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

by

Durreshahwar Sayed

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Dedicated to

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

ستو رِسن پهلوی چی تنده یُرابر توربان
آتل اودَ اهم رَشی، جیدا انجن پیچِل پرائی..
DECLARATION

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Page No:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSLITERATION TABLEÈ</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1: PART 1: THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND IN SIND IN THE PERIOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 2: LIFE OF SHĀH ḌABD AL-LATĪF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2: WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF SHĀH ḌABD AL-LATĪF</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 3: SHĀH ḌABD AL-LATĪF AND HINDU THOUGHT</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO YOGIS</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 4: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE POETRY OF SHĀH ḌABD AL-LATĪF AND THAT OF FARĪD AL-DĪN CATTĀR</strong></td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5: JALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ AND SHĀH ḌABD AL-LATĪF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THEIR POETIC IMAGERY</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This thesis treats hitherto neglected aspects of the work of the well-known poet of Sind, Shāh ṬAbd al-Ṭāfīf (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 ṬAbd al-Ṭāfīf, discussing this topic from a Ṣūfī and social viewpoint.

There has been considerable controversy amongst Hindu and Muslim scholars as to the debt owed by Shāh ṬAbd al-Ṭāfīf 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 ṬAbd al-Ṭāfīf 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 ṬAttār and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and the Risālo of Shāh ṬAbd al-Ṭāfīf. These chapters reveal that the Sindhi poet stands firmly within the great tradition of Persian Ṣūfī 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 ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf. All the translations quoted in this thesis from the Risālā have been made by the author herself.
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I am unable to find words to acknowledge the gratitude
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.

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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.
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

\[
\begin{align*}
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{b} & \text{p} & \text{BH} & \text{t} & \text{\&} & \text{th} & \text{p} & \text{q} \\
\text{th} & \text{t} & \text{th} & \text{p} & \text{ph} & \\
\text{j} & \text{i} & \text{jh} & \text{ch} & \text{chh} & \\
\text{h} & \text{kh} & \text{d} & \text{dh} & \text{d} & \\
\text{d} & \text{dh} & \text{r} & \text{r} & \text{z} & \\
\text{s} & \text{sh} & \text{s} & \text{z} & \text{t} & \\
\text{z} & \text{c} & \text{gh} & \text{f} & \text{q} & \\
\text{k} & \text{kh} & \text{g} & \text{gh} & \\
\text{l} & \text{m} & \text{n} & \text{y} & \\
\text{h} & \text{\&} & \text{y} & \\
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\]

Vowels and Dipthongs:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a} & \\
\text{i} & \\
\text{u} & \\
\text{\&} & \\
\text{\&} & \\
\text{e} & \\
\text{\&} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
Vowels and Diphongs (cont'd):

Symbols:

\[ \text{\textdegree}, \text{\textdegree} \quad \text{\textdegree}, \text{\textdegree} \quad \text{\textdegree}, \text{\textdegree} \]
PART 1

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND IN SIND

IN THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE LIFETIME OF

SHĀH ʿABD AL-LĀṬĪF

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 Muḥammad b. Qāsim who at the behest of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf was sent on a campaign to conquer Sind and the lands of the Indus valley.1 Muḥammad b. Qāsim reached first the port of Debal (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 Rawar. 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 Abbasids in 750 A.D., Sind continued to be ruled by governors sent from the central Islamic world. As in other peripheral areas, however, Abbasid 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 Abbasid 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. 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.

In the early eleventh century Sind was plundered and conquered by Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazna 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

operations.

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

Sūmār rule in Sind was replaced by that of the Sammās, another local family, who governed from Ṭhatta 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 Kalhūṛās 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; Maṣūmī, W.M., Tarīkh-i Maṣūmī, Hyderabad Sind, 1953, pp.41-4.
whilst usually acknowledging the overall authority of the Mughals, although they were at times disobedient to their overlords and punished for it. The two Kalhora rulers who were in power during the life-time of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif were Yār Muhammad and his son Nūr Muhammad. The latter gained full control of Sind before the advent of the Persian ruler, Nādir Shāh whom he vigorously opposed. Nādir Shāh imprisoned the Kalhora ruler in the fort of Umārkot and was released upon payment of a tribute and on condition that the three sons of Nūr Muhammad should be taken away as hostages. After the assassination of Nādir Shāh in 1747 the three Kalhora 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 Sindhi poet, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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 Sumrā 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 Abbāsid 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 Sumrā rule no specimen of Sindhī poetry has survived. The 'Sindhī verse' which is said to belong to the Abbāsid period is not in the Sindhī language at all. According to him "the Sindhī literature of the Hindū period and pre-Sumrā 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 Mālwārī.⁴

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 Ghurid period the Persian language began to prosper for literary purposes and had the patronage of the ruling class. 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 Sasuī, Punhū, Ĉūmar, Māruī and Mūmal Rāṇo, have, however, been traced to this period.

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.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
According to Junejo, the first poetry in Sindhi 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 Sumrā 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 Sumrā period is important in the literary history of Sind because of the gināns (or jāns) (verses) of Pir Nur 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 Sindhi, Multānī, Gujarātī and Punjabi and are religious and philosophical in nature, containing a blend of mystical ideas from Ṣūfī and Vedantic thought.² These gināns were written in lyrical form, like the later kāfiyūn of Sindhi poetry, which were meant to be recited or sung. The Ismāʿīlī pīrs of Sind, such as these, converted a large number of Hindūs to Islam through their preaching, calling their new converts khojas.³

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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 ʿAlī al-Dīn Khilji 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 Bhagul Bai and other women of the family burnt themselves alive to save their honour and that of Sind.


Later, during the Sammā rule in Sind (1350-1520) various poets wrote on subjects such as Ṣūfism and philosophy. In fact, the foundations of Ṣūfī poetry in Sind were laid in this period by poets such as Shaikh Ḥammad, Qāẓī Qāzan, Ḥishāq Aḥāngar (the blacksmith), Mamūf Faqīr, ʿAlī Shīrzāī, 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 Qāẓī Qāzan (d.1551) is the most prominent. He was a man of learning, well-versed in the religious sciences and Ṣūfism. 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 Qāẓī Qāzan was made Qāẓī of Thatta.

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

Qāżan became his murīd. 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 Sūfī ideas are hinted at with the help of similes and metaphors. One of his most popular verses is the following:

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

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

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

2. A collection of the prophetic traditions.
5. Daudpota, 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.

Other important poets include Makhdūm Nūh of Hallā (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.

Mention should also be made of Sayyid ʿAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1538–1623), the great grandfather of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. He was born in Mutāʿalvī and later settled in Bulrī. His work in Persian entitled Bayān al-ʿArifīn includes 93 baits in Sindhī. In these couplets the poet draws on Sindhī folk tales, such as the themes of Sasuī and Phū, ʿUmār and Mārū, Līlā and Chanesar, Suhnī and Mehār, and Morīro. The

2. Badavī, op. cit., pp.74-76.
inspiration of the poetry is Sufī. He was an Uwaisī Sufī who learned much from the company of great Sufīs such as Makhdūm Nūh and Yūsuf Bakharī. According to Badavī, the poet composed his work and expressed similar Sufī views to those of Bāyazīd Biṣṭāmī and Junaid Baghdādī. His poetry is in the form of dohā couplets in Hindi style.

It would appear appropriate to refer to some of the immediate literary predecessors and contemporaries of Shāh ʿAbd 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 Sufīs, makhdūms, pīrs and cūlamāʾ 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 Sufī tariqas which had become popular in Sind, like Suhrawardīyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qādiriyya and Chishtīyya.


2. Daudpot Ḥ U.M., Shāh Karīm Bulrī Wārī jō Kālām, Shīt Shāh, 1977, pp.31-32. Some scholars believe him to have belonged to the Qādiriyya.


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 Qādiriyah order and he attained the status of murshid. For the guidance of his followers he wrote books about his tarīqa, three of which are known by name: Tuḥfat al-Sālikīn and Minhaj al-Mafīrāf, which were written in Persian and Sindhi Risālī. Only the two latter have survived.¹

There are various areas of similarity with the work of Shāh CAbd al-Latīf. Minhaj al-Maṣrifat is written in Persian and contains only twenty Sindhi 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 Adesi, Šāmi and Kāparī, referring to their habits and way of life, but in a Sufī 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 Samunjhi and he writes about yogis in Sur Khāhorī and

Ramkalī.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 Sindhi, whereas his contemporaries generally wrote in Arabic or Persian. Shāh Ābd 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 Sindhi.

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

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

A very important influence was exerted on Shah `Abd al-Latif by Shah `Ināyat Sūfī of Jhoke (d.1721 A.D.). He was murīd to Makhdūm `Abd al-Malik Burhanpūrī of the Qādiriyā, who was a descendant of Shaikh `Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī. Shah `Abd al-Latif used to visit him, and was greatly impressed by him. 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. *

This event had a profound effect on the life and thought of Shah `Abd al-Latif. To commemorate this man's death, he composed some melancholy verses. Although the name of Shah `Ināyat Sūfī is not explicitly mentioned, it has been suggested that he is referring to that event:

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.

---


† There is still some controversy on this. According to some scholars Shah `Abd al-Latif used to visit him. Others argue that this was not possible because some close relatives of Shah `Abd al-Latif, the Sayyids of Bulrī were responsible for Shah `Ināyat's death.
Those who used to give bliss to life have departed.¹

Seven verses in Sur Ramkalī are said to have been written commemorating the death of Shāh Īnāyat Sūfī.

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

سر در قدم پارندارد چی بجا شد
این پار گران بود ادا غد چی بجا شد

Shāh Ī Abd al-Latīf uses this line with reference to Suhnī:-

کهْرْتِی ٰکِرْنَوُ هَكَ كَرَیٰ، ٌیِخْوَن ٌنَحَارِی بَنْتُ
سر در قدم یار فدا غد چی بجا شد،
وصل إهوئي وشک
رائ جَنین جو رَنَکَ، آلا ِاذِ أکَارِین.*

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


1. Shāhwāṇī, 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

Sūfī Ḥazīn’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 Muṣīn Thattavī was also an important figure in the lifetime of Shāh Ṭḥānī. His exact dates are not known but he was born in the late seventeenth century. He was a Naqshbandī Sūfī who became a close friend of Shāh Ṭḥānī, on whose advice he wrote a work in Persian entitled Risāla-yi Uwaisiyya. In this work, the writer gives guidance on the Sūfī path for those Sūfīs who are not attached to a Sūfī master. Muḥammad Muṣīn Thattavī was criticised for his liking for music and also for his Shi’ite beliefs.³

2. Schimmel, Pain and Grace, pp.21-22.
3. Alavī, Shafī’i Ahmad, "Shāh Ṭḥānī ṭabā Ham’asr al-‘Arif", in Nain Zindagi, December 1951, p.17; Schimmel, op. cit., p.22; Wafā’ī, op. cit., p.76.
Another significant contemporary of Shāh Ḟātir Ḥalāl was Makhdūm Muḥammad Ḥāshim Ṭhāttā (1692–1761). He was a strong upholder of orthodox Islam and enjoyed a good relationship with the Kalhorō ruler, Ghulām Shāh. He became chief qāzī of Thatta. He was a prolific writer of works on religion and law, in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi. It seems that Shāh Ḟātir Ḥalāl met Muḥammad Ḥāshim 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 Ṭānhwārī (1713–1774), a follower of the Naqshbandiyya. Although a learned man who strictly observed the Sharīa, he was not narrow-minded. His 84 verses in Sindhi which have survived reveal great depths of religious feeling.\(^2\) Shāh Ḟātir Ḥalāl visited him and was immensely impressed by his knowledge.\(^3\)

Lastly in this brief survey of important literary figures in the time of Shāh Ḟātir Ḥalāl, mention should be made of

2. Sayyid, op. cit., pp.73-5.
Sahib dino Faruqi (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 Sufi themes and draws on Sindhi folk stories as Shah 'Abd al-Latif was to do a little later.1

Shāh āb al-Latīf was born in 1102/1689-1690 in the village of Hallā Hawaiī in the Hyderabad district of Sind. Soon after his birth Shāh Ḥabīb, his father, left Hallā Hawaiī for unknown reasons and settled in another village Kotī (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 Timūr conquered Herat, the conqueror employed Sayyid Mīr ālī, one of the ancestors of Shāh āb al-Latīf, as well as his six sons, in his service, making all save one of them rulers of different states of India. The last son, Sayyid Haidar Shāh, stayed with his father in the service of Timūr. 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

the hand of his daughter in marriage.¹

Thus Sayyid Haidar 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 ⁴ Aḥmad; the boy settled permanently in Sind.² His descendants became known as the Sayyids Muta alvi — or Matyārī. These Sayyids traced their ancestry to Imam Mūsā Kāzim's son, Ja'far ⁵ Sānī al-Hujwīrī. Shāh ⁶ Aḥmad al-Latif 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 ⁶ Aḥmad Karim of Bulrī (1537–1620 AD), the great Sufī poet whose tomb is still visited with reverence by his followers and devotees at Bulrī.³

1. Ibid., p.7.
Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf's father, Ḥabīb 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 ʿAbd al-Lātīf 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 ʿAbd al-Lātīf Bhiṭāl.¹

About the childhood of Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf 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 Gurbukhhshānī, Hotchand and others, Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf 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


² Cont’d...
Abū Hāshim

Abū Talib

Abd Allah

Prophet Muhammad

Hazarat Fatima

Abd al-Muttalib

Abd al-Muttalib

Abu Talib

Abu Hashim

"Abd al-Muttalib

Abu Talib

"Al Murtiza

1. This Shajar nāma (family tree) is based on the appendix of Mīrzā Qalech Beg.

cf. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Āhwāl Shāh ābd al-Latīf, Hyderabad Sind, 1972, p.177.
Gurbukhshānī 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 ʿAbd al-Ḥādīf had regular academic training, nor has his handwriting been found anywhere. But it would appear that he did receive some education, as Akhūnd Nūr Muḥammad Bhaṭṭī is mentioned as his tutor by scholars like Shāhvānī, Gurbukhshānī, Ḵᵛānī, and others. These scholars assert that when Shāh ʿAbd al-Ḥādīf was about five or six years old, his father Shāh Ḥābīb sent him to Akhūnd Nūr Muḥammad Bhaṭṭī 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.


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 CAbd al-Latīf could even read and write. The historian and scholar, Mīr CAlī Shīr Qānī Thattavī, in his book Tuhfat al-Kirām, calls him ummi, meaning illiterate. He writes that, in spite of the fact that the poet was ummi, all knowledge had been inscribed on his chest by God.

The German scholar, Ernest Trumpp, who published Shāh jo-Risālo in 1866, says in his introduction that the accusation that Shāh CAbd 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. Shāhvānī affirms Ernest Trumpp's

1. Qānī Mīr, CAlī Shīr, Tuhfat al-Kirām, trans. Ahmad Mīr Makhdūm, Hyderabad Sind, 1957, p.388. (*This is again a topos.*)


* This is of course 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 Magnāvī 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 Muhammad Kalhōro, the ruler of Sind, once presented a manuscript of Magnāvī (written in golden letters) to Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. If he had been ummi—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 Muhammad 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 unmistakeably 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

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

The same writer explains that Mīr `Alī Shīr Qānī Thatta was an admirer of Shāh Ābī al-Latīf, and that he called the latter ummī out of devotion in order to bring him closer to the prophet Muhammad, 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 Khan,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 Ābī 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 Mīrza Mughal Beg. This man happened to be an influential

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

Mīrzā Mughal Beg was a disciple or murīd of Habīb Shāh, the father of Shāh CAbd al-Latīf. From generation to generation their family had been reputed for saintly persons and Sufis 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 Habīb Shāh to their ladies' apartment to bless the girl. As Shāh Habīb 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 became ruler of Sind. Gurbukhsānī, op. cit., p.11.
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-Latif 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 Ḥabīb 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-Latif 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, Ādvāṇī 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-Latif suffered enormous torments in separation from his beloved, who later became his wife.

All the good advice of his family and friends could not make him forget the girl. 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{چیتاریان} & \quad \text{چَلَکَن} \quad \text{سَیاریان} \quad \text{سَعی} \\
\text{آَهَدَر} & \quad \text{روَن} \quad \text{رَه} \quad \text{مَسکی} \quad \text{صُورت} \quad \text{سِبَرین} \quad \text{جی}
\end{align*}
\]

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.

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{پُل} & \quad \text{بل} \quad \text{پُلیُانسی} \quad \text{پُل} \quad \text{نَم} \quad \text{رَه} \quad \text{پُرین} \quad \text{ری} \\
\text{جُهَنِن} & \quad \text{جُهوری} \quad \text{کَان} \quad \text{جُهولیانس} \quad \text{جَهَچَر} \quad \text{بِن} \quad \text{جُهوری} \quad \text{پُری}
\end{align*}
\]

Every moment I have been prohibiting it (heart).

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

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:

أَوَلَ أَخْرَ أَنْتُ مُهْمِجُ وَرَأْيَي
پُرْهَمْوَ سُنُودُ پُورُهَتْنِ وَ الیُ إِنْ کَیمُ وَجَاهُ
سُوُمُ تُحَرُرُ لَهُوُ جَنَّ، جَنَّ بَلَانِ جَنَّ کُیِّ.

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

2. Ibid., p.377.
While Shāh ʿAbd 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:

\[
\text{سِرَّتُنِ النَّانِيَةَ، يَافُودُ بِهِ أَكْبَرُ،}
\]

\[
\text{إِنَّكَ لَكُمْ دُبِّيَتْ إِلَّا مُرْتَنِانِ، حَسِبْنَا نَغْلَبُ جَهَرَيْنِ!}
\]

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

\[
\text{سُرَرَ إِنَّمَا وَهِيَاءُ، سَجَلَ جَيْنَ سَانَكَ، وَمَا بَرِيءَ، بِجَاهَاءٍ، أَكُنَّ أَوَانَ سَنَ عُرَبَيْنِ إِ}
\]

(Pain) Sorrows! pray do not leave me as the beloved has done.
After the beloved I may converse with you.²

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.

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

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

Laughter burns my heart

¹ Gurbukhsanī, 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.

روـداً وُـلـِهـا وَـحـلـهـا جِـئْـيْـا ناـتـكَّ مُـسَـجـنَّـتْ نـيـلا
اـتي عبد الطيفي ي ، كَـيْـا هـيِـكْـلِـيْـن حـيـلا
جَـيْـكُـرْـم مُـتـيـلا أَـيْـر رـهـيـا راـمـي إـا

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

There, says Ḥabd 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 Ḥabd 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

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 suras of the Risālo.

According to Shāhvānī,1 after leaving home Shāh CAbd al-Latīf must have passed by on the Hallā road (Shāhi 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 Kāli.2 Shāh CAbd 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 Sapar Sammā, ruler of Sind, who was well-known for his generosity. Shāh CAbd al-Latīf pays tribute to him in the following words:

2. For further information, cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis.
The benevolent Lord of the Bela, from his sympathetic nature understood the matter. Sapar attentively comprehended the intentions of the minstrel.¹

Shāh ʿAbd 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 Kinjhar Lake, and the ruins of a palace overlooking the lake. This palace had associations with a love story of Nūrī and Jām Tamachi,² a Sammā ruler of Sind. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf refers to them in the following words:

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


2. Refer to Appendix for the folk story of Nūrī and Jām Tamachi.
By my side is my beloved
Numerous wishes of mine have been fulfilled
None is left unfulfilled.¹

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 Bhambhone. The city, which is in ruins now, was associated with a romantic folk-story of Sasuî and Punhû.³
Five surṣ (out of thirty) are devoted to this story in the Risālā. One may assume that it is because this story has points of similarity with the life of Shāh ʻAbd al-Latîf himself that he composed a large number of verses on it. The poet, like Sasuî, the heroine of the story, was frustrated and searching for the beloved. Both had to face the hardships of

¹. Shāhwānî, op. cit., p. 867.
². Ibid.
the long, tiring journey through the mountains and deserts, but never gave up. In one of the verses he addresses Sasuī saying:

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 Ḥāfd al-Latīf is not unaware of this incident, and composes a sur, Ghatū, about it.²


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.

