been a king and had enjoyed his life like them. But the love and beauty of Mūmal had brought him to the stage in which they had found him. This story made these four friends curious to see Mūmal and try their luck.

King Hamīr Sūmro and two of his friends attempted but failed. Rāno Maindharo who was the cleverest of them all suspected that everything was based on deception, to engulf the traveller. He succeeded in reaching the sitting room, where he found seven identical beds. Suspecting a trap, he checked them all with his arrows and discovered that under six of the beds were deep ditches with sharp weapons. Whichever victim sat on any of them would fall into the ditch and perish.

Rāno Maindharo found the safe bed for himself and waited for Mūmal's arrival. She came with a number of her friends, but somehow he recognised her. When Mūmal became convinced of his wisdom she agreed to marry him.

King Hamīr Sūmro asked Rāno Maindharo to let him see the beauty (Mūmal) for whom numerous admirers had lost their lives. Rāno agreed but told him that Mūmal might object to his entering the palace. Therefore he advised him to disguise himself as a milkman and follow him.

When Mūmal saw a stranger, she asked Rāno who told her that he was a milkman. Mūmal recognised the king, but asked him to milk a cow for her. After great trouble he did so and returned to his other friends abusing Rāno for humiliating him. So he promised to himself that he would punish Rāno for ill-treating him. The three friends returned except for Rāno, who stayed with Mūmal.

After some days King Hamīr Sūmro sent Rāno a message to come and visit his friends at home. As soon as Rāno reached Umakot, Hamīr Sūmro arrested him and put him in prison. At his sister's intervention (who was Hamīr Sūmro's queen), he set Rāno free on condition that he would not see Mūmal any more.

As soon as he was set free Rāno used to visit Mūmal secretly every night, by riding on his camel and returning at dawn.

Eventually Rānō was imprisoned for visiting Mūmal secretly. Finally, Hamīr Sūmro gave him permission to see Mūmal whenever he wished to.

Because of Rāno's long absence Mūmal was very depressed and in order to cheer her up her sister Sūmal put on Rāno's clothes and shared her bed.

When Rāno came at night, and saw a man sleeping with Mūmal he became very angry and wanted to kill them both. Then he changed his mind and leaving his walking stick beside Mūmal he went away.

When Mūmal woke up, she realised her mistake. She sent numerous messages to Rāno, to come and listen to her story but he paid no heed to them when she saw that it was no use wasting time and waiting for him, she disguised herself as a male trader and left for Umarkot. There she settled opposite the house of Rāno, and gradually managed to strike up a friendship with him.

Rāno was very fond of playing chess, a game which

Mūmal also played well and she began to spend most of her time playing with Rāno. One day, while playing, a mole on her arm was exposed, which Rāno recognised. Mūmal begged for forgiveness but of no avail.

She therefore set up a pyre and jumped into the flames. When Rāno heard this he also jumped into the fire. Thus both the lovers were united for ever.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., pp.11-38.
Saib Muhammad ^cUrs, Sūr Mūmal Rāno, Hyderabad, 1960, pp.20-30.
Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.233-35.
Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.695-704.
Laxman, op. cit., pp.13-24.

MORIṚO-SŪR GHĀTŪ - (Shark hunters)

When Rājā Dilārāi ruled over Somiyānī (a state in Sind), there lived a fisherman called Obhāyo who had seven sons. Six of them were healthy and strong but the seventh was handicapped and weak. His name was Morīro, whom the other brothers used to leave behind to look after the home, whilst they used to go daily to fish.

One day six of them went to fish and did not return home. The family became worried about them, so Morīro left home to find news about his brothers. He soon learnt that they had been caught up in the whirlpool in Kālāchī, had been drowned and devoured by the shark which lived there.

Morīro though handicapped, was very intelligent. With the consent of his relatives, he decided to avenge the shark by killing it. He ordered the iron-mongers to build a cage big enough to accommodate him. On the outer sides of the cage, he asked them to fix sharp pointed hooks and huge piercing blades. Morīro sat inside the cage and asked his companions to tie strong ropes to the cage. He told them to sail towards the whirlpool of Kālāchī - where they dropped the cage in the water, as instructed by Morīro.

As soon as the cage fell into the water, the shark

opened its huge mouth to engulf it, but the sharp blades and hooks pierced its jaws. Morīro shook the ropes, by which he indicated to his friends that they should pull him out. Numerous people, with the help of bullocks, pulled the ropes, thus dragging the cage out along with the shark, onto the sea shore. All of them rushed with their weapons and soon killed the monster. Morīro was found safe and sound inside the cage.

They cut open the shark and found the bones of the six brothers of Morīro inside the shark. Morīro took the bones of his brothers, buried them near a mountain two miles away from Karachi, and settled there.

1. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., pp.91-95.
Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.293-294.
Shāhvānī, op. cit., pp.871-874.

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