

**Bulhe Shah** (1680-1758), is considered to be one of the greatest Punjabi Sufi Poets.

Although he composed numerous Dohiras, Siharfis, Baramahas, Athvaras and Dohas, it is for his Kafis that he has carved a permanent niche for himself in the history of Indian literature. Poems mainly of spiritual love, his Kafis depict the various moods of the lover in limpid simplicity. His adoption of the projection of the human soul as a feminine form pining for communion with God lends a certain sharpness and dramatic quality to his verses. But unlike others of the same school he did not use the conventional similes and verse forms.

One cannot, however, help notice the impact of Buddhism, neo-platonism and Sikhism on his lyrics. His poetic composition speaks of his great scholarship, humanistic outlook and catholicity of faith. It is for his eminence as a popular poet that even 200 years after his death he continues to be remembered with love by the common reader of Punjabi poetry.

**Prof. Surindar Singh Kohli** (b. 1920) the author of this monograph served as Prof. & Head of the Department, Punjabi, at Punjab University, Chandigarh. A prolific writer, Prof. Kohli has more than 70 books to his credit. These include books on comparative religion, literary criticism and research, creative literature and books for children, both in Punjabi and English. In the present monograph Prof. Kohli has ably brought out the essence of Bulhe Shah's poetry for the non-Punjabi reader.

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# Bulhe Shah

Surindar Singh Kohli

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**Bulhe Shah**

The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Śuddhodana the dream of Queen Māyā, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

*Courtesy* : National Museum, New Delhi.

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# BULHE SHAH

Surindar Singh Kohli

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First Published 1987

Reprinted 1990

891.421 092 4  
B 87 K

SAHITYA AKADEMI  
REVISED PRICE Rs. 15-00



Published by the Sahitya Akademi  
and printed at DECENT OFFSET, A-73, Naraina, Phase-I, New Delhi-110 028

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# Scheme of Transliteration

## Vowels

ਅ	ਅ਼	ਇ	ਈ	ਉ	ਊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ਏ	ਐ	ਓ	ਔ	ਅੰ	ਅਾਂ
e	ai	o	au	am	ā
ਈਂ	ਊਂ	ਏਂ	ਔਂ	ਓਂ	
ī	ū	ē	ain	ō	

## Consonants

ਕ	ਖ	ਗ	ਘ	ਙ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
ਚ	ਛ	ਜ	ਝ	ਞ
c	ch	j	jh	ṇ
ਟ	ਠ	ਡ	ਢ	ਣ
ਫ	ਫ਼	ਧ	ਧ਼	ਨ
t	th	d	dh	n
ਪ	ਫ	ਬ	ਭ	ਮ
p	ph	b	bh	m
ਯ	ਰ	ਲ	ਵ	ੜ
y	r	l	v	ṛ
ਸ਼	ਹ	ਸ਼		
s	h	ṣ		



## Bulhe Shah—The Sufi Mystic

### His heritage and life

#### *A Brief Account of Sufism*

Islamic mysticism is called Sufism. The word 'sūfī' has been associated with the Arabic word *safā* meaning pure, the word *saf* meaning rank and with *sūf* meaning wool. In the early history of Islam, the Muslim ascetics (dervishes), who wore *sūf* (woollen garments) and led pure lives, were known as Sufis. They engaged themselves in the study of the *Quran* and *Hadith* and led a life of renunciation and poverty. The word 'Sufi' came into use at the end of the second century, after Hijra.

The origin of Sufism has been traced back to the Prophet himself. *Ilm-i-Safinā* of the Prophet is the knowledge conveyed through scriptures and *Ilm-i-Sinā* is the knowledge conveyed through heart and is represented by the Sufis. Some passages in the *Quran* contain the germ of Sufism. The lives of the Prophet and his companions served as a model for the early Sufis. The earliest form of Sufism consists in asceticism and withdrawal from worldly pleasures. There was an intense fear of Allah and his judgements. The early Sufis were pious people wedded to self-mortification and extreme quietism.

By the end of the eighth century, a new development in Sufism became apparent. Greek, Persian, Vedantic and Buddhistic influences brought about this change. The ascetic became the gnostic. Quietism was subordinated to gnostic speculation. The orthodox Muslims regarded these Sufis as heretics.

Then followed the Classical period of Sufism in the thirteenth century A. D. with three great mystical poets of Persia, namely, Farid-ud-Dīn Attār, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī and Sheikh Sādī. The other prominent Sufi poets Hāfiz and Jāmi flouri-

shed in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries respectively.

The Sufi gnostics speculating about God are divided into three schools, namely, *Ijadīyyā*, *Shuhūdīyyā* and *Wujūdīyyā*. The first school believes that God created the world out of nothing. The second school believes that the world is like a mirror, in which divine attributes are reflected. The third school is monistic and believes that everything is God. The goal of the seeker is union with God. The path leading towards God consists of several stages including *ubūdīyyāt* (state of repentance for purification), *ishq* (love), *zuhd* (renunciation), *mārifat* (knowledge) *wajd* (ecstasy), *haqīqat* (reality) and *wasl* (union). The ascent of the soul is gradual and is marked by four main states, namely, *nāsūt* (humanity) *sharīat malakūt* (nature of angels), *jabarūt* (possession of power) and *lāhūt* (Divinity). In the first state, the seeker observes *sharīat* (law), in the second, he traverses the path of the spiritual journey, i.e. *tarīqat*; in the third, there is *mārifat*; and in the fourth, the seeker attains reality, i. e. *haqīqat*.