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

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

In spite of that, says Latīf, she is proceeding towards “the Presence.”

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


2. An honorific title of the beloved.
Through sorrows and not through an easy life has she attained her beloved.\(^1\)

After crossing the Harō 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 Vankār. Thereafter he crossed the river Indus at Thāṭṭa and visited Mughal-bin, then Lakhpat in Kacch, Dwārkā and Pūrab-Bandar.\(^2\) In remembrance of these places Shāh Ḳabd al-Latīf composed Sur Samūḍhi and Sur Śṛī Rāg.

His visit to Jhunagārah and Girnār Hill reminded him of the folk story of Sorath Rai Diyāch\(^2\) 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{क्यू कैर बान्त बन्दो,} & \quad \text{पिय और नापत} \\
\text{राजा रतोण से,} & \quad \text{सिखो तुलन ई} \\
\text{आई माहों,} & \quad \text{माफ ए माफ मदन} \\
\text{लहोरीन लक्ल स्वतंत्र} & \quad \text{देशी} \\
\text{चतुर्यो देती} & \quad \text{देती} \\
\text{मोही के,} & \quad \text{के मोही} \\
\text{है आई के,} & \quad \text{है आई के} \\
\text{है रियाच} & \quad \text{है रियाच}.
\end{align*}
\]

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

---

His song fascinated the Rāja 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 Latif.

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

From Sur Marui, it is clear that Shah Abd al-Latif not only visited Thar and Malir himself but he also uses numerous Thari words. He also mentions the food people ate there and the kind of life they lived. Marui's love for Malir and Maru is proverbial in Sind. This sur is one of the longest in the Risalo. The poet writes:

و ای جئا و طن گی، ساری تیان ساہ

He, Sāri, Thariah, Saheb, Mehnaj, Jān, Siaan etc.

س نامیاش مار یئن، جی تو هیزان

Samaitha Mar, Jee Tho, eian etc.

سیانی جیان، جی و جی مورد ملیر دی

Siaani, Jhan, Jee and Jee under Milir Dei etc.

If I die here, longing for my country


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 ʿAbd al-Latīf also went to Jaisalmīr and
neighbouring places. He even saw Landān, where another
heroine, Mūmal,² had her palace overlooking the river Kāk.
Here he must have visualised, Mūmal waiting for Rānō, and
requesting him for forgiveness. As he says:³

```
O Rānā! do not be annoyed with me, do give up
anger.
O Maindrā! and wise one! overlook my foolishness
O perfect! says Latīf, conceal my faults.
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 Rāna's caste
⁶ Name of Rāna's tribe
It was Shāh ʿAbd 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 Bhit Shāh". Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf was moved by it, and not wanting to disappoint his followers, he went back to Bhit Shāh. After giving up the idea of going to Karbala, he composed Sur Kedāro, in memory of the tragedy of Karbala. 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 ʿAbd 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 Šūfīs, ʿulamāʾ and yogis. He also mentions on a couple of occasions the name of Maulānā Rūmī, whose works had a great effect on him.

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 ʿAbd al-Latīf to be attracted to yogis.\footnote{61. Āḍvānī, ṭop. cit., p.11.} Apart from Hindu companions, the poet had many Muslim friends, especially amongst the ʿulamā‘.

Shāh ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1538-1635), the poet’s own great grandfather.

There were also many living holy men whom Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf visited and with whom he exchanged ideas. These included Shāh ʿInāyat Sūfī of Jhok (died 1718), Makhdūm Muḥammad Muʿīn Thāttavī (died 1747), Makhdūm Muḥammad of Khuhrā (died 1757), Makhdūm Muḥammad Zamān Lanwārī (died 1770).

After three years' travelling, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf returned home and was offered in marriage the same girl, Saʿīda Begum, whose parents had formerly rejected him. By now most
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 ⁴Abd 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 ⁴Abd 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 Sūfī figure.³

Mirza Qalech Beg writes that Shāh ⁴Abd 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.
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 Sufi context but as will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis it does not adequately reflect the attitude of Shāh ĖAbd al-Latīf to women.

After his marriage, the poet chose a sandhill (bhit) 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 ĖAbd al-Latīf as a Sufi and a poet attracted numerous devotees, Hindus and Muslims alike, to the isolated bhit.²

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

1. Mirzā Qalech Beg, op. cit., p.61.
to wear the traditional black clothes of mourning in accordance with Shi'a custom. On the other hand, he never abused or accused the first three Caliphs as the Shi'a do. One possible reason for his partiality to the family of the Prophet could be that his own ancestors came from that line. Moreover, Şah Çabd al-Latîf always supported the oppressed classes. In this case, Yazid was the oppressor who tortured and massacred a handful of Sayyids and it would be natural for Şah Çabd al-Latîf to observe Muharram as a reminder to the people of injustice against which they should rise without fear.¹

Şah Çabd al-Latîf was once asked if he was a Sunnî or Shi'a? He answered 'in between'. When his questioner told him that there was nothing 'in between', Şah Çabd al-Latîf replied that he was that 'nothing'. In Sufi terms this refers to fanā' (nothingness or self-annihilation). Whether or not he was more Sunnî or Shi'a, what is clear is that his thoughts were inclined towards Sufism.

According to Wafai Din Muhammad, Sayyid and Mirza Qalech Beg, Şah Çabd al-Latîf belonged to the Qâdiriyâ Sufi Order, founded by Çabd al-Qadir Gilânî (1077–1166 AD), one of poet's own ancestors. Like many adherents of the Qâdiriyya,

Shāh CAbd al-Latīf was greatly inspired by *waḥdat-al-wujūd*, 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, Āḍvānī argues that he was an Uwaisī Ṣūfī. Whatever the truth may have been, it appears that Shāh CAbd al-Latīf was open to influences from the three other Ṣūfī 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

a large number of followers, who were mostly illiterate, he wished to show them how to conduct themselves from his own example.\footnote{Gurbukhshāñī, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.27-28.}

Fundamentally, however, for Shāh `Abd 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:\footnote{Shāhvani, \textit{op. cit.}, p.1015/14.}

\begin{quotation}
إن بَيْنَ اسْتِعْصَامٍ، جَنِّ لَنْ يَلْهُوْيَيْنَين
دَخَلْنِي دلِّي شَرَكٌ يَقِينَانَنَّ;
مَا مُسْلِمٍ، آنَّدَرْ أَذَرُ آهَنَّ.
\end{quotation}

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.\footnote{This is probably a pun \textit{idā'/idā}, Azar being the name of Abraham's father (i.e. an infidel.)}

He puts great emphasis on purity of heart and right conduct, rather than outward performances. He says:
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 Ṣābir al-Latīf was his love of music and singing. He used to play the yaktārō and sing his own poetry. At times he used to spend several days in samā'2. 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.3

His Muslim contemporaries did not approve of his practice of music.4 Once a group of mullas and learned men, including Makhdūm Muḥammad Ḥāshim Thattāvī, came to Shāh Ṣābir al-Latīf and accused him of singing and playing music, which was an un-Islamic act. They argued that music was not

3. Throughout the centuries, 'ulamā' objected to the Samā' 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 ǧAbd 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 Bhīṭ, Shāh ǧAbd al-Latīf left Kātri 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 Atṭal, frequently visited him. Most of his time was spent in music and sama.²

¹. Mirzā 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.\textsuperscript{1} His songs of love and peace for everyone irrespective of caste, colour or creed make him the guide of unchallenged spiritual Muslims and Hindus alike.

As mentioned already,\textsuperscript{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 Safar 1167/Tuesday, 11th December, 1753.

\textsuperscript{1} Gurbukhshānī, \textit{op. cit.}, p.20.
\textsuperscript{2} Cf. p.43.
The Work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf

Introduction:

Many influential figures in Sindhi literature wrote in the Kalhoro period (1658-1739) which was the most productive and truly decisive time for the development of Sindhi 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 Sindhis, admired and memorised by Muslims and Hindus equally.

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 Kalhoro 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.

I. Manuscripts

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

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 Bhīt 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

2. Shāh ḫo Risālo, BM. Or.2987.
3. Shāh ḫo Risālo, India Office, Sindhi ms., 3.145 FF.
The oldest manuscript, which dates from 1852, has 34 suräs and 150 pages. It is named after Ākhūnd Fazīl Āhī.¹ According to this manuscript, the suräs of the Risālo are as follows:

(1) Kalyān (2) Jaman (Yaman) (3) Sarāg (Srī Rāg)
(4) Samūndhi (5) Sahntī (Suhtī) (6) Sarang
(7) Kedāro (8) Ābri (9) Ma c ūri (10) Daismī
(11) Kohiyārī (12) Husainī (13) Sōrāth (14) Berāg Hindī (15) Berag Sindhī (16) Rānān (Rāno) Mūmal
(17) Khāhorī (18) Rāmkalī (19) Ripp (10) Līlā
(21) Bilāwal (22) Dāhar (23) Kāpāitī (24) Āsā
(25) Māru’Ī (26) Dhanāsirī (27) Kāmod
(28) Kārāyal (29) Pirbhātī (30) Ghātī
(31) Shein handwriting Kedāro (32) Hīr Rānjho (33) Purāb
(34) Dhol Māru’Ī

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

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 Marūi, Jājkānī and Dhanāsārī.

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

One of the manuscripts of the Risālo is in the India Office Library; 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.

Dhanāsirī, Sheinh Kedāro and Basant. Sur Yaman Kalyān is not included in it. Instead of five surā on Sasū i.e. Ābrī, Mazūrī, Desī, Kōhiyārī and Husainī, there is only one sur under the name of Sasū. Sur Līlā Chanasar is also not found in this ms., while the rest of the surā 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 Latifiyyat, a bibliography on Shāh ʿAbd 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, Kalyān, Shāh jo Risālo, Bombay, 1958.2

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. Daiplāt Muhammad C Usmān, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1951.⁴
7. Maimun Muhammad Siddīq, Shāh jo Risālo, Hyderabad Sind, 1951.⁶
8. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Shāh jo Risālo, Sukhar, 1913.⁷

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 sur. with an explanation and introduction to each sur. Advānī, 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. ⁹

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:...

11. QāẒī Ibrāhīm, Shāh jo Risālō, Bombay, 1867.


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 Risālō which does not contain Sur Kedārī. It contains the meanings of difficult words. The order of surūs is also different from the usual Risālō; Sur Suhnī 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 Risālō. It has 22 surūs, and an introduction in English. Trumpp uses his own modifications to the Arabic alphabet to indicate Sindhi 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 Sindhi. These works contain the original poetry of Shāh Ābd 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:

(23) Sur Brāvo Sindhī (24) Sur Rāmkalī
(25) Sur Kāpāitī (26) Sur Pūrab (27) Sur Kārāyal

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 Mārūī, 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 ʿAbd 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 Līlā, Mūmal, Sasuī, Suhnī - and Mārūī. Still others are named after the Indian classical rāgās and

2. Trumpp, op. cit., p.vi.
rāginiś (male and female types of melodies).¹

There is a more recent study in English by Jotvānī, entitled Shāh Ṫ Abd al-Lātīf: 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 Ṫ Abd al-Lātīf's poetry comes under that category.³

This is a disputable point, a problem for linguists and


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 Jo 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 Mārūṭ is one of the longest surs, which contains twelve sections; each section contains from 9-21 couplets (baits) and ends with one or more vāis. The two smallest surs are Ghāṭū, having one section and Ripp, which consists of two sections, the first having 28 baits and one vāi, the second containing 19 baits and one vāi. In some surs such as Sasūī Ābrī there are up to ten vāis or vāyun.

Three editions of Shāh Jo Risālo have been consulted frequently in this thesis. The edition of Gurbukhshānī 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. Ādvānī’s edition is also helpful because of its

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit.
explanatory comments but it is an abbreviated edition. Shāh Ṭūnī'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 Ṭād al-Latif 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 Ahmad Qāzī,² which was translated by Sorley.

2. Qāzī, Ahmad, 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 Harjani's\(^1\) 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 Ībād al-Latif's Risālo, as for example, a number of Baloch's collections, e.g. Maulūd,\(^3\) Tih Akhiryūn,\(^4\) and Haftā Dīhan Ratyūn āin 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 Šūmār Shaikh edited and published two books entitled Shāh jā Gum Thial Bait.\(^8\) In the first book he includes

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

There is yet another category of books on the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. These contain verses from only one sur of the Risālō, 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, Sārāng, three different people have written on each sur, whereas on Suhni and Māruī four books have been published on each.²

There have been very few translations of the complete Risālō of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf into other languages. Shaikh Ayāz, who is a well-known poet in his own right, translated the whole Risālō 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 Ḟalāḥ al-Latīf’s Risālā. He translated into English.¹

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

Ghulām Ḥalī Allānā translated a selection of the poetry of Shāh Ḟalāḥ al-Latīf into English.³

Previous scholarship on Shāh Ḟalāḥ al-Latīf

Many books have been written in Sindhi on the life and work of Shāh Ḟalāḥ al-Latīf, but only a few are to be found in other languages. The list is very long of scholars in the subcontinent who have written on Shāh Ḟalāḥ 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

life of Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf is in the *Tūḥfat al-Kirām,* a biographical work by Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Ḥānī, a younger contemporary of the poet. In this work, apart from a brief biographical sketch, Ḥānī 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 Sindhi and published in 1957. In his other book the author also mentions our poet.

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, he writes about the history of Sind, its people and their way of life, and includes in it some remarks about Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf and his poetry:

Shāh Bheṭāī, the Sindhi, 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

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

A reading of the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif refutes Burton's accusations against the poet. It is true that at times Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif quotes verses in Arabic from the Qurʾān and the hadīths, in accordance with the tradition followed by most Muslim poets, including the great Persian masters like Hāfiz, ʿAttār and Rūmī. 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 Muḥammad 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 ʿAbd al-Latif's poetry. The way in which the poet expressed complex Ṣūfī ideas through symbols and images, against a Sindhi background, must have made it difficult for Burton to understand his work. Moreover, the inherent difficulties of the Sindhi language led to his misunderstanding and misrepresenting the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif.
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 *Risālo* 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 Lalvānī³ 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 ⁵Abd 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 Islam and at his references to the Qur'ān.¹ Indeed Lalvānī expects the *Risālo* to be entirely in conformity with his own religious beliefs.

1. Trumpp, Ernest, Shāh jō Risālo, Leipzig, 1866.
4. Ibid., pp.36-7.
Mīrzā Qalech Beg wrote an important work on Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, Aḥwāl Shāh CʿAbd al-Latīf Bhitai. 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf with that of Ḥāfīz Shirāzī. In Chapter 9 the author writes about Śūfīsm, and Wahdat al-wujūd, in the light of the Qurʾān and ḥadīṣ. In the last two chapters the author speaks about each sur of the Risālo, explaining its religious significance.

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

1. Mīrzā Qalech Beg, Aḥwāl Shāh ʿAbdul Latīf Bhitai, Hyderabad Sind, 1897, 1972.
2. Ibid., Laṭifī Latīf, 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, Shāh jī Risāli jī Kunji, Hyderabad Sind, 1918.
   Idem, Qadīm Sindhi jī Sītārā, Hyderabad Sind, 1923.
   Idem, Shāh Sāhib CʿAlīn, Hyderabad Sind, 1953.
In 1924, Gulrāj Parsrām Jathmal wrote in English a book called Sind and its Ṣūfīs. This was a small book written about Ṣūfism in Sind and the characteristics of Sindhi Ṣūfīs which distinguish them from other Ṣūfīs. In this book he writes only a very short general introduction about Shāh Ḍabd al-Latīf and his public message but his main concern in the book is to discuss Ṣūfīs and their attitude to religion and life. In his other work he discusses the folk stories used by our poet. This book is in two volumes.

Advānī wrote two noteworthy books on the travels of Shāh Ḍabd 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. With other poets, he selected some poetry of Shāh Ḍabd al-Latīf and edited it.

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

1. Gulrāj Jathmal Parsrām, Sind and Its Ṣūfīs, Madras, 1924.
3. Advānī, Bherumal Maharchand, Sind jo Sailānī, Hyderabad Sind, 1923; idem, Latīfī Sair, Karachi, 1924, 1928; idem, Chūnd Kālām, Karachi, 1941.
a long introduction to the Risālo and edited three volumes of it,1 based on eighteen surās. He died before he could complete his edition of all the surās. 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 ṣAbd 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 ṣAbd al-Latīf. It is unfortunate that it is incomplete.

H.T. Sorley wrote a critical account of the work of Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf. He presented this work in 1938 for his Ph.D. thesis in London. It was published in 1940, under the title Shāh ṣAbd 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 ṣAbd al-Latīf and translates into English a

selection (Muntakhab) of the poet's work edited by Qāzī Ahmad Shāh in Sindhi. Sorley's book, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf of Bhīt 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 Sindhi 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 Kedaro has been omitted for unknown reasons. 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. 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.
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 Shah jo-Risālo into English.
submits it to critical analysis.¹

In 1953, G.M. Sayed wrote a book called *Paigham Laṭīf*² in Sindhi. In this work the writer takes a new look at the work of Shāh ⁹Abd al-Laṭīf, 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 ⁹Abd al-Laṭīf and Muhammad Iqbal.

Tanvīr ⁹Abbāsī's book called *Shāh Laṭīf ji Shācīrī*, 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 Sindhi and is therefore of limited circulation.³

Apart from Sorley, Schimmel is the only Western scholar

who is an authority on Sindhi literature in general and Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif in particular. By including the Šūfī poets of the sub-continent and above all Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif in her work Mystical Dimensions of Islam,¹ she has given him his rightful place among the Šūfī poets of India and Pakistan and of the Islamic world. Several scholars before her, including Arberry, who wrote on Šūfī poets, excluded Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif 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, Mir Dard and Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif, are discussed. The part devoted to Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif is divided into three sections. The first is about the life and teaching of Shāh Ḥāfiz ʿAbd al-Latif. The second part concerns Šūfīs and yogīs, and the third discusses the Islamic background. The first and third sections are dealt with beautifully, but with perhaps a little

too much emphasis placed on the Islamic side. She seems to be in agreement with Sindhi-Muslim scholars, and even with Sorley, who believe that the Risālo is solely based on Islamic teaching and on the Qurʾān and hadīth.

In her second section on yogis and Sufis, 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 ǦAbd al-Latif, 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 ǦAbd al-Latif, Schimmel makes the comment that women also played a positive role in the poetry of Shāh ǦAbd al-Latif. 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 Ājwānī,¹ in which he writes a chapter about the predecessors of Shāh ǦAbd al-Latif and he also devotes two chapters to the life of Shāh ǦAbd al-Latif and to his Shāh jo Risālō. The work is marred by his approach,

1. Ājwānī, L.H., History of Sindhi 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 Ābd al-Latīf, Khwāja Muḥammad Zamān of Lawārī, Pīr Muḥammad Baqā, Ṣāḥib dīno Faqīr, Makhdūm Ābd 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 Ābd al-Latīf. They were the product of the Sammā and Kalhora 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 Ābd al-Latīf and his poetry he suggests that he was exclusively inspired by Hindu thought.

1. Ājwānī, op. cit., pp.87, 111.
He strongly criticises Sorley and Baloch for suggesting that the poetry of Šah ʿAbd al-Latif is based on Sufism. He argues that if the poetry is Islamic, Hindus would not have considered his book Risālo as a sacred book.¹

Jotvānī's book published in 1975, Šah ʿAbdul Latīf: His Life and Work, is a study of the Risālo and a critical view of some of the other works written on Šah jo Risālo. His approach is subjective and at times defensive, as he tries to interpret the work of Šah ʿAbd al-Latif as entirely based on Hindu thought. He even tries to prove that Šah ʿAbd al-Latif was only born a Muslim, but that he was unorthodox in his Muslim beliefs. Jotvānī'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 Šah ʿAbd al-Latif 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 Šah ʿAbd al-Latif and his work strongly criticise the attitude of Muslim scholars who try to prove that the whole Risālo is based on the Qurʾān and Tradition. It is noteworthy, however, that the

² Jotvānī, M., Šah ʿAbd al-Latif: His Life and Work, New Delhi, 1975.
efforts of these Hindu scholars are similarly directed towards proving that the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf is not Islamic at all.

Shāh ʿAbd 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, Qurʾān or Vedanta. For a seeker after truth, like Shāh ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd 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 wahdat 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf is the first Sindhi poet on whom an enormous amount of material has been published. Most scholars have, however, concentrated on religious aspects of his poetry¹

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 Šūfī 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 Šūfī poetic masters, ʿAttār and Rūmī.
CHAPTER 2
WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF SHĀH ʿABD AL-LĀṬĪF

The important role played by women in the poetry of
Shāh ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf

A study of the life and work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf 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 teaching\(^1\) or Vedantic philosophy\(^2\). As a human being and a poet, Shāh ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf 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 ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf, 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.

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 Zulākha\(^1\)). In much \(\mathbb{S}\)ū\(\mathbb{F}\) 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. Zulākha is depicted in the Qur'ān as taking the initiative with Yusuf and this tradition is perpetuated in Persian poetry, especially in the work of Žāmī.

It could happen, of course, that Sufi 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 ṣAbd 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 Sufi poets of the Indus Valley. Folk stories in which women play the dominant role abound in Sind and the surrounding states like Rajāstān, Baluchistān and Punjāb in the period before Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf. These stories were taken by poets as themes for their works. Among the very little written Sindhi poetry that has survived in the period before Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf is that of Shāh ṣAbd al-Karīm of Bulrī (1536-1624), and Shāh ṣInāyat Rizvī (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 ṣAbd al-Latīf develops more fully.

Shāh ṣAbd al-Karīm, the great-great grandfather of Shāh

Abd Latîf, draws extensively on Sindhi folk stories in his poetry. In his work, Bayān al-Čārifīn, which is written in Persian, there are 93 Sindhi baits which have survived. In these baits, Shâh Č Abd al-Karîm refers specifically to local Sindhi folk heroes and heroines, such as Sasuī and Punhû, Māruī and Č Umar, Lîla and Chanesar, and Suhnî and Mehar. 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, Shâh Č Abd al-Karîm infuses Čūfî spirit into his treatment of their stories. In one place, the poet addresses Sasuī thus:


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

   The work of Shâh Č Abd al-Karîm has been published by various scholars:


   Mîrzâ Qalech Beg, Risâlo Karîsî, Hyderabad Sind, 1904.

   Nawrangpoto Makhdûm Č Abdal, Bayân al-Č A rifīn (Sindhî), Bombay, 1874.

   The Sindhî verses of Shâh Č Abd al-Karîm have been translated into English by Jotvânî: Jotvânî Motîlâl, Shâh Č Abd al-Karîm, New Delhi, 1970. Cf. also Jotvânî Motîlâl, Sindhi Literature and Society, New Delhi, 1979.
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 ʿAbd al-Karīm addresses his heroine Sūhnī as follows:²

Either leave not your home,
Or return not, O Sūhnī.
Be of one mind, be one with Him and break all other things.³

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

ʿUmar! 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

2. Ibid., p.40.
3. Ibid.
and Shāh ̣Abd al-Karīm speaks for her in the following lines:

On whose heart
You've left and indelible mark.
O Chanesar Dāsārā! 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:

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 ̣Ināyat Rizvī (d.1712 A.D.),
who was alive when Shāh ̣Abd al-Latīf was a young man,
continues this local Sindhi 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,
Suhnī and Nūrī. He also speaks of merchants and their wives
in Sur Sri Rāg and of women-spinners in Sur Kapāīī. In these
eight surs, the role of women is prominent.

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

1. Jotvānī, op. cit., p.44.
2. Ibid., p.39.
of a merchant's wife in the following lines:1

بَـِـَـِـَـِ~

وَبَـِـَـِـَـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِـِ~

On the landing place, where the Sir 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 Shah Abd al Karim and Shah Inayat Rizvi, it is clear that the poetry of Shah Abd al Latif sprang from a well-established local poetic tradition which inevitably drew on Persian Sufi

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 Sindhi folk stories. Shah Abd al-Latif, however, as will be shown later, composed poetry which, it is argued, has greater depth than Shah Inayat Rizvi.

It is interesting to note that a contemporary of Shah Abd al-Latif, Bullhe Shāh¹ (1680-1758) from Punjab, also speaks of an active rather than passive female role in his Sufi poetry. It is not known if the two poets ever met at any time, but there are a number of similarities in their works. Bullhe Shāh, like Shah Abd al-Latif, stresses the feminine role in a great number of his kāfiyūn. Some of the kāfiyūn are composed out of love for his murshid, Shāh Inayat, 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. Bullhe Shāh describes the numerous sufferings and tribulations to which he is subjected in his assumed female identity.

Bullhe 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:-

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 reunion is called the yearning of a virahini.
I am just a sweeper.

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 sweeper.¹

In the poetry of Bullhe 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf there are two distinct and sharply contrasting views of woman. On the one hand, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf can go to similar extremes as Bullhe 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

2. Idem, p.131.
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

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. Ādvaṅī, 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 Ḟarūq al-Latīf such as Mārūnī can admit her poverty, but at the same time take pride in it.

Another well-known poet, contemporary with Shāh Ḟarūq al-Latīf, was Sachal Sarmast (1739-1829),¹ who was much younger than our poet. Sachal Sarmast follows the same tradition as Shāh Ḟarūq 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 Ḟarūq al-Latīf and his predecessors, such as the tales of Sasūī, Suhnī 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


2. Ibid., pp.91-2.
Without you, with whom will I converse?

Come back to me, my husband
I cannot find my way in Windar\(^1\)
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 Bhanbhōre 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 āb d al-Latīf,

---

1. The name of a mountain.
advises Sasui, and tells her what to do.¹

Do not sit down quietly and forget about it, you must

The promise which you gave to your beloved, fulfil.

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

Sachal Sarmast, like Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif, 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

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 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 Purāṇa, where Gopīs are presented as lovers, seeking and longing to see Krishna their beloved and an analogy may perhaps be drawn between the love, longing and suffering experienced by the heroines in the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf and similar experiences undergone by the Gopīs in this work. According to this Hindu scripture, Lord Krishna plays such an enchanting flute that all the milk maids (Gopīs) are fascinated by him. When they are busy performing their duties and they hear Krishna’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.

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

2. Ibid., Books 9-12, p.1174.
3. In this text Krishna is a young cowherd, with whom all the Gopīs are in love.
4. Ibid.
leaves everything, even her home and parents, to travel empty-handed, searching for her beloved husband Punhū.

For Shāh Ābd al-Latīf women play the important role in most of his poetry; indeed they are mentioned directly or indirectly in twenty-eight surās out of the thirty surās of the Risālo. In his second work Shāh Bhitāi jūn vāyūn āin Kāfiyūn there are terms used throughout by the poet, such as ماء، سمندر سرتهن، جيزيون which mean sisters and friends; meaning mother. Apart from such examples as these, throughout both the works of Shāh Ābd al-Latīf one finds words or phrases like مارونزا، سالسینزا ورو، وهايم هیزمیسین، فیکزرو the addition of the suffix رو in سیلهزرو، فیکزرو suggests the feminine form of endearment. In the Sindhi 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 Sindhi language to tell whether the speaker is the male or female.

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

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:

\[ \text{أَمَّا يُنذَرُكُنَّ إِلَيْهِمْ بِفِرَاشٍ} \]

\[ \text{ويَصْلِىُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَيْهِمْ} \]

\[ \text{فَتَوَاورُ تِلْكَ مُسْلِمَةَ} \]

\[ \text{سَيُؤْمَرُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْهَوْرُنَّ} \]

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

Five surds of the Risālo are devoted to Sasuī, a Sindhi 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 Abd 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

\[
\text{وايني}
\] ¹ ¹ ¹
\[
\text{وُنْزُّـثُو هَوَتْ وَجَنُّ ، وَ وُلِّيَانُ بَليَانَ ، هَيْـرُو نَـرُهِيِّ}
\text{آَنُوْنِ جَبَّيْنِ حِيْ آَهَيَانِ ، حَرَّيْ مَـيُّيَانُ نَنَّنُ ،}
\text{جَعَلِيَانُ بَليَانَ ، هَيْرُو نَـرُهِيِّ إِ}
\text{لَأَهْرِيَانُ لَعُلْيَانٌ يُطِيِّبُنَّ ، سَنْدَي بَاجُدَ يِـكُنُّ ،}
\text{جَعَلِيَانُ بَليَانَ ، هَيْرُو نَـرُهِيِّ إِ}
\text{مَرُ مَرَانَ مَارِيَنَ مُوْنَ ، بُرُزَاء بِرْزَعَكُنَّ ،}
\text{جَعَلِيَانُ بَليَانَ ، هَيْرُو نَـرُهِيِّ إِ}

¹ Shahwānī, op. cit., pp.132-3.
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 Čabd al-Latif 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

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.

He (the beloved) is near you, but far from me. My beloved has put sandalwood\(^1\) 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.\(^2\)

\(\text{كرَهو} , \text{نَكَيْكَان} , \text{يَهِينُي} \text{آثْمُون} \text{نَبُّطِي} , \text{جو} \text{مُون} \text{رَات} \text{رَسَامُي} , \text{نيِّي} \text{ساجِن} \text{سَالُ} , \text{مُون} \text{نَد} \text{وَهُيَّنُي} \text{بَانَي} \text{إِ وَيِّي} \text{نْيَي} \text{نْيَيُمَيْيِي} .\)

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.

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

Every day and every moment Dum² 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


2. Name of Suhnī's husband.
Diving into the whirlpool did not prevent her because Suht was true to her promise.

Women and Society:

In the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz 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:

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 Ābd al-Latīf often addresses women, offering them advice. In *Sur Samūdhi* Shāh Ābd al-Latīf seems to be warning women in general, and the wives of sailors in particular, to beware of the forthcoming dangers:

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

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

1. Advānī, op. cit., p.156.
2. It is a polite way of addressing a woman in Sindhi.
3. Advānī, op. cit., p.78.
She does not take rest in the shade, even though she is tired and she is proceeding in the heat. Sasui has come to Wankar and has exhausted herself.

The woman is enquiring about his whereabouts from the birds.

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

May Aryani be reconciled and come back.

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

1. Literally 'withered', dessicated.
2. This reference is to Sasui: for details of the story of Sasui and Punhu, cf. the Appendix.
3. Sasui is enquiring about Punhu.
4. I.e. the birds.
5. I.e. Kech where Punhu lived.
6. I.e. Punhu.
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 Sasuí'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 Sasuí's mouth, our poet commands women
to give up inhibitions and to perform courageous deeds.

Sisters! success is theirs, who abandon
vanity.

Friends! you must give up heedlessness.
Become naked² and come out.³

In the poetry of Shāh ⁴Abd 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:

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?

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

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).

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 Sasui in the following lines:

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

Sasuī! continue crying\(^1\) for that support.\(^2\)

Do not sit down; as you proceed you will find the beloved.\(^3\)