Throughout the spiritual journey, the seeker is guided by the preceptor called *pīr* or *murshid*. The acts of devotion during the journey are *namāz* (prayer), *tilāwat* (recitation of the *Quran*), *awrād* (set forms of prayer), *mujāhadā* (self-mortification), *dhikr* (remembering the Lord) and *murāqabā* (contemplation).

### *Introduction of Sufism into India*

With the Muslim conquest, a large number of Sufis came to India. Their main aim was the propagation of Islam and in this way, they consolidated the Muslim power in India. Undoubtedly, the original conversions were because of the impact of the sword, but much larger numbers became converts because of the preachings of the Sufi saints like Farīd-ud-Dīn, Ganj-i-Shakar and Alī Hujwīrī Dātā Ganj Bakhsh. The later Sufis, however, devoted themselves to the study of various religions and philosophies of India.

The first Muslim settlement in India was on the Malabar coast, which came into being through the influence of Muslim traders and saints. Though Muhammad bin Qāsim invaded Sind in A. D. 712, no Muslim colony had resulted in that area. It was through the Khyber Pass that with the Turk, Mongol

and Afghan armies, Sufis and other Muslim saints and ascetics entered India. Indian thought had influenced Sufi thought long before the Muslim conquest, but it was only after the establishment of the Muslim rule in India that there was a powerful impact of Islam on Hindu thought.

The Sufis who came and settled in India, belong to all the four main orders of the Sufis, viz. the Chishtī order, the Qādirī order, the Suhrāwardī order and the Naqshbandī-order. Out of these four orders, the Chishtī order was the first to be established in India. These played a very important role in the Punjab, which had been the gateway to India.

Besides the four main Sufi orders, there were two other important Sufi orders namely the Fīrdausī and the Shattārī. Though these orders were recognised as distinct ones, the practice of disciples getting spiritual guidance from the *pīrs* of several orders had become gradually very common. The *pīrs* also owed spiritual allegiance to more than one order. In that case the disciple was also known to have adopted those orders, as in the case of Bulhe Shah and his *pīr* Inayat Shah. They were known as Qādirī Shattārī saints.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, considerable change is visible in Sufism in India. Aurangzeb wanted to convert the whole of the Indian sub-continent into Islam. He adopted violent and ruthless methods for this purpose. The radical Sufis did not like this Islamic fanaticism and advocated religious tolerance and freedom of religious beliefs. They no longer remained preachers of Islam. They were drawn more towards the study of other religious systems. We know about the impact of Hindu Vedantic thought on Prince Dara Shikoh.

Punjab, the land of the five rivers, had virtually become the stronghold of Islam. The main Sufi orders had a strong base in this part of northern India. The spiritual-minded amongst them were influenced to a great extent by the Hindu Bhakti movement and Vedantic thought. Even the doctrines of transmigration, reincarnation and Karma made their impact on them. For them, Allah was considered the only reality and everything else an illusion. Because of the new trends in Sufism, the Punjabi Sufis could be classified into two main schools. The first school may be called the orthodox school of Qurānic Sufis. The second school may be called the philos-

ophic school or pantheistic Sufism. Bulhe Shah was an exponent of the latter.

### *Life of Bulhe Shah*

No biography of Bulhe Shah is available. The oldest record about him is contained in *Khazīnā-tul-Asfīā*, a Persian prose work, completed by Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Lahori in Hijri 1281 and published in Hijri 1284. This work contains valuable information about prominent Muslim mystics. The information about Bulhe Shah is as follows:

Mīr Bulhe Shah Qādirī Shattārī Kasūrī was one of the eminent disciples of Hadrith Shah Inayat Qādirī of Lahore. He lived in the town of Kasūr. The chronology of his *pīrs* goes far back to Shah Muhammad Ghaus Gwaliorī. . . Bulhe Shah was a man of devotion, austerity, attraction, ardent passion, love and God-intoxication. He has uttered beautiful and high thoughts about Unity. The common people recite by heart his verses of Divine knowledge and Unity. The Qawaals sing his *kafis* in Sufi gatherings and augment the passions of the listeners. People narrate many miracles of Mīr Sāhib. He passed away in Hijri 1171.

Another important source of information about Bulhe Shah is *Bāgh-i-Aulīāye Hind*, a book in Punjabi verse, written by Maulvi Muhammad Dīn Shahpurī. The following information about Bulhe Shah is available in this book:

This divine personality lived at Kasūr, a town inhabited by Pathans. He received spiritual grace from Hadrith Shah Inayat whose geneology goes far back to the Prophet of the Lord and Pīr Gilani whose mausoleum exists in the southern part of Lahore. Bulhe Shah ruminated in his mind about the best selection of the preceptor. One should act in such a way that the heart feels satisfied. Because of the internal urge when Bulhe Shah went in search of the *Murshid*, he scanned the city of Lahore in the very beginning. At Lahore, he stayed in the garden of Shah Inayat. He saw a ripe mango on one of the trees. On seeing it, he uttered

the Name of the Lord and there and then came down the mango. Shah Inayat called him and said, "Listen, O traveller, give back the mango which you have stolen". Bulhe Shah replied, "I have not climbed the tree. Because of wind, it has fallen down in my lap". But the owner retorted, "You recited the Name of the Lord and the mango fell. You have committed an act of theft". Bulhe Shah realised that Shah Inayat had the spiritual powers, therefore this saint fell at his feet. Thus Bulha became a disciple of Shah Inayat and realised spiritual mysteries. He passed away in Hijri 1171 and a fine mausoleum was built in his memory at Kasūr.

The above-mentioned book of Maulvi Shahpuri from which the above account about Bulhe Shah is taken, gives very brief information about various Muslim saints. It was published at Lahore in 1928.