In the above verse Shāh \(^4\)Abd 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:

\[
	ext{هَتَينُ، بِيْرُينَ، مَوْنَرْنِينَ، كُلُّ مَانُ، هَنْتَينَ،}
\
\text{عَشْقُ آرِيَ، بِأَمَّ جَوَ، بِهِمِينِ،}
\
\text{جَانَ جَانَ تَيِّ جَيْمَينَ، تَانَ بَارِجَ، كُمْ بِنُهْونَ، سَيْنَ.}
\]

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

In this way accomplish your love with Ārī \(^5\)Jām.\(^6\)

As long as you live, never equate anyone with Punhū.\(^7\)

---

1. Here the poet suggests continued pursuit of a certain goal.
2. Literally pillar; i.e. Punhū.
4. I.e. Punhū.
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 Ğabd 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; Sasūī, although she is in reality a princess, lives as the adopted daughter of a washerman. Suhnī is the daughter of a potter, whilst Marūī 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 Ğabd 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 Ğabd al-Laṭīf, Suhnī is married to Dam
against her wishes. 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, Suhnī 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 Ābd 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 Suhnī 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 Suhnī:

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 Suhrā'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:

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 guide! help her out from the deep waters.

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:

 Hundreds of them (i.e. women) have been drowned.
 But this woman has drowned the Mehrān.
 By hitting its head on the bank, it (the river) has retreated in submission.

1. One of the Divine names.
3. I.e. the river Indus.
While referring to Suhni’s courage in jumping into the rough stormy river and drowning in it, our poet considers even her death as a success, saying:

If Suhni 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 Suhni:

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

---

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

In the story of Nūrī, the poet is pointing to the stratifications of the society in which he lives. Nūrī belongs to the muhānā caste, the lowest in Sindhī society. Shāh Ābd al-Latif 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:

 cheat, Bīrīn, ʻl-silīn, mā yā mahāshī,
 jīn, gībū waj sharndī, tīn, rāshūn yā rāshī,
 ʻaḥl hīn ʻān kī, ʻaḥl āz-disī,
 sēmī sēshāshī, bīzō, ʻaḥl bārā bahū.

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 wrist.³

In the stories of Mūmal and Rāno and Līlā and Chanesar, Shāh 'Abd 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.
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

One third of the sur is concerned with Mūmal's longing and begging for forgiveness until she ultimately commits suicide by burning herself.⁴

1. Mūmal's husband is Rāno.
2. Rāno's caste.
3. A town where Mūmal lived.

Here the poet is referring to a local Hindu tradition, 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,

Cont'd:...
In another story Līlā is the loving wife of Chanesar, until she loses him because of her negligence and love of jewellery.1 Shāh Ḥāfiz Ābd al-Latīf blame 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:

\[\text{In another story Līlā is the loving wife of Chanesar, until she loses him because of her negligence and love of jewellery.1 Shāh Ḥāfiz Ābd al-Latīf blame 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:}

Cont'd: since she has been deserted by her husband, she burns herself. When Rānā 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf 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.

What will you do with your heat,
to the already distressed woman, O mountain?
If you are the stone of Pub\(^1\)
My body is also of iron.
It is no fault of anyone, except
my own destiny.\(^4\)

Moreover, Shāh ʿAbd al-Lātīf advises Sasūlī thus on how
to cope in adverse circumstances:

1. The name of the mountain.
By taking humility as your guide, follow its footsteps.

O lonely helpless one! never carry expectations while travelling to Kech.\(^2\)

Sasui! take selfless love with you.

Never let 'Azāzī\(^3\) come near you.\(^4\)

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

In *Sur Mārūī*, Shah C. 'Abd al-Latif depicts life in two distinct social milieux. On the one hand, there is that of 'Umar 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 Shah C. 'Abd al-Latif 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. Mārūī is a poor girl, brought to the palace by force, who detests everything around her. She recalls her poor friends and relatives, and portrays their picture of 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. Ādvaṇī, op. cit., p. 129.
Blessed are the women of my country, whose shelter\(^1\) is the desert.

The golára\(^2\) and the gugriyún\(^3\) is the bedding of my relatives.

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

My Mārū\(^4\) gave me wasteland as a dowry.\(^5\)

While commenting on their contentment in poverty, Shah

---

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 Roxburghii*.
4. I.e. Marūi's relatives and countrymen of Malir.
5. Since Mārū had nothing to give, they gave her what they owned, i.e. wasteland and desert.
Abd al-Latif puts his words in the mouth of Marui, saying:

كَأَنَّهُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْنِ، وَاخْبَرَاهُمَا بِمَا سَوَى
وَرَأَى جَبَّاَرُ مِنْ قَرَاءَتِي، فَأَقْبَلَ فِرْحَتُ بِأَنْثِيَانِ

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 Shah Abd al-Latif 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, Shah Abd al-Latif 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 ones.

¹Advani, op. cit., p.260.
ones. The poet gives an image of the longing of wives in the following lines:

\[
\text{وجينٌ جان ويجي، جُرُّ پُلوه پائِيان،}
\]
\[
\text{شَرَّ بُيرُا إِ كُحِر سُبرُين إِ أُوسُ رِي بَيِّن،}
\]
\[
\text{چَن وَهُجَار سِين وَكَرِين، سُرِها سِبيِّن،}
\]
\[
\text{جَرَمتُ سَانِي حَبِيب جي، سُوُّكَليان دِسِني،}
\]
\[
\text{با زَهِين أَوُرِي بِيِّي، كَبِد كَيرَانِو آمِيا.}
\]

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, ²
They were not held back for customs' duty.
Ultimately the travellers to far-off lands came safely home. ²

1. According to Ādvānī and Shahwānī, 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:

أبَّلِ إِيَّكَ مَائَلٌ، أَيُّهَا نَجْهَيْيَانٌ،
لاَيِّهَا تَفْهُمُ النَّهْضَانَ، مُنْ سِينٍ كَيْ، تُؤَرَّحْ.

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.

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

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 ³ Abd al-Lāṭīf 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

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.4

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.2

4. 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.

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

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


2. Ibid., p.426.
The role of women with particular reference to Sur Mārūf

In order to highlight the role of women as depicted in the poetry of Shāh Ḟād 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 Mārūf 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 Ḟād al-Latīf, Shāh Ḟād al-Karīm of Bulrī and Shāh Ḟād Ināyāt Rizvī used this theme for their Ṣūfī poetry. Shāh Ḟād al-Latīf, like his predecessors, takes this story for the longest sur in the whole Risālī. This is a very significant point since it indicates that the poet puts special emphasis on this sur. The Risālī edited by Gurbukhshānī has thirty pages devoted to Mārūf, whereas in Shāhnānī's edition, there are ninety pages.

   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 Risālī has wider and longer pages, which contain more verses than the Risālī edited by Shāhnānī.

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 ĈUmar and praised Māruī’s beauty in such words that ĈUmar was tempted to win her himself.

ĈUmar 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, ĈUmar 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 Cūmar 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 fiancé Khetsīn, had become suspicious of Māruī's character while she was in the palace, and used to taunt her for this. When king Cūmar heard this, he sent his force against the Mārū saying that Khetsīn was not only accusing Māruī, but casting doubts on Cūmar'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 Cūmar 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. Cūmar 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 ČUmarkot, (the fort of ČUmar) 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. ČUmar'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 Şūfī one. In his view Māruī represents the true seeker or lover of God, ČUmar stands for tyrants and the powerful men in this world, and ČUmarkot is suggestive of this world, which is a prison for seekers and religious people. Malīr 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

3. Ibid., p.170.
Gurbukhshānī also puts forward a Sufī interpretation for this story.¹ He suggests that with Māruī, Shāh ʿAbdal-Latīf refers to the original country (homeland) 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 salīk, Māruī's body is in bondage in ʿUmārkot, 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

2. Ibid.
Nevertheless Gurbukhšāṇī can view the character of Mārūī from another angle. He writes, 

Mārūī is a humble village girl. She is the image of patriotism and devotion to her country. The dūth, daunra (caper fruit) golārā and gugriyūn, pharah and laniyūn, khārā and khaḥaryūn1 are in her eyes blessings from heaven.4

Ādvāṇī’s Ṣūfī interpretation3 is almost identical to that of Gurbukhšāṇī. Malīr refers to homeland (wāṭān) and countrymen. Souls are imprisoned in this world because of greed and temptation. ʿUmar stands for the lower soul (nafs), whose aim is to mislead the seeker to the wrong road. But the true seekers like Mārūī, being aware of the tactics of the lower soul (nafs) reject every offer. As a result, the nafs gives up bothering such persons. Thus Mārūī 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 Mārūī 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. Āgvāṇī, op. cit., p.254.
2. Different types of wildly grown grass, bushes, fruit and its blossom, eaten by poor people.
i.e. Arsh, where other wise people already reside. The true lovers reach their original home and become One with their heavenly Beloved (God).\textsuperscript{1} This interpretation is shared, broadly speaking, by Shāhwānī.\textsuperscript{2}

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

Mārūf, who is kept chained in \textsuperscript{c}Umarkot, the fort of \textsuperscript{c}Umar, 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 \textsuperscript{c}Umar is the king, he remains in the background. It is usually Mārūf who is heard, either arguing with him, pleading with him or upbraiding him for his cruelty and injustice. Most of \textsuperscript{c}Umar's actions are suggested, rather than explicitly described, in Mārūf'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

\textsuperscript{1} Advānī, op. cit., p.254.

\textsuperscript{2} Shāhwānī, op. cit., pp.763-66.
the powerful king who is at liberty.

Shāh C. Abd 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 Tirathdās Hotchand who rightly points out that in the rural areas of Sīnd, 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

Tirathdās Hotchand does, however, go a little too far when he suggests that Shāh C. Abd 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 C. Abd 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 C. Abd al-Latīf’s time. She yearns for the life of her village where the women move around freely.

2. Ibid., p. 45.
Blessed are the women of my country
Whose shelter and protection is the desert.¹

Marui 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:

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 Shāḥwānī, op. cit., p.783.
The tears that keep falling on my pen are preventing me from writing.\(^1\)

Though a simple village girl, Shāh `Abd al-Latīf makes the suggestion here that Maruī 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 Maruī herself. Indeed, she is surprised at the apparent contentment of other women who are with her in the fort in confinement:

\[
\text{The other prisoners are at peace  }
\]

\[
\text{But we are restless in iron (chains)  }
\]

\[
\text{Because the guardian's sword is always hanging over us.}^3
\]

By putting these words into the mouth of Maruī the poet

---

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 Mārūi act as a rebel who complains about the bondage in which women are kept. cUmar symbolises 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 Mārūi, resent and resist it. Shāh cAbd al-Latīf seems to sympathise with Mārūi when he offers her these words of consolation:

Do not cry nor wail nor shed tears
Whatever your days may bring you,
endure them
O Sanghār! after the sorrows, soon will come the comfort.

O Panwahār! understand this, says Latīf

Your bars have been lifted

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

If Māruī were here, I would comfort her.

I would approach Umar 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,

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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 Malir.

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. Ājvānī rightly points out that there has been too much emphasis in the past on Sūfī elements in Shāh Ābd al-Latīf’s poetry, at the expense of another dominant motif which he calls Sindhiyyat or Sindhi-ness.² While commenting on the poetry of Shāh Ābd al-Latīf, Ājvānī 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 Ḥusām al-Dīn Rāshidī,* in his articles, and Muhammad Ibrāhīm Joyo⁵ and others⁶ have

2. Ājvānī, op. cit., p.67.
3. Ibid., p.87.
made passing remarks on Shah  
Abd al-Latif's patriotic feelings about Sind, expressed in the Risālā. G.M. Sayyid believes that through Sur Mārū ṭ Shah  
Abd al-Latif 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 Mārū ṭ reject all the luxuries offered to her by an unjust ruler,  
Umar. 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 Shah  
Abd al-Latif refers to Malīr as an independent state and  
Umarkot (the fort of  
Umar) as a place of servitude; thus Mārū ṭ prefers the poverty of Malīr to the luxury of  
Umarkot. Mārū ṭ 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 Shah  
Abd al-Latif, but it seems that there is a need for a slight shift of emphasis. From the historical records of Sind, it is

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 Marū is that Shāh Ābd al-Latif is using Marū to represent Sind itself, rather than its people.

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

It is an evocative symbol that Shāh Ābd al-Latif 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 Ābd al-Latif, is seen to be always concerned with the well-being of her loved ones. Marū loves Marū and Malīr unconditionally. Marū, 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 Mārūi are but a selection of many such lines which evoke Mārūi's longing and love of her people.¹

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


2. A coarse raw woollen blanket worn as a shawl in winter by poor herdsman 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

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 fiance.
2. Shāhwānī, op. cit., p.783.
3. Ibid.
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 Umar! They are not unruly – why are you hurting those who are already suffering.

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

¹ Gurbukhšānī, 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 Ḥāmid Ḥāmid Ḥāmid, Khādirja Daudpota called him the "poet of heroines". She went on to say that much of the Risālo reveals the great status Shāh Ḥāmid Ḥāmid 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.

CHAPTER 3

SHĀH ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF 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,

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 guru 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 \(^c\)Abd al-Latīf was brought up.

The contact which Shāh \(^c\)Abd 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 \(^c\)Abd 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 \(^c\)Abd 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 \(^c\)Abd al-Latīf. Certainly, his poetry has long been enjoyed by Hindus and Muslims alike.


\(^1\) Gulrāj, op. cit., pp.81-4.
In his introduction to the *Risālo*, Gurbukhshānī devotes a section exclusively to the relationship between Vedantic philosophy and Ṣūfīsm, 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 subsystems: Advaita (monism or non-dualism), Visistadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Dvaita (dualism). The chief exponent of Advaita was Shankara, who believed in only one reality, a single unity underlying everything. As for Visistadvaita, 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.

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 Nirguna (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 ʿAbd 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

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:

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. Advâni, 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 Ābd 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 Ābd al-Latīf. For Shāh Ābd 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 Ābd 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

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 Rāmānuja:

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 ⁴Abd al-Latif's poetry, Rāmānuja's ideas are also echoed in a number of verses. For Shāh ⁴Abd al-Latif 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 ⁴Abd al-Latif says:

3. Ḍvāṇī, op. cit., p. 118.
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:

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 Advani, op. cit., p.118.
² Ibid.
The above verses seem to bring Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf more close to the position of Rāmānuja, 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf, although to postulate a direct influence would be a difficult hypothesis to prove. To take a few examples to illustrate this, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf expresses similar views to those in the Gita on the subject of God's being within oneself:

جو توں دورئین دور، سوگدا آھي سائی تو
لالن، لِ لطیفِ کچھ، مَنْجھِ تَوْ مَعذُورِ
منجھان پَتَکن پُرَوَزُ، تو مَنْجھِ آہس تَحْکِبُو.

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 Gītā 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 ʿAbd 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

آندر تو ان جار ، پنا پرگندین خیترا

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 Ḟārd al-Lātīf and yogis

The various editors of Shāh Ḟārd al-Lātīf’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 Khāhōrī and Sur Rāmkālī, which discuss the subject of yogis.² The

Shāhshānī, G.W., Shāhjā Risāl, Hyderabad Sind, 1950.
Mīrzā Qalb-e Jān Beg, Shāh Ḟārd-Lātīf Bhitā, Hyderabad Sind, 1910.
Hindu scholar Ādvānī adds that Shāh Ābd 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 Ābd 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 Ābd 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 Ābd al-Latīf loves and longs for the yogis. Shāh Ābd 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 Ābd al-Latīf "had the heart of a Muslim who could not get

1. Op. cit., p.387. In his introductory note on Sur Ramkali, Ādvānī mentions different types of yogis, but does not comment on their origins and customs.
satisfaction by worshipping potsherds and bricks".

Controversy has raged fiercely between Muslim and Hindu scholars over the whole issue of Shah ʿAbd al-Latīf and Hindu yogi influence. On the Muslim side, Mīrzā Qalīch Beg is typical of the traditional approach. Whilst he admits that Shah ʿAbd al-Latīf travelled around with yogis visiting some Hindu holy places and that he did actually write the two sūrs mentioned above, he goes on to say that Shah 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 Shah 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

Div Muhammad WafāT throws some light on the possible reasons for Shah ʿAbd al-Latīf's break with the yogis, after having spent three years with them. He suggests that Shah

¹ Mīrzā Qalīch Beg, Ahwāl Shah 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.
`Abd al-Latif 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 Mushtaq Muta`alvi as follows:

He (Shāh `Abd al-Latif) went to see the Hindu shrine of Nānī, where with his Sufi 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 in spite of spending time in the company of yogis, Shāh `Abd al-Latif managed to remain a true Muslim.

In response to such a negative attitude on the part of Muslim scholars such as Mīrzā Qalech 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

2. Ibid., p.59. The same author also mentions that the yogis on the eight-day journey from Karachi to Chandercoap do not brush their teeth or wash throughout. He comments that it is not surprising that Shāh `Abd al-Latif should have disliked this. Ibid., p.60.
Brohī call the poet "a true Muslim".

Ājvānī criticises Mīrzā Qalṣch Beg for distorting the truth and suggests that the reason why Shāh ɬAbd 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 sama 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."

Ājvānī stresses that Shāh ɬAbd 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 Bhakti 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 ČAbd al-Latīf were those of the Quʾrān, ḥadīṣ and Persian poetry, and he totally ignores the question of Hindu inspiration, including the issue of Shāh ČAbd al-Latīf and the yogis. The Hindu writer Jotvānī vigorously refutes and ridicules the views of Baloch and attempts to prove that Shāh ČAbd al-Latīf's thought is inspired by Hinduism, saying the Risālo, particularly its Sur Khāhorī and Sur Rāmkalī eloquently testifies to the all-Indian character of his religion and philosophy.²

1. Ājvānī, op. cit., p.81.
With particular reference to the yogis, Jotvānī generally reiterates the views of Ājvānī. Unlike Muslim scholars, Jotvānī states that Shah Ī Abd al-Latif parted from the yogis on good terms. He does not, however, comment on what kind of yogis became Shah Ī Abd al-Latif’s companions nor on their origins or customs.

G.M. Sayyid is able to admit, as a Muslim, that Shah Ī Abd al-Latif 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.

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


The article written by Southey on Shah Ī Abd al-Latif is worthless since it is a blend of inaccuracies and superstitious stories, including an amusing anecdote about Shah Ī Abd al-Latif giving an idol a drink of milk. The yogis, having seen the idol take the cup of milk, are determined to kill and eat Shah Ī Abd al-Latif in order to obtain his magic powers. Shah Ī Abd al-Latif, realising...
Schimmel, on the other hand, discusses Sūfis and yogis in the second part of her section on Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf in *Pain and Grace*.¹ She highlights the important points of resemblance between the Sūfis and yogis. Though Sūfis 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 Sūfis (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, "Sūfis and yogis in Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf's Poems" suggests, Schimmel discusses both Sūfis and yogis together and gives examples from the poems.

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


2. Ibid., pp.210-222.
aspect of Shāh Ḟād al-Latīf's work.

As has already been mentioned in the introduction, Shāh Ḟād 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 Ḟād al-Latīf seems to have left Koṭrī 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. 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 Ḥinglāj.  

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

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf actually refers in his poetry in Sur Khāhorī to the mountain of Ganjo-Takkar, where he questions his own motives in being there:—

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 Khahori.

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

Miyāṅī and Hinglāj. The journey must have been difficult since they went on foot, with no provision of food. Shāh āl-Latif says:

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

Dothī are searching in the desert for wild growth.

The signs of Khāhoṛīs 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 Nāṅī, a castellated mud edifice with a

2. Spiritual food.

*p The nomadic people of Thar, who live on Dhīlic 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.

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

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


2. Ibid., p.103.

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 ʿAbd al-Latīf refers to such a visit as follows:²

The Nagās went to Hinglāj to visit Nānī
The mehesī (worshippers of Śiva) happily visited the Dwārkā.
Their leader is ʿAlī, I cannot live without them.

1. Places where the dismembered limbs of Kālī were scattered. Briggs, op. cit., pp.105-6.
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 ʿAlī in this context. What is important is the search for divine, whether the guide is ʿAlī or Śiva.
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. Şāh  Câm al-Lātīf 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 Devī’s 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 Şāh  Câm al-Lātīf in his poetry, such as Qandahār, Kabul and above all Benāres (Kāsī). However, Kāsī is such a common symbol of Hinduism in Indo/Pakistani Şūfī poetry that it may not necessarily be assumed that Şāh  Câm al-Lātīf actually went there in the company of yogis, although he may have done, as Kāsī was visited by Gorakhnāth yogis.

Şāh  Câm al-Lātīf 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, Pūrab-Bandar, Jhūnāgar, Mughalbhīn, Hālār, Khanbhāt and Dwārkā. 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 ʼAbd 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 ʼAbd 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 ʼAbd 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

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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.

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 \textit{yoga}. These obstacles are called \textit{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 \textit{yoga} which bear on Shāh \(^3\)Abd al-Latīf and his relationship with the yogis. Within Hinduism, two of the major \textit{Vaishva} schools are the Shivaite and the Vishnuvite orders.

The Shivaites are so-called because of their chief god, Shiva. The Vishnuvites are named after their godhead, Vishnu. Turning first to the Shivaites, 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 \textit{karma}.

\(^2\) Pott, \textit{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 Ṭanṭric 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

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp.1-10. It is interesting to note that Briggs mentions another section of the Kanphaṭās who are called Jāfīr Pīrs and are Muslims. Although they are

Cont’d:...
Rawal or Nāgnāth are another group who are associated with the Shivaites. They are the most important group of Muslim yogis who are found in Peshāwar 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.
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 Vairāgīs and other similar denominations are used, and correctly used in a wider acception, 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 Vairāgīs, those of Vishnu.³

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 Ṣubḥ al-Lātīf’s treatment of yogis in his poetry

The theme of yogis in Sindhi poetry was known before the time of Shāh Ṣubḥ al-Lātīf. According to the extant poetic sources in Sindhi which pre-date the work of Shāh Ṣubḥ al-Lātīf, 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‘rifat, written in Persian, and Sindhi Risālo.⁴ This poet belonged to the Qādirī ṭariqa 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.
3. Ibid., pp.103-4.
Kāpaṛīs, and he refers to their way of life in order to shed light on his explanation of the Șūfī path.¹

Where once there were Kāpaṛīs, they are no more.
Sannyāsīs have broken relationships
They have gone away to a distant place
The fearless Nāṅgā 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.

2. The word used in Sindhi is Sandh – which means a hole broken through the house.
   This suggests the way yogis disappear suddenly from a place.
Shāh ʻInāyat (1620 A.D. – 1708 A.D.) also uses the theme of yogis in his poetry. Indeed, he devotes two whole suras, 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 Ṣūfī context:\(^1\)

If you want to become a yogī, then observe the tradition of the yogīs.

Forget adab, ikhlāṣ, ṣabr, shukūr, emnity and sorrows

ʻInāyat 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 ḎInāyat writes:²

\[
\text{بِس۝۝*}
\]

They do not search in the village, 
nor do they go begging around.

Hunger has left the Adesis.

The Master of the Universe has provided for them 
without their asking, says ḎInāyat.

While Gaudriyaṣat, Gorakh came 
to their courtyard.

As for Shāh ḎAbd al-Latif'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.
3. The Gaudriyya are a type of yogi.
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 ʿAbd 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf gives detailed descriptions of the appearance of yogis in his poetry:

1. Advāñī, op. cit., p. 418.
Get rid of the signad, the rope and the ragbag, all three things, and the sacred thread (*jane vog*)

Throw the begging bowl onto the floor, break it to pieces.

Those who are in love with Lahut *  
never leave their resting-places.

_ _

Abandon the *gaudri* 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.*

In another place, the poet writes:-

---

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. Advani, loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p.419.

* Those yogis who have reached the Sufi stage of Lahut need not travel nor are rituals applicable any more to them.
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 Ḥabīl al-Latif describes the yogis in these words:¹

¹ Advani, op. cit., p.375.
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 Khāhūrīs never give up longing at any time.

Shāh Ābd al-Lātīf 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

While looking and searching in the mountains,
ythey 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. Āgyānī, op. cit., p.375.
The Khāhōrīs possess some knowledge about the Lāhūt.

The poet advises his audience to seek the company of such true wanderers:—

ناشِنْ وَتَسِدِي ، نَمَّ كَاهَرِينَ حَيِّ،
جَوْشَ دِنَاوُنِ حَيِّ، كَيِّ، لَكُنْيَ لَوَكِانَ،
دوْتَنَ كُنَّهُنَ كُدّادِ، سَعِيَ كُلَّ نَمَالِهِرَ.

Go and sit in the courtyard of Khāhōrīs

By keeping it a secret from the common people they have burnt themselves.

Because of pain, the Dothī never sleep contented.

Shāh Ṣabd 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:—

1. Ādvāṇī, op. cit., p.371.
2. The poet is suggesting one should seek the company of yogis.
3. Ādvāṇī, op. cit., loc. cit.
You are untrue to kufr;
You should not therefore call yourself an unbeliever (kafir).
Nor are you a Hindu, so the janeo does not suit you.
The only people who are eligible to wear the tilak are those who are faithful to shirk.

Here Shah Abd al-Latif 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 Ramkali:—

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 ⁶ ⁰ ⁴ ⁶ Ābd 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. Šahwānī, op. cit., p. 1128.
2. Shāh ⁶ ⁰ ⁴ ⁶ Ābd al-Latīf uses several titles to refer to yogis. Some of the names refer to sects and subsects of the different groups of yogis, while others are adjectives which allude to their characteristics, e.g. dothī suggests 'those who eat ḍūth (i.e. wild plants), gunjā and bora 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, Kāmphata, Kanūt, Kāpārī, Kanōtiyya, Kanchīrī, Yogi, Bairāgī, Pūrābī, Sāmī, Lāhūtī, Bābū, Bekhārī, Nāṅgā, Ṭadesī, Mahalī, Sābri, Malakūtī, Jābarūtī, Kāpat, Faqīr, Khāhorī, Nūrī, Nārī, Dothī, Gungā, Bora, Sannyāsī, Bhabhūtiyya, Khākī, Rawal, 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 ʿAbd al-Lātīf 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:

\[
\text{كن كة، كابت، كابير، كونتبا، كن قير،}
\]

\[
\text{كدنا رهين سامخان، عاشق أثر هير،}
\]

\[
\text{نا ديني تن كي، ساريانون مير،}
\]

\[
\text{جي نا تيا فتير، هير إن تكيا يشو ما.}
\]
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

कंदी सान ही आंत किये जा रहे लोकवर्ग
परते ही परिवार की पूजन जीवन की:

They tied their bodies with leather bands
To make themselves lean.

1. Ḍhvāṇī, op. cit., p. 397.
2. The loin cloth worn by Hindus, especially yogis.
3. Ḍhvāṇī, op. cit., p. 409.
They never allowed their appetites expensive delicacies.
In this way the Kaparī reached Kabul.

Shāh 'Abd al-Latif is clearly referring to the Vairāgīs, a group of Sannyāsīs, when he writes:—¹

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 Namga are content and happy.

1. Advānī, op. cit., p.393.
They move about amongst the common folk.¹

As far as Shāh ʿAbd 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 Ṣūfīs.

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

1. ʿAḏvaṭī, 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:\(^1\)

> सामी कामः ब्रमः, लः, कृतस्य खः, ज्ञातु रूपां दोर्व तिः, ज्ञातु रूपां नै कवाहः, आतीन अर्थेऽ गात्यां, मेघान वै जीवः कृतस्य यः, सुदो नाहि ज्ञावहः, तु यो जीवः कृतस्य यः।

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.

---

\(^1\) Agvānī, *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 Rāmkālī*.

They follow the path of Shari'ā, and the contemplation of the tariqa.

They reach the state of haqīqa, because their destiny is ma'rifa.

Nāsūt, Malakūt, Jabarūt, is the reward they have received.

Thus they cross the Lāhūt, and pass beyond the stage of Hāhūt.

In this verse, the poet uses Sufi 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 COMMANDER al-Latif is impressed by the modesty and selfless devotion of the yogis. He believes that they are true seekers after truth.

Shāh COMMANDER al-Latif 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. **Yama** - abstinence or restraint.
2. **Niyama** - the observance of spiritual discipline.
3. **Asana** - postures. A number of sitting positions are adopted by the yogi to attain the intended goal.
4. **Pranayama** - regulation of breath, for inner purity and preparation for meditation.
5. **Pratyahara** - abstraction of the senses.
6. **Dharana** - fixing of thoughts without the assistance of senses.
7. **Dhyana** - meditation as the result of undistracted concentration.
8. **Samadhi** - the final stage in the **yoga** mystical ladder, when the unification of subject and object is attained.

**Yama** - 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 Sufism, i.e. warā'.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf appears to be well aware of these different stages in yoga. He emphasises the importance of abstinence. In Sur Khāhorī and Rāmkālī 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

¹ Pott, op. cit., p.4.
² Shāhwaḥī, 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

 чтят кра́йа каби́рй, блатам, дм тамаму,
 сиён кабано́н хев, п'кхр д билану,
 вмр асану, ати лундар диниа.

They are weary of eating and have no desire for food;

¹. Advani, 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 niyama – 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 ṭāpas, a yogi should be able to bear hunger, thirst, heat and cold.¹

There are several examples in the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf where asceticism, contentment and endurance of pain, hunger and thirst are attributed to yogis. For example, he says: ²

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 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

They are offended when given, and satisfied
when ignored (i.e. not given alms);
They have become Sūfīs 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

Slaves to their appetites are false yogis.

Those who are more concerned with their food are entirely mere dregs.

A true seeker, says Shāh ⁶ʿAbd al-Latīf, abstains from the world and keeps hoping to be released from it soon.

Shāh ⁶ʿAbd 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

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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 ʿAbd al-Latif, 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

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

2. ʿAqvaṇī, 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 Śūfī 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.

Pratyāhāra — 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 Samsāra, 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

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.
3. Ibid., pp.722-23.
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, dhārana, 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, dhiyānā 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.5.
intended object with his mind so clearly that it is as if he has seen it with his eyes.¹

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif is possibly referring to yogis in this stage, when he says the following words:²

کاہوریين خنیء، سین، سوجی تضر ٓسکان،
عاقی اهوئی آیین، لکھبا لامکان،
هوہ ملکیہ هو کیا، بابری پرکان،
سیوئی سکان، آیو نظر آسن حی.

Khāhoṛīs (wandering yogis) with their secret remembrance, searched and found God (subḥān)

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., Rāmānuja on the Yogā, Madras, 1976, p.23.
Samadhi is the final stage of spiritual consciousness in 'the eight member yoga of the orthodox yoga school'. 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 samadhi. In one, the person is conscious of the object on which he is concentrating. In another undifferentiated samadhi, all consciousness disappears, and mental functions are stopped; the person is fully liberated, and arrives at an identification with the Divine.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf advises yogis on what they should do if they want to attain that stage in the following lines:3

جي یان چبی بیان، تر کن پیالی بی،
نام بهاری هنگ کری، "آلون مسین این پن پی،
ت سندر وحشته وی، طالب ا تو ا مان نی.

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

Where there is no divine throne nor sky,
nor any particle of earth,
nor rising moon, nor
signs of the sun.

¹. Šahrwānī, op. cit., pp.1175-6.
There is the stamping\(^1\) 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 Čabd 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 Khāhopī* 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 self-obsession 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 Šūfīs. It

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1. Where yogis stay and dance about.
seems that Shāh ⁰Abd 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 ⁰Abd 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 ⁰Abd 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 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 ⁰Abd 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 SHĀḤ ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF AND THAT OF
FARĪD AL-ḤĀN ʿATTĀR
It is generally accepted that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf knew Arabic and Persian quite well and that he must have been acquainted with the great Sufī writers of the Middle Ages, such as al-Ṭūsī, al-Hujwīrī, al-Suhrawardī and others. Above all, it is certain that he had read the Masnavi of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī since there are direct references to it in the Risālo.¹

As for the work of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAttār, it is not certain that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf had read it, although it is quite likely that this was the case. Rūmī had a high regard for ʿAttār and since Shāh ʿAbd 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 ʿAttār. Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf must have come across the famous saying of Rūmī’s:—²

Sanaʾī was the spirit, and ʿAttār his two eyes;
We have come after Sanaʾī and ʿAttār.

Whether or not there is proof that Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf read the work of ʿAttār, 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.
Before embarking on a more detailed comparison between the two works, it is perhaps useful to summarise the salient points of the plot of *Mantiq al-Tair*. 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

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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 Sîmurgh.

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 Sî-murgh in Persian means thirty birds.

The journey of the birds is used by Farîd al-Dîn CAttār to symbolise the journey of the sâlik in the various stages through which he has to pass before attaining self-realisation. Shâh ČAbd al-Latîf also speaks of the journey of the sâlik, a journey which he represents by the search of his heroines for their beloved. The stories of Sasûf and Suhûf are especially appropriate in this context as they both set out on a journey in search of their love.
With reference to Sasūī there are five _surs_ which speak of her journey and the hardships she has to go through during her travels. According to the story, Sasūī 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 Sasūī, the poet refers to the agony which she undergoes through separation from Punhū and he highlights Sasūī'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 Suhnī the second heroine of Shāh ṭAbd al-Lāṭīf who travels, her journey is of a different kind. According to the story, Suhnī, 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, Suhnī swims across the

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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 Suhni 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-Tair 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, Sana‘ī’s small magnavī is based on this theme. Its title is Sair al-Čibād 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. Moreover, Farīd al-Dīn ČAttār is said to have followed the same tradition for Mantiq al-Tair. Whereas, however, ČAttār uses birds which is a common motif in Persian poetry before him to denote the soul, as indeed do Avicenna and al-Ghazālī, Shah ČAbd al-Latīf prefers to take the heroines Sasui and Suhni 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

2. Ibid., p.307.
husband, the Brahmā, the Great Soul (i.e. God), has to struggle for re-union.\(^1\) The story of Sasvi fits very aptly with the above mentioned imagery. It would appear that Shāh Ṫ Abd al-Latīf uses the same idea of the soul as a woman, a concept which is already adopted by his predecessors, Shāh Ṭ Abdal Karīm of Bulrī and Shāh Ṭ Ināyat Rizvī, who also utilise the concept of a journey. So Shāh Ṭ Abd 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 Ṭ Abd al-Latīf and Farīd al-Dīn Ṭ Attār represent in their poetry the Ṣūfī concept of the search of the soul for divine union. In the Risālo heroines from Sindhi folk stories are used allegorically to represent spiritual seekers, as are the birds in the work of Ṭ Attār. The purpose behind Shāh Ṭ Abd 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 sāilik 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 Ḥāfiz Ḥallī all seven maqāms are discussed clearly and explicitly with headings and in sequence. In Shāh Ḥāfiz Ḥallī's work, although it may be argued that he alludes to seven maqāms, they are not in any systematic order as in Manṭiq 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 Manṭiq al-Ṭair. We now turn to important differences between the two works. In Manṭiq 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 Qurʾān mentions the hoopoe as having been in the company of Solomon and having brought him messages from the Queen of Sheba.¹

Shāh Ḥāfiz Ḥallī, on the other hand, has a rather different approach with his heroines. When Sasuī and Suhnī set out on their journey they do not have a guide. With reference

1. Qurʾān: xxvii. 22-26, and xxvii, 22-44.
to Suhnī he comments:

From the beginning Todī has been the seeker after Truth. She does not ask for the sailor, the boat, or the rope. When Suhnī is in the middle of the river, to her the water seems only knee high.

In other suras Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf stresses that one should take a sailor as guide while crossing the river or the seas. But for Suhnī 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 Suhnī rebuke those who seek for assistance:

1. I.e., Suhnī.
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 Sasuí, 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. Gurbukhshānī, op.cit., p.258.
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 Ābd 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 Sasūi he says:

¹ Gurbukshshāni, 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.

Sasuī crossed the *ārena* (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 Sasuī is travelling through the forests, mountains and plains, the poet addresses her with words of encouragement, advice and sympathy:⁴

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1. I.e. Shah Šah Ābd al-Latif himself, who was a Sayyid.
2. I.e. Punhū, her beloved husband.
Forlorn, defenceless and weak woman,
Gain strength with sincerity.
Cook yourself within the stones (i.e. mountain)
and become matured.
The helpless one has been confronted with affliction
Latif says, the Path has enriched her, and she
has become red (i.e. attained perfection).

In contrast to the Risalo, 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 Sufis 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

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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 Simurgh 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 Simurgh? 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 ³Abd al-Latīf’s heroines not having a guide, as the birds do in the Manṭiq al-Tair, may well reflect on the lives of the two poets themselves. Whereas ³Attār became a pupil of a learned šaikh and was initiated into Șūfīsm, there is no reference to a living murshid or šaikh in relation to Shāh ³Abd al-Latīf.

Another significant difference between the journey of the birds of ³Attār and the heroines of Shāh ³Abd al-Latīf is one of number. Thousands of birds congregate around the hoopoe

who is their leader. In the case of Sasuī and Suḥnī, 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ਵੀਘੋ ਸਗੀ ਵਰੀ , } & \text{ ਅਲੀਨ ਜੀ ਕਲੰਤ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਸੀੰ ,} \\
\text{ਨਵਰੇਨੀ ਵੱਰਜਕ ਜੀ , } & \text{ ਸਧੀ ਗ੯ਲ ਗ਼ਰੀ ,} \\
\text{ਬੁੰਨੀ ਜਨ ਪੀੰ , } & \text{ ਦੰਗਰੀ ਸੀ ਤਹਿਦੀੰੂਨ .}
\end{align*}
\]

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 Gurbukhsanī, op. cit., p.290.
Sasuī:  

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 yogni³  

I will wear earrings⁴ in my ears for my beloved Baloch.⁵  

In the above verse one can see Sasuī’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'
suggestions. Again, the friends are in the background; one only hears Sasui speaking:

بنهری، سین پیرتی جو، کو جو پچ بچوم،
پنی پتی مین پیچری مه، وہل وہ تندم،
سٹیون موئنگہ سندویں، کا کٹیوں ان کیم تندو،
سندویں ا ساہ سندو، تنو کوئیلاوی هو، جی.

My intense love for Punhū, has made my living in this wretched Bhambhore an affliction.

O companions! do not advise me to return

Friends! my soul is in the possession of my beloved.

On several other occasions the poet points out that it is her love for Punhū that gives strength to Sasui. Shāh Ḳabīl al-Latīf expresses her determination in the following lines:

ہلندی بہت پہلہ، جہاں، لوہی کی کرویں،
چہتی نہیں پٹی تی، میں لئے ان لونیوں،
سی مہیلوں یکہ کی، جگججن ہن جونیوں
باپی بی بھوٹیوں، تہ کتنا کبین کچہ جاہ.

1. Home town of Sasuí.
2. Gurbukshshānī, op. cit., p.337.
While walking towards Punhū, the insincere ones are exhausted.

The stones\(^1\) become plains for the ones who wander for the beloved.

In love all the friends are short-sighted and weak hearted.\(^2\)

Brahman\(^3\) become pieces so that the dogs of Kech\(^4\) may eat you.\(^5\)

As for Suhnī, 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:

\[
\text{"\begin{quote}
نکا جہول جہلیس، تم تاگھو تم نار کین،

تم پیچھے چڑھیں، پہر تم پہلیس،

تان تان میں جلیس، میں جان میں سبکار کی۔
\end{quote}}
\]

1. I.e. the mountain.

2. I.e. mere pretenders on the journey who cannot comprehend the Truth.

3. I.e. Sasuī was a Brahman 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 Suhni'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 Suhni says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{تّران تان مُران} & , \text{ وّران تان وّوتّ رو} , \\
\text{هيّري مه حون جا} & , \text{ اّجن كّعور كّحطان} , \\
\text{بّسنو باّري واررون} & , \text{ تّسنو تّرن} : \text{ تّران} , \\
\text{رجان كّین} & , \text{ وّران بّ كنتيّ مُنعور كاركّي}. \\
\end{align*}
\]

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, Sasui and Suhni, are without friends or guide and harassed by obstacles. It is only their personal

¹. Gurbukhshani, op. cit., p.262.
². Ibid., p.278.
determination which keeps them going on their journey. For Shāh Ṭāhir Shah Abd 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:

> 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?

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 ÇAttār's birds reveals that Shāh ÇAbd al-Laṭīf 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, Sasūfī and Suhnī are keen themselves and in spite of all odds they overcome everything that stands in their way and achieve union with the beloved. For ÇAttār 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 ÇAttār and Shāh ÇAbd al-Laṭīf. 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 ÇAttār.²

2. For al-Sarrāj Ṭūṣī the maqāms are:
   a. repentence (tauba) e. patience (sabr)
   b. abstinence (warāf') f. trust in God (tawakkul)
   c. renunciation (zuhd) g. contentment (rizā)
   d. poverty (faqr) Cont’d:...
Seven Sufi maqāms, known as valleys in Manṭiq al-Ṭair, are enumerated in systematic order. In the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, one does not find such an orderly presentation of maqāms but there are verses scattered all over the Risālā which can be interpreted as maqāms. More especially, if one studies the journeys of Sasuī and Suhnī one can find maqāms parallel to those in Manṭiq al-Ṭair, although the sequence is different in the work of the two poets.

In Manṭiq 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 (maḏafa)
4. The valley of detachment and independence (istighna)
5. The valley of unity (tauhīd)
6. The valley of astonishment or bewilderment (haira)
7. The valley of annihilation (fanā')

In Manṭiq al-Ṭair the hoopoe which acts as the guide for the birds is seen giving information on each valley in


1. Nott, op. cit., p.98.
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 ʿAbd al-Latīf, on the other hand, Sasuī and Suhnī do not have a guide to give them instructions about the Sūfī maqām or stages. Nevertheless, the seven Sūfī maqāms are alluded to and the poet comments through Sasuī and Suhnī as they pass through each stage. For Shāh ʿAbd 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 Suhnī of the Risālī of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf. They appear to be the same as those in Mantiq al-Ṭair 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 Sasuí and Suhni. 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, Sasuí is bewildered when she passes through mountains, valleys and desert. After Suhni 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 Sasuí and Suhnî, 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 Sasuí say these words.

I have become Punhû myself, and Sasuí has lost her beauty.

"God created man in His image"

The trees are uttering that tune.

The crazy woman\(^2\) has found her beloved from within and has taken him in her lap.

Shâh ⁹Abd al-Latif suggests that once the seeker attains self-realisation, he or she proceeds towards unity, which is the sixth maqâm.

Sasuí and Suhnî apparently do not reach their beloveds

1. Gurbukhshânî, op. cit., p.293.

2. Sasuí is calling herself crazy, because love of Punhû 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.:

\[

erka tānhī hīnjī mī, pūshaīn ṭukhrah bū'rī mī?
erā'ī āntūstūn, ānālāh-i-mū'ron, sūjamī kīr sēyī,
ka'dū kāmad ārī, ṭurū' guřūlī hī nī.
\]

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, Sasuţ and Suhnī, meet their death while still on their journey. Thus one finds the heroines of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf reaching the final stage (*maqām*) of annihilation.

There now follows a more detailed comparison between the *maqāms* outlined by ʿAttār and those which may be discerned

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2. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p.293.
in the poetry of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf.

The Valley of Quest

ʿAttār and Shāh ʿAbd 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 Manṭiq al-Ṭair, 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 ʿAbd 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.

ʿAttār 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. ʿAttār, op. cit., pp. 80-81.
Shāh ʿAbd al-Ḥāfīz’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 ʿAttār 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 ʿAbd al-Ḥāfīz, the heroines

¹ Nott, op. cit., p.98.
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 Suñī 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 وَلِيْكَ اِكْ رَفْحَةَ جاَ، حَبْنَ بنُ جَيْهَا.
منزل دُوْرُهُ، مَنْ تَنَاهَا، أَتْ بَوْلَونَ كَنْ بَيْهَا،
رايَ بِبْرٍ تَرْ دِيْهَا، لِيْ لُكَدَ دِيْهَا،
لْمَفْ جِيْوُن لِيْهَا، لُؤْرِحِيْانِ لَلَّالْلَّيْبَذَيْهَا.

There are the tall trees of Wāṅkār² where only owls³ and chīhā 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.  

While discussing the quest, Shāh Ābd al-Latīf distinguishes between those who are true lovers and those who are fraudulent. In Sur Suhnī he comments on them thus:—

While standing on the bank (of the river) several (women) call out Sāhar Sāhar. 

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.

Thus true lovers are not afraid of any sacrifice they have to make in search of their beloved.

In the above verses our poet refers to Suhni 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:

Suhni has entered (the river) from the dangerous landing place
But it turns out to be favourable for her.
Suhni 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

Sasu has several friends who wish to accompany her on her journey, as do the numerous birds in Mantiq al-Tair. But

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 salik. The poet comments on this in the following words:

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 Sufi path, who apparently make a show of being in search of the truth.

Shāh ⁴ Abd al-Latīf seems to believe that not everyone can claim to be a salik, 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.
other women for her bravery. Her quest for the beloved is so great that she cannot be deterred from facing any kind of difficulty.

Out of longing, Sasui 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

¹Attār 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 Ābd al-Latīf there is a further aspect to the quest. When the lover seeks the beloved, according to Shāh Ābd al-Latīf the beloved also responds by seeking him or her.

For example:

2. Āttār, op. cit., p.42.
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.  

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 Simurgh 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 ḡAbd al-Latīf’s Beloved is here seen to be willing and interested in seeking out those who seek Him, whereas for ḡAttār the Beloved seems remote.

The Valley of Love

In ḡAttār’s work this is the second valley or stage on the Sufī path. The hoopoe, as mentioned earlier, being a guide to other birds, gives them instructions in a long discourse

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-Ṭair* 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.

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.

In the work of *C. Attar* 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 *C. Abd al-Latīf*, however, Sasūfī and Suhnī prove through their own actions that love does...

not care for any reason.

Suhni'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:

\[
\text{جَبْحُ لَوْكَ جَعَلْتُ كُرَي، ذُروَ جَابِكَ تَهْوُ،}
\]
\[
أُوحِيَ أَجَنِو، أَدِينَ إِنَّهُ يَرْيَانَ حُرَّ بَوْء،}
\]
\[
جَبْحُ جَوْنِم كُرَوَ، ثُمَّ بَرَكَ يَبْيَانَ نَعْطُو،}
\]

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 ʿAbd 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

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 ʿAbd 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.

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.

In the above verse one can see the intensity of the love which Sasui has for Punhū. Sasui's love for Punhū or Suhni'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.

Suhni 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 Suhni in love, our poet's implied meaning relates to the condition of a true spiritual seeker.

During the midst of the winter night, when it is raining, she enters it (river)
Let us go and ask Suhñī 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, ³Attār 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

2. ³Attār, op. cit., p.187.
Shah ʿAbd al-Latif 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 Sufi point of view the prerequisite for love is self-sacrifice and self-renunciation. These qualities are displayed by the heroines of Shah ʿAbd al-Latif.

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

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\(^1\) Gurbuhshānī, op. cit., p.278.
overpowered by divine love, and becomes impatient to attain divine union.

The third *maqām*: the valley of *ma'rifa* (knowledge)

According to Āṭṭār *ma'rifa* 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

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Cf. Āṭṭār, op. cit., p.195.
For the attainment of divine knowledge there are certain conditions for the salik. 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 salik.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'rifa (knowledge) in the Risālo would appear to be the fifth maqām, which comes after detachment and bewilderment.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf makes Sasūl 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 Vāṭ given below she says:

غفلتُ يا رُبُّ نوايُو، بَّريُّ إِنَّ جَمِیْنَٰ

كَيْنَ كَرِیْبَانَ آلْیُوُبُ إِنَّ غَهُّ نَتَهُ بًٰ

1. ʿAttār, op. cit., p.196.
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 Mantiq al-Ṭair this is the fourth Sūfī maqām and the

hoopoe is seen explaining its conditions to other birds. It tells them that in order to attain this maqam 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 ẒAbd al-Latīf this seems to be the third valley or maqam. For Sasuī and Suhrī 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 Suhrī have to proceed on their own without stopping, as they are conscious of the vastness and hardships of the journey.

The poet advises Sasui on how to detach herself from human weakness and worldly desires.

"لاَيْ خَلُّ، لاَ جَوْ، هِيْ خُصُرْكُي هَلَّ،
سُمِّنْ جِبْرِيلَ، سُمِّي، جِهْ، وَنُغُورْ يَدَ وَهَلَّ
بَيْضُ يُرْوِي كَلُّ، تُ هُلَّ، مَهُوَرَيْنَ.

Kill your mule (baser soul) with the dagger of "لَا"

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:

"هُورَنَ هَارُوُ لِفْكُهَو، بُنَيْ إِمُوَسُكَ، يَكُ أَلَّا، سَيْنَ آَيَتُكَ، بُكُنَّ، رِسَالِي يُكِيْكُ كَيَّ.

O unlucky one! give up self-adornment, and cross the Haro.

1. I.e. No - or None other than God.

2. Gurbukhshāni, op. cit., p.311.

3. The name of a mountain.
Take the "la-yūm" with you, and nothing will help you to reach the Kech.²

Through these heroines Shāh ʿAbd 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 Mantiq al-Tair. 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

2. The name of a town in Baluchistan, which was the home town of Punhvâ, Sasuī's husband.
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.

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

In the above verse Sasuí 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 Sasuí symbolises the seeker, our poet is critical of the seekers who are mislead 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:

When I merged within myself and conversed with my soul.

There remained no mountain, nor any need of the Kechi.²

As long as I was Sasuí I suffered, thus I became Punhū myself.

In the above verse Sasuí 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 Sasuí’s in-laws.

In Mantiq al-Tair, Attar 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.

Shah ¢Abd al-Latif comments on the theme in the following words.

Listen and take care, for your ego is the veil. The barrier to wişal (i.e. the meeting between God and man) is one’s own self or ego.

Shah ¢Abd al-Latif believes that God is not far away. The seeker has only to overcome his weakness and purify his heart to find God within himself.

You should wear that collyrium in your eyes which will bring you wişāl (i.e. unite you with God).

By giving up doubt (shirk) cheerfully attain ma'rifa.

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 unity, that of God and the seeker himself is not distinct from that unity. In that state the seeker proclaims:

¹ Advani, op. cit., p.355.
The real 'Self' is situated within me, Therefore I can say I. Therefore I have the right to say I. That I is entitled to claim Unity.

You (i.e. common people) must not say that.  

The sixth maqām: the valley of bewilderment or astonishment

According to Ḍattār, 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.

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, Ḍattār tells

1. I.e. self-realisation leads to the realisation of God.
3. Ḍattār, 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 ṭĀbd al-Latīf, bewilderment seems to be the fourth maqām on the Ṣūfī path. After detaching themselves from their family and friends, Sasū and Suhnī find themselves all alone without any companion or support. Shāh ṭĀbd al-Latīf comments on this stage of bewilderment in the following lines:

¹. ṭAttār, op. cit., pp.216-217.
I am searching in infinity
But I cannot find the limits of my guide.¹
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.

¹ By guide the poet means the beloved or God.
² Advānī, op. cit., p. 345.
The strength of bewilderment is not known to intellect
The beauty of Truth cannot be understood by the blind.¹

Sasui 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:

آذنرا اجا، آمزا، گُنگر کی یادا،
کیم آه عجیب کی، سبد منجا ہا کا،
بیشی هنگیکی وہت کی، گَنگیہ رجبی کن ہا،
منہجر وو وآها، بدلی ہو姆 پرچر 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 Baloch to hear my call.²

Shāh Abd al-Latif gives a powerful illustration of

¹. Ibid., p.351.
². Gurbukhsānī, op. cit., p.335.
bewilderment in the story of Suhnī. 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.

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.

In another verse the poet expresses his amazement at the courage of Suhnī.

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 hasten 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 Sahar! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep water.¹

The seventh maqām: the valley of annihilation

In Mantiq al-Tair the hoopoe continues its discourse by

speaking of the valley of annihilation. This is the seventh and final maqām, according to Ṣattār. For Shāh Ābd al-Latīf this is also the final stage on the Śūfī 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 Ābd 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. Ṣattār, op. cit., pp.219-220.

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 Ābd al-Lāṭif 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:

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.

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.

1. Gurbukhshānī, op. cit., p. 278.
Sasuf! 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.  

Similarly Suhni searches and longs to meet her Mehar.
Our poet gives her advice about how she can attain her beloved.


Never take ego with you, give up every kind of protection or shelter.

O Suhni! 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.

Our poet comments further:

2. Ibid., p.257.
The vessel broke, and the woman died, and the protective methods were destroyed.

Then only Suhnī heard the call of Mehar (i.e. attained union).

It is important to note that there is a significant difference between ʿAttār and Shāh Ṭūb 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.

CHAPTER 5

JALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ AND SHĀH ĀBD AL-LAṬĪF

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 Sufism associating, like him, with leading Sufis 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 Sufi 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 1253 A.D., to Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan (Chalabi). It was on the latter's advice that Rūmī composed his famous Masnavī


   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 Ṣūfī was the Dīvān-i Shams, a voluminous collection of
lyrical poems.

After this brief sketch of Ṣūfī’s life, we may now turn
our attention to the relationship between Ṣūfī and Shāh ʿAbd
al-Latīf. The latter was a declared admirer of Ṣūfī, ackowledging his indebtedness to him in his verses and
referring to him directly on a number of occasions. For
eexample Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf says:

\[
\text{طلب خَلَّر، سنة سَر، إيا رُومي جي رهان،}
\]
\[
\text{بِهِرين رجائيت بان، بْبنَتَي برهن كِي.}
\]

The seekers are many. Divine Beauty is the origin
(of everything),

This is the pleasant conversation of Ṣūfī

First of all lose yourself, then seek the beloved.2

He goes on to say:

1. Arberry, op. cit., p.6—8
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 *Risālī* 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:

Like a segment of reed, it tells the tale of its being cleft.
It cries because of the flickering pain of the beloved.

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 Sanāʾī
which originally came from a Greek source, i.e. the tale of
King Midas.2 What seems highly probable, however, is that
Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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 ʿAbd al-Latif. 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 ʿAbd al-Latif.

The sun

The image of the sun is universal, although each writer

2. Schimmel, A.M., The Triumphal Sun: A study of the works of Jalal al-Din Rūmī,
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 Qurʾān as possessing the Divine attributes of glory and majesty and having great miraculous powers.

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.

For Shāh ʿAbd 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 Kāparī is compared to that of the morning sun, which is red like blood or a ruby:

![Verse from Sur Mūmal Rāḥo](image)

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:

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

2. A kind of red colour, which does not fade away.

Cont'd:...
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 Muḥammad, 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 Ṣoḍhā.


1. Schimmel, op. cit., p.70.
other hand, the sun also stand for Shams al-Din of Tabriz, who in Rumi's estimation represents the Perfect Man. Rumi sees the Divine Light and Beauty and the glory of the Prophet as being combined in his beloved Shams al-Din. After the latter's death, Rumi sees a reflection of that light he calls Ziya' in Salah al-Din and later in Husam al-Din.¹

In the case of Shāh ⁶ Abd al-Latif the sun does not symbolise the Perfect Man or the Prophet. Moreover, in various suras about Sasuī such as Abri, Husainī 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:

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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{اَنَّ الْيَسِرَ، اَوْنَارَ الْيَسِرِ، وَيَسِرُّ الْيَلِّوَمِ تَسِيرُ،} \\
\text{جَوْرُونَ الْيَسِرِ وَابْنُهُ، جِهَ لَنَا بَنْهَوْهُ بَيْرُ،} \\
\text{بَنْجُونَ الْيَسِرِ فَندُوْ، جِهَ الْحَيَّيْيِ مَيْيِ آوْبِرُ،} \\
\text{بَنْحُونَ الْيَسِرِ يَيْبُرُ بَنْدرُ، جِهَ مَسْوَانِ نِعْمَةِ سِسَرُ،} \\
\text{سِكْحُونَ الْيَسِرِ يَبْنُ ثَغْرُ، جُوْرُكْرِدُو مُؤْدِيَ وَبْرُ،} \\
\text{وَاهْبِرِي جِيْيَيْ وَبْرَ، سَلْوُنَ كُرْبِانِ يَضْرِبُنَّ إِنِّ.}
\end{align*}
\]

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.

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 Ābd al-Latīf does not like these elements which display qualities of brute force and hardness because they cause miseries to the weak.

Shāh Ābd 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:

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As you arise, first of all you must look at 
your 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 ṣAbd al-Latīf has 
a lover express his views on the moon in the following lines:

 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 ʿAbd 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 Qurʾān. 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.

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 ḡAbd 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, Sāmudhī and Suḥnī. 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 ḡAbd al-Latīf's are presented in a seemingly haphazard manner. Shāh ḡAbd al-Latīf's style is distinctly non-narrative and non-sequential 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 Ṭabd al-Latīf follows the same Ṣūfī tradition as Rūmī. In this respect the ideas of the two poets correspond.

In the work of Shāh Ṭabd al-Latīf there are a number of verses which refer to the Prophet Muhammad. For example the poet says:

```
روضح الناس رسول الله ، خضو ووزیب وارو ،
پریانی پتی پتی ، نظر سین بارو ،
هادی بتر حکم سین ، یہی تور ناسارو ،
ضریل نظرارو ، بیبی بسابر باهجو .
```

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 Muḥammad. 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-ḥalāmīn, 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 ʿAbd al-Latif is reminded of the blessings of the Prophet Muḥammad. Schimmel has also pointed out this similarity between the characteristics of the rain and those of the Prophet Muḥammad.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

In Sur Ṣamūḏī and Sur Sṛī Rāgī Shāh ʿAbd 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:

सेवा नक़र सूदेड़ जी, जहज़ेर ओही तर जाल,
समीन ओहन ज़ेर ढे, सांहके सौनी लल,
जी मासो ज़ेरी मल, तेज़ौजारा एपैर र्जैन.

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

2. Ibid., p.200.
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, Rūmī and Shāh ⁹Abd al-Latīf, in the
tradition of their Sūfī predecessors, use the symbol of the
pearl and oyster. Both employ it with its Sūfī 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 ⁹Abd al-Latīf
expresses his views thus:

1. Shāh ⁹Abd al-Latīf uses the word river in the verse. This he does frequently
to fit the rhyme scheme.
3. Schimmel, op. cit., p.79.
4. It only tastes a drop of rain.
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 Ṣabd 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:

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:

ءَلَّهُ بِأَشْهَارِهِ يَقُولُ لَوْانِ، \(\text{فَتَرَكَ وَحَمَلَ مَنْ سَوِى}
\text{وَفَتَرَكَ وَسَيَادَةً،} \)

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


2. Ibid., pp.964-5.
the rain has brought cheerfulness, and rejoicing:

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.  

Our poet portrays a picture of the countryside after the rain, and its resultant wellbeing:-

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 \(^\text{c}\) Abd al-Latif. 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 \(^\text{c}\) Abd al-Latif are not from religious sources, but from folk stories.


2. Schimmel, \textit{op. cit.}, p.76.
In Sur Suhni our poet describes the turbulence of the river and the destruction it causes:

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 Sahar! help the non-swimmer to cross the deep water.¹

¹. Shāhānī, op. cit., p.299.
Apart from the above-mentioned images of water, Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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).

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:

¹. Shāhwanī, _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 Ṛūmī 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 Qur'ānic 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf also uses animals and birds but not as many as Ṛūmī. Like Ṛūmī, 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 Ṛūmī's treatment of the camel. Although it is an ill-natured animal, nevertheless, with

1. Shāhvāni, op. cit., p.999.
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 Ḥādī al-Latīf also condemns the camel for its bad habits and sinful nature:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I have fastened the camel to a tree so that it should eat the buds.}
\end{align*}
\]

But the ill-natured camel is secretly eating the salty shrubs.

\[
\begin{align*}
O \text{ mother! this camel has caused much distress to me.}^2
\end{align*}
\]

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 Ḥādī al-Latīf as a stubborn camel-soul, which needs training

2. Shāhwānī, 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. For example, he says:—

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.

Our poet even praises the camel in the following lines:—


2. Here the camel can be seen as the same or even aidabāni which has lost its original lovely qualities and is able to carry men to the Beloved.
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.2

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 ّamāra, which is transformed by Divine grace into the soul at peace, nafs mut ma'ınna. Shāh Ḥabd al-Latīf, by contrast, uses cows and buffaloes to symbolise the prosperity and happiness for country folk:

موتی ساندالم جا، اَمری گُیاپِین بَر,
رَجُّون وُسْعُ آپیِون، گوَّدان گُلی خُر,
میِهْوُن یان َمانِرَیِون، ِوْدَا ِبِرن َنَر,
وَذِی اوۡوه َآپیِون، پُنُن لَائي نِر,
سَاری أَچبُو ِسْوَا میِهْوُن، دَینِنِ کِرَ َسَر,
سالن وانِپِن وَرَ، پِریِون پْریِن َجَون کُیون.

It has started raining, and building up edges

3. In Sur Khambhat, the poet has used the camel to symbolise the lower soul nafs ّamāra, which once trained is capable of achieving a higher goal. Therefore it should not be under estimated.
Delightedly flashes of lightenings 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:

\[
\text{وَسِيَتَتْنَّا وَسَ،} \quad \text{مَدْسُوَّتِي} \quad \text{يِمَّهُ} \quad \\
\text{كَتِنُنَّ كِيَتَا بُقْدِيَا،} \quad \text{حَيْ يُصَرِّبُونَ في} \quad \\
\text{غَابَاءُ مُتِّي سَغَّسَ ذَلِكَ مَ رَ كِ بُدَا} \quad \\
\]

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 enviroment of a countryside, with

¹. Shahwani, 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 ʿAbd 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:

¹ Schimmel, op. cit., p.97.
² Ibid., pp.97-102.
The dog chews bones, but eats his liver (i.e. suffers silently).
"the world is a corpse and those who yearn for it are dogs. This you should understand." 1

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf uses the image of the horse and the lion in Sur Kedārō in connection with the bravery of Imām ʿAlī. Moreover, the lion is used as a title for ʿAlī in a number of places:

The bridegroom 2 made ready the horse by putting the saddle on it. ʿAlī, 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf to represent the carnal soul, nor have these images as many connotations as in the work of Rūmī who uses them in

2. I.e. Husain.
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 Ḥāi 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 Ḥāi's riding animal, a noble, white mule.²

Shāh Ḥabd al-Latīf also uses these animals in similar contexts. For example about duldul he says:

¹ L-f; j'oJa < • • <

² Schimmel, op. cit., p.105.

2. Ibid.
Karbala became coloured (red); the feet of the duldul became red,
While the lion\(^1\) 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 ʿIbrāhīm b. Adhām returned after breaking his worldly chains. Bāyāzīd Bistāmi's encounter with Ḵhizr is again compared with elephants seeing India.*

Shāh Ṣāḥib b. 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

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1. I.e. Husain.
4. Ibid., p.108.
with one pull, to free itself to return to the beloved:

جو نیت لشکر، بتددره بندر پیاس
جحی سنجاق باد پیاس، چرک بینابیکین هیختی.

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 ⁴Abd 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 Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, then by Sanā‘ī, and later by Rūmī.² It is most probable that Shāh ⁴Abd al-Latīf came to know about this image from Rūmī. He comments on it in the following words:

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 chiefs that makes us see things.¹

The elephant is mentioned in a number of other places in his work, as for example in Sur Bilāwal and Sur Kedāro where Shāh ʿAbd 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.² In the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf the imagery of the rose and the nightingale

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1. I.e. spiritually-guided or knowledgeable people who can help others on the path of spirituality.
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 ṣAbd al-Latīf rarely describes birds and insects in the manner in which they are treated in the Qurʾān. Shāh ṣAbd al-Latīf also refers to snakes, describing them as extremely dangerous creatures, whose bite immediately kills the person.

Do not consider snakes as being weak, with tapered stomachs. Their attack can be very dangerous even to brave ones.  

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. In the work of Shāh ṣAbd al-Latif the pigeon is not mentioned directly. However, the birds referred to in Sur Keğāro as taking the message to Medina about the death of ʿUthayn can be assumed to be pigeons.  

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. In general, Shāh ṣAbd al-Latif 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

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.120.
endearment because it brings messages from their beloved:

Kangal\(^1\) 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.\(^3\)


1. Kang means crow in Sindhi. 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.

Shāh Ṭāhir al-Latif also comments on the crow's negative aspects and bad behaviour.

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.
permissible in certain cases.

There are references to the hawk only once or twice in the work of Shāh ʿAbd 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:

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الْمَأْمُومُ ارْتِزَاهُ مِمَّا أَبَى نَكْنِي نَارٍ
بُسُونُ جَيْ بِاتَارٍ، هَنّجُ تَنْبُينَ جَوْ هُنْبَنَّ.
```