Another work, which gives an anecdote about Bulhe Shah like the above book, is *Qunoon-i-Ishq* (The law of love). This work of Anwar Ali Shāh Rohtakti in two parts was published at Lahore. The following information about Bulhe Shah is contained in the first part:

The fire of the passion of love for the Prophet was doubly kindled in the heart of the faithful seeker Bulha. He wanted to fly to the sacred Medina and visit the holy mausoleum of the Prophet. When he became highly restless and anxious, he narrated his state of mind to his *murshid*. The preceptor said, "why do you want to go there?" The disciple said, "The passion of having a sight of the mausoleum of the Prophet draws me towards it." "Why?" said the preceptor. Bulha said, "Because the Prophet himself has said that the person who visits his mausoleum, sees him in person." When the preceptor heard this, he said, "I shall give you a reply after three days. Bulha had to stay. On the third night he dreamt the arrival of the Prophet in person. Bulha fell at the holy feet of the Prophet. The Prophet said, "Call your *murshid*". The preceptor was called in the presence of the Prophet. The Prophet beckoned the preceptor to sit on his right side. Bulha stood before them with great



reverence. When raising his eyes he looked towards the Prophet and the preceptor, he could not differentiate between their forms. With great amazement and fear, Bulha woke up.

The above legend is also recorded by C. F. Usborne in his pamphlet entitled *Bulhe Shah*.

Several legends about Bulhe Shah are found scattered here and there and even remembered orally by *qawaals* and minstrels. One thing is clear from these legends that Shah Inayat Qādirī Shattārī was the *murshid* of Bulhe Shah.

#### *Shah Inayat Qādirī Shattārī—Pir of Bulhe Shah*

Before giving an account of Shah Inayat from available sources, a brief explanation of Qādirī Shattārī is necessary. We have seen that the Qādirī order is one of the four main orders of Sufism. Its founder was Sheikh Abdul Qādir Gilānī. There are two sections of this order, viz. the Hussain Shahī section and the Miyan Khel section. The Shattārī order is an offshoot of the Tayfūsī Khanwādā which was founded by Bayazīd of Bistām. Its founder was Sheikh Abdullah Shattārī who was a descendant of Sheikh Shihab-ud-Din Suhrāwardi. Because of certain mystical practices, the Shattārīs are said to achieve in the shortest possible time the states of *fanā* (annihilation) and *baqā* (subsistence). On the completion of such practices, Abdullah was the first to receive the title of Shattārī. He was sent to India by his *pir* Sheikh Muhammad Ārif. Shah Muhammad Ghawth of Gwalior was the fourth in the line of succession from Abdullah Shattārī. He was the author of several books. He passed away in A.D. 1562-63 and was buried in Gwalior.

Shah Inayat, the preceptor of Bulhe Shah, though a Qādirī saint, was introduced into mystical heights by a Shattārī saint Hazrat Razā Shah Shattārī. Therefore he came to be known as Qādirī Shattārī. His disciple Bulhe Shah is also called Qādirī Shattārī.

Shah Inayat, according to *Khazīnat-ul-Asfiā* and *Bāgh-i-Auliāye Hind*, being a resident of Lahore, was known as Lahori. For the propagation of his faith, for some time he stayed at Kasūr. There he married the daughter of a courtesan. Her

relatives raised a hue and cry over this and presented a petition before the ruler Nawab Hussain Khān Pathan. When the Nawab made enquiries from the saint, the saint resented it and instead questioned the ruler about the propriety of his action. Because of the inimical attitude of the ruler, the saint left Kasūr along with his relatives. He also invoked a curse on the ruler, who was killed shortly afterwards. Shah Ināyat passed away in Hijri 1141 (A.D. 1728) and buried in Lahore.

Shah Ināyat was an *arāī* or gardener. There is an oral tradition, that one day the saint was working in his garden, when Bulhe Shah, who was in search of a real spiritual teacher, dropped in. He had heard about the spiritual greatness of Shah Ināyat. The saint asked Bulha the purpose of his visit. Bulha requested the saint to accept him as his disciple and teach him the esoteric doctrine about God. In reply the saint is said to have spoken the following couplet:

*Bulhiā Rabb dā kī Pāṇā,  
Edharon Putṇā te odhar lāṇā.*

(O Bulha, the secret of the realisation of God is this: Uproot from this side and plant on the other side.)

Bulha is said to have been greatly impressed by this reply and became the disciple of the saint. Another tradition of the meeting of Bulhe Shah with the saint has been given above in the beginning of the chapter.

Bulhe Shah has named his *murshid* in a few of his *kāfīs*, viz.

1. Bulhe Shah dī Suno hakāit,  
Hādī pakṛiā hog hadāit,  
Merā murshid Shāh Ināyat,  
uh langhāe pār.

(Listen to the story of Bulhe Shah. He has caught hold of his *murshid* from whom he will receive the instruction. My *murshid* is Shāh Ināyat, he will make me cross.)

2. Ināyat Sabh hūā tan hai,  
Phir Bulhā nām dharāiā hai.

(My body has taken the form of Ināyat and then it has been named Bulha.)

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3. Bulha Shah dī zāt nā kāī,  
Main Shoh Ināyat pāyā hai.

(The Beloved is without any caste and I have met my Beloved Ināyat.)

4. Bulha Shah sang preet lagāī  
Jī Jāme dī ditti sāl  
Murshid Shāh Ināyat Sāin,  
Jis dīl barmāyo re.

(Bulha is in love with the Lord and has surrendered his self for this. My *murshid* is Shah Inayat, who has captured my heart.)

5. Bulhiā dheh pau Ināyat de būhe  
Jis pehnāe tainū sāwe te sūhe

(O Bulha, fall down at the door of Inayat, who has clothed you in various hues.)

6. Māpe chor laqī laq tere  
Shah Ināyat Sāin mere  
Lālā dī laj pāl ve, vehre aa var mere  
Main tere qurbān ve vehre aa var mere.

(O my Lord Shah Inayat, I have left my parents and taken refuge in thee. Respond to my love and enter my courtyard. I am a sacrifice to thee, kindly enter my courtyard.)

Other verses depicting the grace of the preceptor Shah Inayat are also available.

Bishop John A. Subhan in his book *Sufism: Its saints and Shrines*, has given the list of Indian Sufi saints arranged chronologically in Appendix A, wherein he has mentioned 116 saints of the Qādirī order. Among these Qādirī saints, Shah Ināyat is the eighty-fourth saint, whose shrine is situated in Lahore and who passed away in A.D. 1728. In the same list at the ninety-eighth place appears the name of Mīr Bahli Shah, whose shrine is at kasūr and who passed away in A.D. 1757.

### *Various Names of Bulhe Shah*

It appears that Mīr Bahli Shah is another name for Bulhe Shah. Dr. Faqir Muhammad Faqir in his introduction to his collection of the poetry of Bulhe Shah entitled *Kuliyāt Bulhe*

*Shah* has made a mention of an addenda of the *Oriental College Magazine* (of Punjab University, Lahore) May, 1939, wherein the name of Bulhe Shah occurs as Mīr Bahli Shah Qādirī Shattārī Kasūrī. According to *Tarikh Nafe-ul-Sālkīn*, his father named him Abdullā Shah, but after his fame as a Sufi saint-poet, he came to be known as Bulhe Shah.

### *Birth-place*

Bulhe Shah was born in village Pandoke, situated about fourteen miles south-east of Kasūr. But there is a tradition that he was born at Uch Gilānīān. The author of *Tarikh Nafe-ul-Sālkīn* writes that Bulhe Shah was the son of Sakhi Shah Muhammad Darwesh, who lived in village Uch Gilānīān in Sind. This village was inhabited by Gilānī Sayyid. Shah Muhammad was also a Gilānī Sayyid. Bulhe Shah was born in this village. Lajwanti Ramakrishna in her book *Punjabi Sufi Poets* and Mian Maula Bakhsh Kushta in his book *Punjabi Shāīrān da Tazkarā* mention Bulhe Shah's birth place at village Pandoke of Kasūr in Lahore district.

### *Family Background*

There is some information regarding the family background of Bulhe Shah in *Tarikh Nafe-ul-Sālkīn*. It is mentioned that Sakhi Shah Muhammad Darwesh, forced by domestic circumstances left village Uch Gilānīān for good, when Bulhe Shah was about six-years old. He settled in the new settlement of Malakwal in Sāhiwal area. After a few days, Chaudharī Pāndo Bhattī came to Talwandi near Malakwal on a private errand. His friends and relatives were pleased to see him. When they sat together after dinner, one of the relatives asked the guest about the welfare of the new settlement of Pandoke Bhattī. The guest replied that everything was alright. The land was fertile and yielded good crops throughout the year. Even the menials were well off and wished for greater prosperity for the chief. But there was one shortcoming. A good *maulvi* (priest) was being searched for the splendid mosque built for the settlement. When Pando said that, the friends and relatives suggested that the *maulvi* who had recently come to Malakwal might like to go to the new settle-

ment of Pando. Next day the elders of Talwandi accompanied Pando Bhatti to Malakwal and met Shah Muhammad Darwesh who responded to their appeal and shifted with all his bag and baggage to Pandoke. Shah Muhammad Darwesh took up the management of the mosque and Bulhe Shah was engaged in acquiring elementary education. He was also given the task of grazing the village cattle.

It is not known, where the elders of Shah Muhammad Darwesh settled in the beginning in India and also where from they migrated. The author of *Sat Sitāre* (quoted by Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr), a Sikh Tehsildar, says in his book that Pandoke, a new settlement on the banks of Bāri Doab canal is situated at a distance of twenty miles towards the south of Lahore. Bulhe Shah was born here in the family of Bukhārī Sayyids.

The grave of Sakhi Muhammad Darwesh is in village Pandoke, where an *urs* is celebrated every year on the death anniversary of Bulhe Shah. On that day *qawaals* come from far and near and sing the *kāfīs* of Bulhe Shah.

#### *Bulhe Shah and Shah Ināyat*

No incidents about the life of Bulhe Shah are available except those connected with his *murshid* or his *kāfīs*. Regarding the education of Bulhe Shah, we know this much that he was tutored by a renowned Persian and Arabic scholar of Kasūr, Hadrith Ghulām Murtazā. He is said to have been the class fellow of Sayyid Wāris Shah, famous for his kissā *Heer-Ranjha*. It is said that Bulha remained a bachelor throughout his life like Shah Hussain. He is said to have one sister, who also did not marry and passed her life in meditation.

Though Bulhe Shah was born in a Sayyid family, he could not find a Sayyid as his preceptor. Inayat was an *arāī*, which was considered a low caste in Muslim society. Therefore, when Bulhe Shah became a disciple of Shah Inayat, his relatives became unhappy over this relationship. Bulhe Shah has himself mentioned this incident in one of his *kāfīs*.

The sisters and sisters-in-law came to  
reprimand Bulha,

Why have you, being a Sayyid,  
brought a bad name to the family?  
Accept our advice, O Bulha,  
and leave the skirt of an *arāi*.