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:

2. Ibid., p.1209.
3. Ibid., pp.1209-10.
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'.

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. As already mentioned, Shāh ʿAbd 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.

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

Rūmī, whereas the choice of the swan by Shāh ʿAḍīd al-Lāṭīf reflects his gentle and non-violent character. It seems that Pīr Ḥusain 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 ʿAḍīd al-Lāṭīf:

In the Maṣnawī of Rūmī there is no such tenderness, (softness تَََٰرُمَيْ ) and gentleness ( لَأْنَة ) as one would find in the Risāl. It is as gentle and soft as pure silk, which is pleasant to the touch.¹

Like Rūmī, Shāh ʿAḍīd al-Lāṭīf uses bird imagery to express Sūfī ideas:

\[
\text{موبْكَى سَوْ بَجْرَوَ ، سَوْ سَرَ ، سوَّي سَمَّجَ ،}
\]

\[
\text{بِبِيَ حَنْجِدَ ، مَوْنَ بَجْرَوْ مَنْجَدَ ،}
\]

\[
\text{دَيْلَ حَبَ حَوْ أَنْجَدَ ، سوَ مَرِي تَوْ مَنْجَدَ قِرَّ .}
\]

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

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. Thus the crane for Rūmī is an insignificant bird. In contrast, for Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf it is worthy of praise.

It is interesting to see how Shāh ʿAbd 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; in one of the verses our poet comments:

أثـرَ ذِي أَلْبِ، الْحَانِصْحٓوَنَّ كُونِجٍ كَرِيِّ،
بابِنٍ بَيْضٍ مَنْحِئٍ خَرَابٍ، وَهَاهِيٍّ ابْيُونَ كُرِيِّ.

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.

Here, one can say that the crane in the poet's work

2. Shāh-Wānī, 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 ʿAbd 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:

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 ʿAbd 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

Qur'ān, such as the ḥuhud hoopoe and others.¹ There are no references in the work of Shāh ṣAbd 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 ṣAbd 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.

а хар эна махерр, мо ла, но мо амал

شبل عرب واته م، سيب كي سيمار,

خورا بيسا ريج ق، لو م لوبسي وار,

لكين بيديش ليوكشيون، غليلون تريكوئون دار,

هيما لا هوار، بالبا ريندي سوهلي.

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 (Jobinyūn)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 babīho (i.e. the desert bird), tāro* (a desert cuckoo) and the chiho⁵ 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.
4. Ibid., pp.957, 969.
5. A small bird with red spots.
contrast in them. Rumi's imagery is mostly urban, and that found in the poetry of Shah Abū al-Latīf is predominantly rural. Given the different environment of the two poets this is not surprising.

Rumi 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 Abū 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{جرر جبرى يَحْذى، نَرَى يَجَندا رَحَنٰ!} \\
\text{شَنُوُن بِهِلْ كَرْبَى يَنِينٰ، جَنُنٰ عُنْيَارَ عَرْنَ غُمُّ سِيِنَ.}
\end{align*}
\]

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 ʿAbd al-Latif 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 ʿAbd al-Latif speaks similarly of charcoal. He admires the patience of charcoal which twice undergoes the process of burning with patience:

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 'Abd al-Latīf concentrates on rural areas where he must have seen the wood being 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 '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:

\[
\text{رَجِبُ وَسُوحُ نَارُ وَهَنَاءُ وَأَرَىِ كَيْدَيْنَ،}
\]
\[
\text{هَيْمُرُ بَرْيَانَ ذَارَ وَرَبْيَانِ ذَرَرَيْنِ.}
\]

The same way as the water which is drawn from the well by the waterwheel flows mixed with sand

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 Sufi 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf. Here the image is used negatively:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{جَيَّلَبُ زَبْعَانَ مَـيْهَا مَـنْجَدَ حَماَمَ،} \\
\text{أَرَامَ أَوْلُ ذِكَارَةَ، أَوْدَا نَمَّ أَرَامَ،} \\
\text{كِيَانُونَ رَمَيْامَ، أَكْثَرَنَّ ذِيَ جَنُّدِي أَنَّ وَيِ.}
\end{align*}
\]

2. Schimmel, op. cit., p.133.
The yogis in the world were as if in a **hammām**
They were far from rest and they did not approach the rest.
It is tragic, I cannot live without them.¹

Elsewhere he says:


جِدْنِيَ جَوَ جَامْ , ِّرَنْنَاءُنْ تَرْلِيِ كُنِّي ،
مَوْكِلُ مُنْهِيَ مِنْ مَ , ِّبَارِيِ هُرْتُ حَمَمْ ,
آؤُلِ بِنْو آرَامْ , ِّخَاَكْلُ بَيْنَ حَانَدَ جَوَ .

They gave to me, the suffering one, a cup of illness
They set alight the stove in my heart,
and the beloved lit the **hammām**

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

2. Ibid., p.412.

* He probably means fire of **hammām** not water.
enjoyable in the former, is associated with the fire of torture by our poet from Sind. Although Rūmī and Shāh CʿAbd 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 CʿAbd al-Latīf also speaks of the world as a ḥammām but the yogis or true sālikṣ 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 CʿAbd 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 CʿAbd 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.

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 Ī Abd al-Latīf takes images from daily life, and from his own environment to express Sufi 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. Shāhī, op. cit., p.720.

occasions Shah Abd al-Latif does mention the bed, but, it is the empty bed which she sees deserted that makes the heroine cry:

رَانَى نَيُ، رَاهَا إِنّهـ نهارفُ حُبْراً،
پینی که کَنْن نیِ، تنا پِنگ پِرَاهَا،
دِرایهٔ دورا تنا، وَرْ رُی رَهَا،
جابوُن غَلَّ، چِهَانَ، وَلَ تَو رَی چَهِدیْس کَن سِنِإ
Rana! 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?

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:

آَلِهِ نازِي، بَقَرْ کُنِدْنِون، یَا بَیک مَعْن،
سْرُهْسِ پیچ، بَسی پَریِن، مَرْ پُنَاپِ بَوْنِ،
اَسَان پَریِن، چَال هْوْن مَرْابِر لَیخواً

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 Ābd al-Latīf lived in an agricultural country and it is not surprising that he should use farming images in his poetry unlike Rūmī. Shāh Ābd al-Latīf comments on the preparation of the peasants, when there are signs of rain:

١١٥٥٢٥٥٣١٥٣١٥۱٤٥٤٢٥٤٥٤٢٥٤١٥٤٢٥٤٢٥٤١٥٤٢٥٤٢٥٤١٥٤٢٥٤٢٥٤١٥٤٢٥٤٢

Even today irtā have been calling on the northern side.


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. 

The imagery of food

Rūmī, like other Muslim poets, compares the lover's heart and the torture of separation to the kabāb. Shāh Ābd 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.

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.

There are several verses of this type in the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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 ʿAbd al-Latif resembles that of Rūmī, who similarly compares the beloved to a butcher, who sells hearts and heads.

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif expresses his views on the topic as follows:

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.

From this example one can deduce that there is a slight difference between Shāh Ḟāṭimī and Rūmī. For Shāh Ḟāṭimī 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, qajā'īf 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 Shah Ābd 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 Mārūj by Ī-Umar in the fort (where she is imprisoned). This also she rejects by expressing her preference for her simple food:

\[
\text{Alā'īn چی چاوهیین، تَنَّ چیهایی، سوُموُرَا!}
\]
\[
\text{سَتَا چَنَور، سَیِّدُ چی، سَاوُن سَعَابَیْنِ.}
\]
\[
\text{مَنِجا لَبَ لَسُفْن چی، جًاَوَر چَنوُر چاوهِیِن،}
\]
\[
\text{پلاَدَ چیهایِین، عَمَّرَ ی اَرَائِی سِین.}
\]

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 jumb¹ says Latif, they cook grains like rice
C\textsuperscript{c}Umar! they never prefer the pullao² to (the food
prepared from) grass.³

Shāh C\textsuperscript{c}Abd al-Latif 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 Mārūlī takes pride in her simple way of life
and proudly tells C\textsuperscript{c}Umar about her peoples' well-being as
follows:

\begin{quote}
\text{\textls{-300}\،\،،\،،،،،ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہیں ہی
\end{quote}

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.
Those whose dealing is with trees and plants,
those Dōthī² 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:

والي:

وَبِرِيْجِينِ ذِي رَوْنْدَيِ ، ُعْمَرُ اَنْثُنُوْن مَارُوقَانِ ذِي وَنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
سُحْرِ سَاهِتَيْنِ سِنِن ، سأَؤْوِيْ منْحَ سَينِدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
أَنَا يَمِينُ مِلْبَرِ مِ، ذَلِلا كَبُرْ كُونْدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.

عُمْرُ اَنْثُنُوْن دِيِّ جَا ، كَوْرُ ثُثُ جُرْنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
سُكُرُ وْتُوْنَوْن قِيْوْنِ ، جَبِيَ سَالُ جُعْتَيْنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
كُوْرُ بَنِيْرِ بُنْيَنِ مِ، فُوْرَكَوْ ، فُكَّ بَرْنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
عِيْدُن بُرَادَيْنِ كَي ، كَلِهَ سَانِدَانُوْن كُنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.
پُيُّ كَاِي بَيْتِ مِ، تُوْرَمُوْنُوْنَا كُنَدَيِ ،
تُبيِّهَ دَآذَاهِيْنَ ُقُرُوْنِ.

1. Countrymen who eat duth, i.e. wild grass and its grain.

2. Shāhwaṇī, op. cit., p.808.
Vāi
(1) shall go to my countrymen,

C Umar! I shall go to my Mārūraya

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
Along with my friends, I shall collect sinār
in my home town.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
At the time of the rains in Mālīr, I shall wash
my tattered, coarse clothes.

In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country,

C Umar, 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 gōlāra 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 Čīd and festivities, I shall eat
the khīh and māndhano
In the thatched huts of my grandparents' country
I shall eat the flower of the caper and pay its
fruit as tax

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.
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 Qur'ān, likening wine either to Sharāban Tahūran, which will be the reward in paradise, or to the kauṣar 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 Tahūra promised in the Qur'ān:

وارئی
و عمان می ہے مسون، مُہجو تُنُبْعِنَ ثُونَ، حَوْمَ مُلِسْلَی حَو بَیو،
نَوْنَ تُتَرِهِ مِن حَرْمَ مُسْجِدِین، نُجِّیہَ كَنَّ مَیْکُونُ،
و عمان می ہے مسون.

أَهْلِی رَسِی اَسْمَا، اَلیان سوْرَهی یُورَنَ،
و عمان می ہے مسون.

رَسِی مُحِمَّد كاْرِیلی، جَنی هَوْکَن دُ ہُؤنَ،
و عمان می ہے مسون.

¹ Schimmel, op. cit., pp.149-150.
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 Tahūra to Latīf

Do not go away from me.²

1. This is probably a reference to the grave.

The fact that in this vak Shāh ʿAbd 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. wisāl:

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 - wisāl).
Everything will be attained by the presence of Sammā.\(^1\)

The above verse reminds one of Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya, who is not concerned about paradise and heavenly rewards, her

---

2. This is a reference to Sammā, a king, but here it means God.
love for God being for the sake of love.\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{quote}
ลาหี รก' لئิش جي ,  السوريَانَي ساني ,

بيط ثالي بعك يتيك تون , كهرموت إ منجها كهاتي ,

جورتنه رهاتني , سور وتي سرو ساهكر .
\end{quote}

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.\textsuperscript{2}

Rūmī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf both speak of "the magical

\begin{enumerate}
\item Smith, Margaret, Ṣābi the Mystic and her Fellow Saints in Islam, Cambridge, 1928, pp.98-99.
\item ShahVaṇī, op. cit., p.74.
\end{enumerate}
quality of this wine of love and the Divine cupbearer".¹ Shāh ⁴Abd al-Latīf speaks of wine and its intoxication in the following words:

\[ \text{\ldots} \]

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 ⁴Abd 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 Šāhwānī, op. cit., p.119.
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 ¹Abd 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 Shiʿites, and the martyrs of Karbala'².

1. ShāhWanī, op. cit., p.117.  
Shāh ʻAbd al-Latīf does not narrate any story about the Prophet or the four companions, but he refers to the Prophet Muhammad 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 Kedāro is dedicated to Imām Husain and other members of his family, who were treacherously killed by Yazīd in Karbala'. Like Rūmī our poet speaks about Imām ʻAlī as the lion of God and his sons and the bravery of Imām Husain and other princes, who fought on the battlefield. He also pays tribute to them for their qualities, such as uprightness, patience and courage in standing up against an enemy more powerful than themselves. For example he says:—

They fixed their tents in the battlefield of Karbala'.

They stood against Yazīd and devotedly engaged themselves in the fight

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 Jabârites, Qadarites, and Mu'tazilites. He uses one particular religious group in his poetry — Ḥkhwān 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 ʿAbd al-Latîf. 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 Mahmûd. 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 Suhrâb, Rustam and Kaikavûs.³

3. Ibid., p.187.
In the work of Shāh Ḟāṭimī, there are no references to figures from Islamic history nor to rulers contemporary with the author, such as the Kalhorā king of Sind or the Mughal rulers of India. But he does praise the rule of Sammā and Ṣūmrā who were kings of Sind. The above mentioned two Sindhi dynasties existed hundreds of years before Shāh Ḟāṭimī. 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 Jakhiro is put to the test by the ladies of the Ṣūmrā royal family, who request him to give them Ṣām or protection. Shāh Ḟāṭimī praises Jakhiro for giving Ṣām or protection to ladies. Ṣām is the best example of altruism in Sindhi society. The weaker party or person takes Ṣām from a stronger person. Giving Ṣām implies taking an oath to stand by that person irrespective of the consequences. In most cases women take Ṣām with a strong trusted man who can protect them from danger. Shāh Ḟāṭimī praises Jādam Jakhiro for sacrificing his own life and interests to those of others, to honour the Sindhi

1. At the time of Shāh Ḟāṭimī, Sind was a vassal state of India.
tradition of Sām:

Sultan ʿAlā 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 Jakhiro 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 Jakhiro's generosity and addresses him thus:²

2. Ibid., pp.1286-7.
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.

 İlām 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf also congratulates him for
making a low caste fishergirl his queen, thus breaking the
rigid rules of his society. He praises İlām Tamāchī in the
following words:

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 Jam! says Sayyid, everything belonging to these countrymen (i.e. the fishermen) is under your protection.¹

Most scholars have attributed a Śūfī 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 Jam 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. Shāhwānī, 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.

References to cities like Mecca, Medina, and Karbala’ in the Risālo are to be expected since these are immediately associated with the Prophet Muhammad and Imām Ḥusain. Otherwise, there are 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. 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.

3. Ibid., p.980.
Allusions to Šūfi history

Rūmī refers to many well-known figures from the early history of Šūfism, such as Junaid, Shaikh Bistāmī, Shaqīq al-Balkhī, Hallāj and others. Rūmī believes, however, that Shams al-Dīn was superior to all these Šūfīs, even including Hallāj and Bistāmī.¹

There is some controversy over the exact Šūfī allegiance of Shāh CAbd al-Latīf. In any case, the only prominent Šūfīs mentioned by him are Hallāj and Rūmī himself.

Rūmī does not mention explicitly the name of Rābī C although he refers to her story, attributing it to a Šūfī who sat in the middle of a garden putting his head on his knees and contemplating God.²

There is no direct reference to Rābī C in the work of Shāh C Abd al-Latīf either, but it can be argued that he

2. Ibid., p.200.

According to this story Rābī C 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:

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:

I have searched everywhere for the friend Jat

'Everything is surrounded by God'

This is the sign of Āryāṇī
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‘a. The poet says:³

كنوه أين كوهيار حین تو پوئیری ییاپیا،
پند م حیر بحرئی تی و جوئی ولاکار،
دارنا یاچی دار، یج پریان گر بالی ٹون۔⁴

Kohiyār 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.

2. Ibid., pp.1281-82.
3. Ibid., p.391.
4. Reference to Punhū, resident of the mountain.
Rûmî 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

Shâh ʿAbd al-Latîf also believes that Ḥallāj was wrongly hanged. He therefore comments:

حَرَّمَ أَنْ تَكُنِّ تَصَوَّرَ ، وَكِتَابٌ رَأِيَ هِيَ كَرَىٰ،
كُبْرِيَّ مَيْهُ تَثَا ، سُوَّرِيَ سُرَاوَرَ،
هَمَّةٍ تَصَرُّرُ خَراَزَ ، كُحَرَّا جَارِهَنَوْ جَارِهَاَلِينَ ُ؟

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 Mansûr Which of them is going to be hanged?

Yet another verse conveys this meaning:

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?!

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 Ābū al-Latīf to Mansūr Ḥallāj is that in his youth he witnessed the execution on similar grounds of a Sūfī, Shāh Īnāyat of Jhoke (d.1133 A.H.). This event is said to have left a lasting impression on Shāh Ābū al-Latīf and evidently motivates and colours his description of Ḥallāj’s death. Although there are no direct references to Shāh Īnāyat’s death, a number of verses in Sur Rāmkalī are said to have

been composed by the poet in memory of Shāh ʿInāyat. This verse may have been said on that occasion:

آجِ مَ اوراطانِ میں، سیدی جبریلِ ذاتِ،
سارد़ی سناسِ کی ، رَنّمُ سارِی رائِ،
مون تن جوئین جی ناپ سی لاہوری لَذِی وِنا.

The yogis are no more in the utāq 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:

یکھنِ یہ سوری بنتی آتِر، میتَوی،
وہِلُ واتریتِ تھی، کارُنا ضروری،
بیہیں جی پوری، جی ہی ہنی، ری* نریِ.

Longing and gallows are both the same word\(^1\)

The necessary condition for both is to sit and wait on the wayside

Both are satisfied by nothing less than giving up life.\(^2\)

Shâh \(^{\text{Abd al-\text{Latif}}\)} and Rûmî both share therefore a similar attitude towards \(\text{Hallāj}\). Rûmî goes further, however. In spite of all his admiration for \(\text{Hallāj}\), whom he compares to Shams al-Dīn, Rûmî nevertheless comments that \(\text{Hallāj}\) was less than an ant, because he did not recognise Shams.\(^3\) Moreover, he says that Shams was superior to \(\text{Hallāj}\) because he reached the rank of the beloved, whereas \(\text{Hallāj}\) still remained a lover.

**Images of Music and Dance**

Rûmî 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.\(^4\)

Shâh \(^{\text{Abd al-\text{Latif}}\)} , as has already been mentioned, is also an ardent lover of music regardless of criticism by

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1. In Sindhi the words for longing and gallows both start with an S.
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 ʿAbd al-Latīf experiences because of separation from his lady love ʿSāda Begum takes the form of poetry. This ʿishq mujāżī is said to have been the source of inspiration for his poetry, and his love of music. After his return from journeying with 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf begins to sing in heart-rending verses, recalling their company:

سُوَ سِيْتُنا ماهِی١ ۡجِہنِۡ عُنۡوَرۡرُیۡ كَی٢،
رَھَی٢ ۡجِہنِ رَاتَرَی٢ ۡسَنِدَیۡ جَاهَۡ ۡكَی٢,
ۡتَنِّی١ ۡسِجاااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااаاااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااااa
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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{وَأَجَةَ وَبَرْكَّيْنِيْ جَا،} & \quad \text{سُؤُنَ ذَرِّيْ رَءَوَتَ مَالُ،} \\
\text{مَكَالَ مَحِيدَ الّيَا،} & \quad \text{كُرْنِهِ وَبِنِ فَالُ،} \\
\text{حَامِلُ جَيِّنِ حَالُ،} & \quad \text{كُونُ ذَرِّيْ جَيِّدِيْ أنَّ رُيُ.}
\end{align*}
\]

The sounds of the music of vairāgis 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, mūsqār and others.³

2. Ibid., pp.1105-6.
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 shahr-eney.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 Ḟāhr al-Latīf uses the same symbol of the reed flute, crying in separation from its beloved. Shāh Ḟāhr 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:

\[
\text{The slaughtered one speaks}
\]

The slaughtered one complains

2. Ibid., p. 211.
That (reed) longs for its origin
This one (Sasui) sheds tears for her beloved.¹

Elsewhere the poet expresses a similar idea in terms of the imagery of another musical instrument, namely the Sarangi:

रुद्र गीत नृत्ति ती, तिलार सारंगी सारः

ei विश्व गीत नृत्ति ती, सा वह रुद्र गीत ती.