Bulhe Shah retorted to the above advice in the following manner :

Whosoever calls me a Sayyid,  
he will be punished in hell;  
Whosoever calls me an *arāi*,  
he may have swings in heaven;  
If you want, O Bulha, the real pleasures,  
become a disciple of the *arāi*.

It is said that once the *murshid* became angry with Bulhe Shah because of his open violation of *Shari'at* (formal religion) as enunciated by the holy scripture. He had said :

Burn the prayer-mat, break the jug (for ablution),  
Do not hold the rosary, cup and staff,  
Forsake the right path and adopt the opposite,  
Love's domain is ever afresh.  
When I read the lesson of love,  
The self was fearful of the mosque,  
It entered the temple yafd,  
Where sound a thousand horns,  
Love's domain is ever afresh,  
We were tired of reciting the Vedas and the Quran,  
The foreheads were rubbed and wasted in prayer,  
God neither resides in holy places nor in Mecca,  
Whosoever realised Him, got steeped in resplendent  
light,  
Love's domain is ever afresh.

He also uttered the same ideas in another hymn :

People advise Bulha to go and sit in the mosque,  
Of what avail is the visit to the mosque, if  
the heart has not prayed?



I am a sacrifice to you, come into my yard,  
You may recognise me or not, come into my yard.  
For me none is like you.  
I have searched the forests and wildernesses,  
I have searched all the world, come into my yard.

He also sang thus:

I shall never be proud of my beloved friend Ranjha,  
Stay in my house this very night, O beloved,  
Share with me the secrets of your heart with  
smiles, O beloved.

Such a strain drew the attention of Shah Inayat, while he was returning from the mosque. He asked the singer, recognising the tone of his voice, 'Are you Bulha?'. The disciple who was impatiently awaiting for a word from his preceptor immediately said, "My Lord, I am not Bulha, but *bhulla*". The word '*bhulla*' means 'repentent'. The disciple was there and than forgiven for his lapse and brought again into the fold of his Master. He fell at the feet of the Master, who clasped him with love and grace. In this moment of ecstasy, Bulha sang:

Come, O friends and congratulate me,  
I have realised my Lord Ranjha.  
The sacred day has dawned,  
When Ranjha has entered my yard.  
A stick in his hand and a blanket on his shoulder,  
He has appeared as a herdsman.

It is said in a tradition that once Bulhe Shah visited Haji Hans and a *samā* was arranged in his honour. A good number of Sufi faqīrs gathered on the occasion. Several Kāfīs of Bulhe Shah were recited. In a fit of ecstasy, the Faqīrs began to move their heads. Next day Haji Hans called mimics and minstrels to imitate the ecstatic mood undergone by the faqīrs in the previous night. When Bulhe Shah came to know of this, he became very angry. He cursed the town for this act and as a result of his curse, the place turned into a wilderness. The town was situated near Pak Patan and its name was Kabir,



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### *Dates of Birth and Death of Bulhe Shah*

There is no authentic source for the date of birth of Bulhe Shah. It was C.F. Usborne, who in his pamphlet entitled *Bullhe Shah* mentioned his year of birth as A.D. 1680, which has been generally accepted by the scholars. Dr. Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr, in his book *Kuliyāt Bulhe Shah*, has referred to *Tarīkh Sat Sitāre* in which the author has given Hijri 1148 as the year of the birth of Bulhe Shah. The year of death of the saint, given in *Khazīnātul Asfiā* as Hijri 1171 has been considered authentic by most of the scholars. But Dr. Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr has made a mention of a research article by Principal Maulvi Muhammad Shafi read in the annual function of Arabic-Persian Society of Panjab University on April 22, 1939 in which the learned scholar says that the saint was still alive in Hijri 1181. Therefore, we cannot be sure about both the years of birth and death. However, as most of the scholars believe, the years of birth and death of the saint may be considered as A.D. 1680 and A.D. 1758 (Hijri 1171).

## Times of Bulhe Shah

The span of life of Bulhe Shah from A.D. 1680 to A.D. 1758 falls partly in the reign of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and partly in the time of his successors Bahadur Shah (1707-1712) Jahandar Shah (1712-1713), Farrukh Siyar (1713-1718), Mohammad Shah (1720-1747), Ahmed Shah (1748-1754) and Alamgir (1754-1759). Aurangzeb ruled from A.D. 1658 to A.D. 1707. Bulhe Shah was born in the twenty-first year of the reign of Aurangzeb. When the emperor passed away, Bulhe Shah was twenty-seven years old. The remaining fifty-one years of his life he lived in the times of the successors of Aurangzeb.

Bulhe Shah was born in the Punjab and spent his whole life there. Therefore it is necessary to get a glimpse about the conditions in the Punjab at that time. Bulhe Shah was born five years after the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, on the orders of Aurangzeb. The Emperor, a staunch Sunni and a disciple of Ahmed Sirhindi, wanted the whole of India to be made purely an Islamic State. He wanted total conversions of Hindus to Islam. In order to fulfil this mission at first there were peaceful overtures. This was followed by the offers of money, if the peaceful methods failed. If this failed, then there was threat of punishment. If all the measures failed, then recourse to forcible conversion was taken up. Orders were given for the destruction of Hindu temples. Cows were killed and their flesh was thrown into the wells of drinking water in order to defile them. Several other coercive measures were taken to intimidate Hindus. They were removed from high positions, and high taxes were levied upon them. There had been several attempts to stifle the Sikh movement in the Punjab. The freedom of religion was greatly hampered. It was for the protection of the freedom of religion that Guru Teg Bahadur suffered martyrdom. It was a momentous event in the history

of India. All the Sufis except the Naqshbandis abhorred such a tyrannical act. The Chishti and Qadiri Sufi saints were very much appreciative of the Sikh movement. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, had included the verses of Farid Shakar-ganj in the *Adi Granth*, the scripture of the Sikhs. Farid was a most prominent Sufi of the Chishti Order. Mian Mir, the great Qadiri saint, had condemned the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, which took place on the orders of Jehangir. He is said to have laid the foundation stone of Har Mandir (Golden Temple). Bulhe Shah, like his predecessor, was of witness to the rising of the Sikh movement after the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In one of his *kāfīs*, he has pointed out with great reverence the martyrdom of the Guru. He says :

Kite chor bane kite qāzī ho,  
Kite mimbar te beh vaazī ho  
Kite Tegh Bahādur ghāzī ho  
Āpe apnā katak banāī dā,  
Huṇ kis tō aap lukāī dā.

(Somewhere you are a thief, somewhere you are a *qadī* (judge), somewhere you are a preacher on the platform, somewhere you are Tegh Bahadur, the martyr. You prepare yourself your own forces. From whom are you hiding yourself now?)

There is a popular saying in the name of Bulhe Shah, which brings forth his immense homage for Guru Gobind Singh:

Nā kahū jab kī, nā kahū tab kī,  
Bāt kahū main ab kī,  
Agar nā hote Guru Gobind Singh,  
Sunnat hotī sabh kī.

(I do not say anything about any time in the past, I talk about the present. If Guru Gobind Singh had not been there, every one would have been converted to Islam.)

This shows that the Qadiri saints were very liberal in their views and did not like the policy of conversions followed by Aurangzeb. They were also appreciative of the Indian saints, who preached fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.

Guru Gobind Singh passed away at Nanded in South India

in A.D. 1708. Bulhe Shah lived half a century after the tenth Guru. This period of the eighteenth century was a period of turmoil and restlessness in the Panjab. Banda Singh Bahadur, a new convert to Sikhism, was sent on a mission from the south by the Guru himself. He came to chastise the depraved rulers and tyrants. Several cities and towns fell before his forces before the sack of Sirhind. Then the Jalandhar Doab was occupied. The Muslims raised a green banner, called the Haidri Flag and proclaimed a crusade against the Sikhs. A heavy defeat was inflicted on the crusaders. At this juncture, Emperor Bahadur Shah moved a mammoth army against the Sikhs, but Banda Bahadur retired to the hills alongwith his forces. He made short excursions off and on. Bahadur Shah died in February, 1712 and was succeeded by his son Jahandar Shah, who was ousted by Farrukh Siyar in the beginning of 1713. The new ruler was ultimately successful in capturing Banda alongwith his troops. They were first taken to Lahore and then to Delhi, where Banda Singh was mercilessly beheaded on June 9, 1716.

After the execution of Banda Singh Bahadur, an edict was issued by Farrukh Siyar, which directed the authorities to capture the Sikhs and put them to death if they did not embrace Islam. A reward was offered for the head of every Sikh. Hundreds of Sikhs were killed in this way. Gradually the royal decree was confined to those sikhs, who had taken part in Banda's campaign. The Sikhs who had been hiding in the hills, came down in the plains to lead a peaceful life. But this was a temporary phase. In 1726, Abdus Samad Khan, the governor of Lahore was transferred to Multan and his son Zakrya Khan, also known as Khan Bahadur, took over from him as Governor of Lahore. He adopted strong measures for elimination of this valiant community. The sikhs were hunted again and a price was fixed on their heads. As a result they went into hiding again. Their persecution continued for several years until the authorities felt tired of this. They now tried to placate the Sikhs. The title of Nawab was offered with a *jāgīr*, which was conferred on Kapur Singh of Faizullapur in 1733. This gave a breathing time to the Sikhs and they began to move to their original homes. But this was also a temporary phase. Two Dals named Budha Dal and Taruna Dal became active under the supervision of Nawab Kapur Singh. The energetic moves of the Taruna Dal

alarmed the Government and the jāgīr given to the Nawab earlier was confiscated in 1735. There were clashes with the Government, which was again roused to action. There was persecution of the Sikhs again. Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh and Mehtab Singh of Mirankot were martyred. In 1745 Zakrya Khan died and his son Yahiya Khan succeeded him, who continued the executions with added vigour. His Hindu minister Diwan Lakhpāt Rai was also maddened with rage against the Sikhs on the death of his brother Jaspat Rai, the Faujdar of Aminabad. A huge army under the personal command of Yahiya Khan and Lakhpāt Rai marched against the Sikhs, who were about fifteen thousand in number. The Sikhs suffered a huge loss in this single campaign, which is known as the first *ghalūghārā* or holocaust.

In March 1747 Yahiya Khan was ousted by his younger brother Shah Nawaz Khan. The Delhi Government did not accept him as the Governor, therefore he invited the Kabul ruler Ahmed Shah Durrani to invade India. Because of his rough attitude towards the envoys, he fled away from Lahore. The Afghan chief of Kasūr named Jalhe Khan was appointed as Governor of Lahore by Ahmed Shah Durrani, when he came to Lahore. Momin Khan was appointed the Deputy Governor and Lakhpāt Rai as the Diwan. But this arrangement made in January 1748 proved very short-lived, because of the defeat of Durrani near Sirhind in March 1748. Wazīr Qamar-ud-Dīn of Delhi Government, who was the father-in-law of Yahiya Khan, appointed his son Mir Mannu as the Governor of Lahore. Mir Mannu made Diwan Kaura Mal his minister, who was sympathetic towards the Sikhs. Though Mir Mannu was inimical towards the Sikhs, who had been gaining power in several areas of the Punjab, he sought their assistance in odd circumstances on the advice of Diwan Kaura Mal. In a battle with the Durrani in March 1752, the Diwan was killed by stratagem of rivals, by Bayazid Khan, a Pathan of Kasūr. Mir Mannu became an ally of Durrani and feeling more secure on the change of his master, he resorted to vigorous measures against the Sikhs, from whom he did not require any assistance.