There is a cry in the wilderness, like the tune of sarangi.
It is the call of love, people have attributed it to the woman.²

With reference to Rumi's influence on Shāh ⁴ Abd al-Latif, 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), Rumi likens its sound to lamentation lovingly played at the command of the

2. Ibid., p.492.
Beloved.  

The chang and its magical powers are mentioned in Sur Sorath. In this sur the musician Bijal represents the spiritual master and Rai Diyach is a raja, 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: 

جاجك جغونا بزه م، كرو عُطائي آب، 

بي كابل كيري كينرو، وبي وجابر، 

قُهر محوني سر سين، تدُن تجابر، 

دايتون ديواندي تيون، باين باتاب، 

جارنِي جابر، نماري آمي خُسفو.

Jajik a talented musician came to Jhunagarh. 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.

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 Ābd al-Latīf describes how the spell of the harp makes the Rājā agree to Bijal every wish:

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

It seems that Shāh Š Abd al-Latif uses the image of Bijal to represent the Perfect Man. His music makes the Rāja, the salik, 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:

جوٰ برجاں، ملكاً پرندی جهویرا۔

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 Rāja 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:

سُرُه سَرَخَان بانی، جی ہند تیار بریا۔
اثل اورت اہم فیہی، جی فہم بیچل بریا۔
سکلی ہند آہی، سرہ مسجد ناہی ہی۔

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:


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

2. Ibid., p.910.
Rūmī calls samā⁷ "the nourishment of the soul".¹ Samā⁷ is considered the chief characteristic of the Mevlevi order. Rūmī himself used to take part in samā⁷, either in his own home or at his friends' houses where regular meetings were held. It is said that once Rūmī danced with Salāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb embracing him. Later, this dance was instiţionalised in the Mevlevi order.² Although it is agreed by scholars who have written about Shāh Ṭāhir Ḥusayn that he was fond of music and samā⁷ in his poetry there appears to be no clear reference to samā⁷.

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 Ṭāhir Ḥusayn, there are not many references to gardens, such as one would find in cities like

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:

اَلْوُنَّ، بِالْوُنَّ، سَرَكْنَا شَاهِرُونَ، جَبَلُ خَلِّا بُرنَكُطُرَّ،

مَي سَبِّي مَهَبْيّا، جَبَلُ تَرْيَيْنَ يُقُشرُ،

کُنْتَارُيْنَ يُّقُشرُ، كَاهِ يَنْتَ يُسْوَنَ كَاهَکَ 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 ⁶ 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.
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 Risāla. This difference no

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 Ḥāfīz al-Latīf are those found in the countryside of Sind and commonly used as food for the rural poor.

Generally, Shāh Ḥāfīz al-Latīf does not speak of flowers. A rare example is the following:

> حَوْتَرَ بَاوُون بَانَاس، مُوتِنُ پَرِي آخاس،
> پِنِّینِ سَنَدِی گَالَّنِی، رَآقِ کَنِی رَاسِی،
> یِه یِشٰق کَی شاباس، جِه یِمحتی سِزَنَا.

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. *ShāhWānī, 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 Ḥabd al-Latīf makes Marūf say:

"Umar! the countrymen have told me of (my) home that the creepers and the trees have blossomed, that lots of luler\(^1\) have grown there. They are bringing baskets full of bitter gourds and collecting them in the barns. They are savouring all the fruits, maḏur\(^2\) and honey I can hardly stay in the fort,"

1. A vegetable which is grown wild and eaten.
2. Pods of the Kando tree.
Marui will go to Malir.¹

Quranic Imagery

In Rumi's works, whether the Mašnavi or the Diwān, one finds numerous words, phrases, and sentences from the Qurʾān, either quoted in the actual Arabic or translated into Persian. Rumi was well versed in Arabic, so he did not find it difficult to fit Qurʾānic 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.²

In her chapter on the Islamic background of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif, Schimmel discusses the Qurʾānic references in his poetry in some detail.³ Another scholar, Mirzā Qalech Beg, had earlier examined this aspect of the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif, giving examples from the Qurʾān 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 Qurʾān in the imagery of Rumi and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif

will therefore suffice.

Like Rūmī, Shāh Ṭāhir' uses certain words, phrases and sentences from the Qur'ān and hadīṣ, 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 Ṭāhir' makes Maru'd repeat this over and over again to remind Ṭāhir' Umar that her love for her people and Khetsin is eternal, so it is useless for him to try to change her opinion.

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


2. Ibid., p.767.
Elsewhere Mārūʿī says:

(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 suras from the Qur'ān and the tradition to be found in Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf's work; for example:

2. Ibid., p.770. Sura 16/50.
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 Qur’ān reveals the power and wisdom of God.

Shāh 'Abd al-Latīf does not compare the beauty of the friend to the Qur’ān but likens the face of the beloved to the niche of the mosque.

The face of the beloved is the niche (in the mosque)
The whole world is the mosque

1. Shāhwānī, *op. cit.*, p. 409
2. Ibid., p. 1135
3. Ibid., pp. 136, 407.
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 Qurʾān. 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 Muhammad and others.²

Following the tradition of his predecessors, Shah ʿAbd 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 Qurʾān or hadīṣ. For instance, he draws a contrast between Moses and Iblīs, Khalīl and ʿĀzār:³

In appearance (your face) is like Moses,
but your habits are like Iblīs

Why don't you get rid of such wicked or impure a character?

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf also makes an allusion to Abraham Khalīl, and to his father Āzar, again showing a contrast between a believer and non-believer.

In appearance you are Khalīl, whereas,


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 Ābd al-Latif, help me to be sincere

(You are) Āzar within.

It is noteworthy that Shāh Ābd al-Latif combines the
Qur'ānic allegories with his own local references. For example
in the Vai 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 Ābd al-Latif 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, unlike his son.
The knees of the Sannyāsīs are like Mount Sīnā." The Gaudriyya are in prostration says Sayyid.
And, 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 ³ Abd al-Latīf also uses this imagery but he employs

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:

وَسَيَّ رَابِيَانِ، آلَّهُ چَی جَی اَلِیٰ مَ،
لَا سَمْوُدَ فِي الدَّارِنِ، اِنَّ يَرَ اَلِیٰ نِائِنَ
ۡقُبُّرُ ۡسُوْنِائِنَ، ۠ثقَا ۡرُسِیِلا ۡرَحْمَانَ سِنِنَ

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 Ḟabd 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:

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:

Draw the line of alif in your heart, and you will attain (the knowledge) of thousands of books from within.²

1. Shāhwañī, op. cit., p.129.
2. Ibid., p.131.
Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif, like Rūmī, remarks on the difference between Ahmad and Ahad, that is between the Prophet Muhammad and God on the basis of the hadīṣ qudsī:

\[ \text{اِنَّ الْاَحْدَ يَا بَالِيَ مَيْلَ،} \]
\[ \text{وَالْاَهْدَ عَلَى عَالَمٍ اِيِّيَهُ بَالِيَ مَيْلَ.} \]

The difference between Ahad and Ahmad is just 
\[ \text{مَجُمُّ،} \]

The world is immersed in that thought.²

Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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.

\[ \text{كَارِبَ لَكِينَ جَينَ لَا يِسَ لَامُ اَلْفَ سِنَ،} \]
\[ \text{أَسَانَ سَجِيلَ يَنَهَ، رَهَيْوُ اَهِيَ رَجُ مَهَ.} \]

In the same way the calligrapher writes putting lām attached to alif,

So too my beloved lives in my heart.

2. Ibid., p.130.
Rūmī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif 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. In a similar way Shāh ʿAbd al-Latif also refers to this tablet with reference to his heroines, in particular Suhnī, Mārūī and Sasūī. He attributes their suffering to its having been pre-destined by virtue of being inscribed on the divine tablet. For example, Mārūī is heard complaining:

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

O master, give your approval, that
Maruī may see her Marū.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 Sūfī 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.

3. Ibid., pp.157-160.
Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf does not speak of any of the expensive cloth mentioned by Rūmī. In Sur Kāpātī, 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:

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 ʿAbd al-Latīf, yarn spun devoutly and sincerely becomes more valuable than precious stones. On

another occasion he comments on coarse material:¹

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_Kāpāiti_ 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:-


2. Ibid., pp.1181-90.
You are not spinning, but you are sleeping, laying aside all thoughts of danger. In the morning at the arrival of the \(c^\text{Id}\), 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 \textit{Sur Kāpātī}, the poet speaks of a merchant who buys yarn from these women. He warns that the merchant will reject

¹ ShahVani, \textit{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 ʿAbd 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:

\[
\text{شُبَّابِيُّ نَاَكِبُ سِبّنَ،} \\
\text{جيَّنٌ ظَجايرُ يَا،} \\
\text{ليَشْتَدُّ،َ لطِفُّ يِنَى،} \\
\text{هَلَيْ تْنَ تَنْ هَيَا،} \\
\text{ملَّمَل مَنْجِها مَا،} \\
\text{أَحَي يَكِيْنُونَ تَنْ سُونُ كَنِّهُ.}
\]

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 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 ʿAbd al-Latīf one does not find

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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{پناہی داتا بروحہ، تے کا راک رنجائی گنری،} \\
\text{بانتی بروحی جی، سنجی ودی لمحور،} \\
\text{ہک ستی پنا سوز، ونا یتیبدا بانیمی}.
\end{align*}
\]

The neighbours are unaware, that someone has spent the night in distress.

Bābhanī has been wounded by the stare of Baloch.\(^1\)

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 Babhán or Brahman class, but was adopted by a potter.

2. I.e. Punhuū.

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 Abd 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:

\[

cel lei hayehi non, kolln kowara,
poorhe tahrė yahdi, attin sovara,
aatse we bajara, akhā iwaq emit.
\]

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! 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


2. Name of a caste.
poor in the work of Shāh Ẓahir b. ʿAbd al-Latif.

Images of sickness

Rūmī seems to have had some knowledge of certain diseases and of their symptoms and causes. He uses these terms symbolically to illustrate the spiritual experiences of the lover or seeker. He speaks of illnesses such as fever, colic, delirium, saudāʾ and safraʾ:

the illness of black gall and yellow bile, i.e. melancholic choleric temperament and their results are external signs of the lovers.

Shāh Ẓahir b. ʿAbd al-Latif 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:

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 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 Ḥādī 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 Suĥnī, and expresses her feeling:

كَامَانِ، يَجَانِ، يَجِرَانِ، لُجَانِ،
تَنِ مُتَنَٰسِ بَرِّيتِيَنِ حَيِ، يَبِانِ، مَتَدَابَانِ،
حَيِ سَنَدَيْنِ مَعِ كَرِيْانِ، تُوهِ سَرُوكِتِيِّي نَزَِبِيِّ.

I have been agitated in pain, cooked in grief and am searching.

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 ⁴Abd al-Latīf speaks of hunger in a different way. In contrast to Rūmī, the yogi in the poetry of Shāh ⁴Abd al-Latīf representing the seeker, enjoys hunger and wandering about in this state:

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),

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
\(^3\)Abd al-Lātîf, unlike Rûmî, does not refer to many medicines,
but there is, however, a rather negative reference to sorma
(collyrium) in the Risālo:\(^2\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{سُرْمَةُ سَيْاهٍ} \\
\text{كَانِيٍّ كَارِيٍّ} \\
\text{أَلْنِّي مَتَآنُ،} \\
\end{align*}
\]

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).

Elsewhere he speaks of kānī, which will make the wearer
see the Truth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{كَأَنَى كَا كَانِيٍّ} \\
\text{مِنْ مِرْجٍ مِلَالٍ} \\
\text{سُبُنِيْبَيْيُ دُوْرُ كَرِي} \\
\text{مَهَّيْتُ تَلْهَاءٍ} \\
\text{سُبُرُبَيْنَ حِيَ سَوَعَ مَ} \\
\text{أَلْ أَنْفُهُ بِطَاءٍ} \\
\end{align*}
\]

2. Shāhwānī, op. cit., p.1017.
3. A thin round rod of silver or pewter with which collyrium is applied to the
eyes.
You should apply the kānī of union (wisāl) to your eyes.

Cast aside duality, and attain ma'rifat

There should not be a fault in the beauty of the beloved

When the eye witnesses (the divine light) then you will attain true Musalmānī.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 ʿAbd 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:

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 *kabāb*) 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 ³ Abd al-Latīf rarely suggests any medicine, focussing rather on the physician. He says that medicines like *sāthar⁴* and gruel will only cure if the right type of doctor treats the patient:

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*).⁵

---

3. The leaves of a certain plant used as medicine.
Shāh ṣAbd al-Lātīf, like Rūmī, refers to the 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:

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 ṣAbd al-Lātīf 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:

2. Ibid.
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 ṣAbd al-Latīf shared a common Islamic background. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Shāh ṣAbd 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 ṣAbd 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


Cont’d:...
While comparing the Risālō and the Maṣnawī 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 ṭAbd al-Latīf, has traced some similarities between the work of our poet and Rūmī.²

U.M. Dauḍpōtā does not agree with scholars on the similarities between Shāh ṭAbd 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.


1. Ibid., p.70.

... 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 Ṭāshidī seems to have held the same opinion as Daudpatō 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

2. Ṭāshidī, op. cit., p.12.

Ṭāshidī mentions two basic differences between the work of Shāh ʿAbd al-Latīf and that of Rūmī, saying that there is no tenderness (شاعری, لطافت) nor patriotism in the work of Rūmī as one notices in the Risālā of Shāh ʿAbd 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 Sūfī 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 Kotri, then to Bhīt Shāh a small village on a hill. Although he had some learned and Sūfī 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 ʿIbrāhīm Adham, a figure from Sūfī 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 swāmī in Sur Mūmal-Rān, 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 Sindhi traditions.

There are, of course, exceptional examples where the two poets have used the same personalities from Sūfī and Islamic
history. One example is both the extensive reference made by both to the Prophet Muḥammad, to Imām Ḥusain 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 Ḫabd 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 Ḫabd 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) in his work as a symbol of the seeker's grief in his attempt to expound Ṣūfī ideas. Shāh ḌAbd 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 ḌAbd 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

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 ṣABBĀD AL-LĀṬĪF
In the poetry of Shāh ّAbd 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 ّAbd al-Latīf composed this sur or whether it was written by another poet but attributed to Shāh ّAbd 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- ّUmar is also excluded from the appendix because it has already been

¹. Gurbukhshānī, 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. Nūrī-Jām Tamāchī
t. Mūmal-Rāno
vii. Morīro and the Shark.

¹. See pp. 130-49.
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 Cālī in Bukhārā who had a beloved only son, C Izzat Beg.

Having received permission from his father, C Izzat 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. C Izzat 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 C Izzat 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 Tulla which he could not pay back, as he had already finished all his money. Tulla started demanding money. Finally Izzat Beg asked Tulla to employ him, so that he could repay his debt. In this way he had a chance to see Suhni.

Tulla asked him to look after his buffaloes. Thus he became known as Mehar or Mainhwal. Suhni had fallen in love with him too, so they used to meet secretly.

When Tulla learnt about their love, he was furious and dismissed Mehar from his service. He married Suhni by force to Dam. Suhni never approved of this marriage and was always longing and yearning to meet Mehar.

Mehar became a yogi and sat on the bank of the Chenab river opposite the town where Suhni lived. When Suhni heard this, she used to swim across the river with the help of an earthenware jar every night to meet Mehar.

On one occasion Suhni's sister-in-law saw Suhni crossing the river. She told her brother about this and he taunted and abused Suhni for her infidelity and threatened her, if she still continued the same practice. In spite of all this, nothing could prevent Suhni 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. Suhnī plunged into the river with the unbaked jar. After a short while, the jar began to sink and it was finally submerged. Then Suhnī 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 Suhnī'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 Suhnī 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 Suhnī lived on the west bank of the river Indus (in Sind) and her husband Dum lived on the East bank. When Suhnī 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.

   Advānī, op. cit., pp.89-90.
   Laxman, Kakmal, Folk Tales of Pakistan, New Delhi, 1976, pp.45-52.
There once lived a Brahman called Naun in a village near the bank of the river Bhambhore. Naun 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 Muhammad 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 Sasui. 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 Makran (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 Bhambhore. 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 Bhambhere 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 Bhambhere at night.
When Sasuí woke up in the morning, she discovered the deceit of her brothers-in-law. She cried, lamented and decided to leave Bhambhore to follow Pünhū 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 Pünhū. 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 Mābār 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 Sasuí had disappeared, and he settled there.

I.I. Qāzī describes Sasuí's death as follows:

Just near Kech her delicate health gives way and she dies mysteriously in the mountains.¹

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.

ShāhVānī, op. cit., pp.171-175.
Once there ruled a Rājā called Rāi Diyāch at Jhunagar in Kāthicār. 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. 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 Raī Diyačh 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 Raī'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 Raī Diyačh he started playing a tune which pierced the heart of Rājā Raī Diyačh. 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 Diyačh 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.

   Ādvānī, op. cit., pp.299-300.
Rāja Chanesar was a well-known ruler of the Śumrā 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 Jakhiro 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.

   Laxman, op. cit., pp.38-44.
   Gurbukhshāni, 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. Everyone 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.

Shahyanī, op. cit., pp. 853-856.
Laxman, op. cit., pp. 53-55.
Gurbukhshāni, op. cit., pp. 55-60.
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 Sumāl 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 Jaisalmīr) 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 Maindharō 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 Ḥamīr Šūmrō asked Rāno Maindharō 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 Ḥamīr Šūmrō sent Rāno a message to come and visit his friends at home. As soon as Rāno reached Umarkot, Ḥamīr Šūmrō arrested him and put him in prison. At his sister's intervention (who was Ḥamīr Šūmrō'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 Rāno was imprisoned for visiting Mūmal secretly. Finally, Ḥamīr 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.

MORIRO-SUR GHATU - (Shark hunters)

When Raja Dilarai ruled over Somiyani (a state in Sind), there lived a fisherman called Obhayo who had seven sons. Six of them were healthy and strong but the seventh was handicapped and weak. His name was Moriro, 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 Moriro left home to find news about his brothers. He soon learnt that they had been caught up in the whirlpool in Kalachi, had been drowned and devoured by the shark which lived there.

Moriro 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. Moriro sat inside the cage and asked his companions to tie strong ropes to the cage. He told them to sail towards the whirlpool of Kalachi – where they dropped the cage in the water, as instructed by Moriro.

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.

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