Giani Gian Singh has made a mention of two punitive expeditions led by two Kasūr Afghans, Mir Momin Khan and Hussain Khan. But the severest action against the Sikhs was

taken by Mir Mannu himself in the central districts of the Punjab. Hundreds of Sikhs were killed and their womenfolk assaulted. Hunting of the Sikhs began with full force. There is a famous saying of those days, which shows the atrocities committed by Mannu:

Mannu asādī dātrī, asī Mannu de soe,

Jiō jiō Mannu wadhdā, asī dūṇ sawāe hoe

(Mannu is our sickle, and we are his crop; the more he cuts, the more we grow.)

In November, 1753 Mannu fell off from his horse, while hunting down Sikhs and died. With the death of Mir Mannu the Lahore Government was weakened further. The Sikhs took advantage of the confusion caused by the weakness of the Lahore Government and the continued invasions of Ahmed Shah Durani. They continued their expeditions and way laid the incoming and outgoing invaders. During the fourth invasion of Durani in 1757, a detachment was sent to chastise the Sikhs at Amritsar. The sacred tank was demolished at that time. Ahmed Shah installed his son Taimur as the Viceroy of all his Indian possessions. The Sikhs were the main target of Taimur, but he could not cope with them because of their increasing powers. In April 1758, the Sikhs entered Lahore along with Marathas and killed or captured all the soldiers left by Taimur. Adeena Beg, a Faujdar of Jalandhar under the Kabul Government, who wanted to become the Governor of Lahore, had sought the help of the Sikhs and Marathas both. He was duly installed as Governor, but he could enjoy this position only for four months. During this period he tried to strengthen his position, but he could not do so because of the growing strength of the Sikhs. The Marathas had earlier left Punjab, for good. On account of his bitterness due to failure, he turned against the Sikhs and sent a couple of expeditions against them. His repression of the Sikhs ended with his death in September 1758.

Ahmed Shah invaded India for the fifth time in October 1759. The Sikhs resisted the advance of the invader but the Shah continued his march up to Delhi and spent a year in its neighbourhood. He fought some battles with the Marathas on the way. The historic battle of Panipat was fought in January 1761.

Ahmed Shah was victorious in this battle. But when he was returning home, he was relieved of much of his booty in the way by the Sikhs. During the sixth invasion of Ahmed Shah Durrani, there was a great onslaught against the Sikhs. A fearful carnage occurred in February 1762 which is known as *waddā ghalūghārā* or the second great holocaust. About ten thousand Sikhs are said to have been killed in this holocaust. On this occasion, the Durrani blew up the sacred temple at Amritsar with gunpowder. During his seventh invasion, in October 1764, Ahmed Shah was determined to exterminate the Sikhs. Therefore he ransacked the entire country, which was known as the homeland of the Sikhs. People were massacred without any distinction. But the valiant Sikhs had been on the move. There had been a few skirmishes with the forces of Durrani. When the Shah departed, the Sikhs gathered at Amritsar on Baisakhi day in April 1765, where they decided to take possession of Lahore.

Bulhe Shah had watched closely the political developments in the Punjab. He knew about the state of affairs at Lahore and the growing power of the Sikhs, in spite of their persecution by the Muslim authority, Mughal or Afghan. He had seen the forces of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah devastating the whole country. He knew about the tyrannical policies followed by Aurangzeb and his successors. He was a very conscientious saint. That is why we find references to his contemporary conditions in his *kāfis*:

Ulte hor zamāne aae  
 Kā laggaṛ nu māran lagge chirīā jurre khāe  
 Arākiā nu paī chābak paundī gaddhe khūd pawāe  
 Bulha hukam hazūro āyā tis nū kaun hatāe  
 Ulte hor zamāne aae.

(Other adverse times have come. The crows have beaten the hawks and falcons have been eaten by sparrows. The horses are being whipped and the asses are being fed on green wheat plants. Who can change the orders of the highest authority? says Bulha.)

Sānū aa mil Yār piārayā  
 Jad apnī apnī pai gāi  
 Dhī māt nū lut ke lai gāi  
 Mūh bāhravīñ sadī pasāriā

Sanū aa mil Yār piārayā  
Dar Khulhā hashar azāb dā  
Bura hāl hoyā Punjab dā  
Vich haviā dozakh māriā  
Sanū aa mil Yār piārayā  
Bulha Shah mere ghar āvasī  
Merī baldī bhāh bujhāvasī  
Ināyat dam dam nāl chitārayā  
Sanū aa mil Yār piārayā.

(Come and meet us, O Beloved. When every one was interested in self, the daughter robbed away the mother. The twelfth century [of Hijri era] has dawned. Come and meet us, O Beloved. The gate of suffering and resurrection has opened and the condition of the Punjab has worsened. It is languishing in sighs and hell. Come and meet us, O Beloved. The Lord will enter my home and extinguish the burning fire [of suffering]. I remember Inayat with every breath. Come and meet us, O Beloved.)

Mughlā zahr piāle pīte,  
Bhooriā wāle rāje kīte,  
Sabh ashrāf phiran chup kīte,  
Bhalā uhnā nū jhāriā ee  
Raho raho ve ishqā maryā ee  
Kaho kis nū pār utāryā ee.

(The Mughals have drunk the cups of poison. The Jats with blankets have been made the kings. All the gentle persons walk silently, and they have been slighted by you. O love, you may stay away, you have put me to grief. Tell me whom you have ferried across?)

In the last quotation given above, there is a clear reference to the tyranny of the Mughals and the victory for the people of Punjab wearing coarse sheets. This is a pointer towards the Sikhs. The worsening situation of the Punjab in the second quotation refers to the executions by the invaders like Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah and Taimur and the expeditions of extermination of the Sikhs by the Governors of the Punjab. It also points indirectly to the barbaric executions of the martyrs like Haqīqat Rāi and Bhāi Mani Singh (A.D. 1735) Bhāi Tarū Singh (A.D. 1745) and Shāhbāz Singh and Shāhbeg Singh (A.D. 1746). The small and great holocausts might also have attracted the attention of Bulhe Shah.



## Poetical Works of Bulhe Shah

No manuscript containing complete works of Bulhe Shah either in Gurmukhi or Persian script is available. Bhai Prem Singh Zargar Kasūrī, who published a collection of poems of Bulhe Shah in A.D. 1896, has given the following introductory note in the beginning :

For a long time I had a strong desire that the kāfis of Bulhe Shah, who was illiterate, were not found in one collection and had been committed to memory by the qawwāls, should be duly compiled. It was a very difficult task and required very hard work. In pursuance of my desire, I worked hard and met various qawwāls who remembered the kāfis. After spending a good deal of time and money, I have prepared this collection. . . .

This shows that in this earliest collection, the kāfis of Bulhe Shah were collected from various sources. But the assertion of Prem Singh about Bulhe Shah does not hold good because he had remained a student of Khwājā Hāfiz Ghulām Murtazā Kasūrī and knew Persian and Arabic both. He could have written his Kāfis himself in Persian characters. It is possible that the saint might have penned down his Kāfis himself, which had been lost because of the disturbed conditions in the Punjab. The Kāfis had become very popular and were sung by the Sufis and the qawwāls in musical festivals. Since they were composed in popular idiom, it was not difficult to remember them by heart. But all the material collected by Prem Singh cannot be passed on as work of Bulhe Shah. Dr. Faqir Muhammad Faqir feels on the basis of the language and style of Bulhe Shah that some work in the collection is of doubtful nature.

Dr. Mohan Singh published fifty Kāfis of Bulhe Shah in

1930 with Introduction, notes, biography, index, etc. In this edition, the sources of his selection include the above-mentioned collection of Prem Singh Zargar. His other sources include *Shabad Shlok Bhagtān de* published by Rai Sahib Munshi Gulab Singh & Sons in 1900 and 1904. The other sources mentioned by him are the manuscript nos. 374 and 4684 in Punjab University library and a manuscript in Hifzul Uloom, Lahore. The compiler has taken 7 kāfis from Ms No. 374, 8 from the manuscript of Hifzul Uloom, 16 from the Ms No. 4684 and the remaining 19 from *Shabad Shlok Bhagtān de*. The last 19 Kāfis include 17 which also occur in the collection of Prem Singh or in *Kanoon-i-Ishq*, compiled by Maulvi Anwar Ali Rohtaki. The collection of Prem Singh contains 139 Kāfis, 45 Dohirās, 40 Gandhā, 3 Siharfis, one Bārāmāhā and one Athvārā. The collection entitled *Kanoon-i-Ishq* contains 116 kāfis. The collection of Prem Singh was published in Samvat 1953 (A.D. 1896) under the title *Kāfiān Hazrat Bullhe Shāh Sāhib Kasūri* and printed at Sewak Machine Press, Lahore. *Kanoon-i-Ishq* was published in Hijri 1309 (A.D. 1959) and printed at Alam press, Lahore. The first publisher was Chanan Din Allah Vāle Kī Kaumī Dukān, Kashmīrī Bāzār, Lahore.

The other collections of poems of Bulhe Shah, significant enough to be mentioned, are detailed below :

1. *Kāfiān Bulhe Shah* (undated) published by Hafiz Muhammad Din, Kashmīrī Bazar, Lahore. It contains thirty nine Kāfis.
2. *Kāfiān Bulhe Shah* (1901/1925), published by Charāgh Din Sarāj Din, Kashmīrī Bazar, Lahore. It contains 38 Kāfis.
3. *Sāi Bulhe Shah* by Sundar Singh Nirula (1931-32), published by Bhai Partāp Singh Sundar Singh, Bāzār Māi Sewān, Amritsar. It contains 116 Kāfis, one Bārāmāhā and one Athvārā.
4. *Kāfiān Bulhe Shah* (undated), published by Labhū Rām & Sons, Naulakhā Bāzār, Lahore.
5. *Kuliyāt Bulhe Shah* by Dr. Faqir Muhammad Faqir (1960), published by Punjābī Adabi Academy. Lahore. This collection contains 156 Kāfis, one Athvārā, one

Bārāmāhā, 49 Dohare, three Siharfīs and 40 Gandhā. This is all available in the name of Bulhe Shah.

6. Dr. Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr has referred to the following collections also :

- (a) *Kāfiān Mian Bulhe Shah*, (Hijri 1328), published at Lahore.
- (b) *Kāfiān Bulhe Shah* (A.D. 1950), published at Lahore.
- (c) 'Kāfis of Bulhe Shah', unpublished manuscript, with Miān Ahmad Dīn of Lorāī, District Gujrat.

The collection mentioned at (a) contains 58 Kāfis and 8 Dohi-rās. The collection mentioned at (b) contains 70 Kāfis. It is a copy of the collection published by Labhū Ram of Naulakhā Bāzār, Lahore.

It will not be out of place here to give a brief description of the forms of poetry used by Bulhe Shah. He wrote kāfis, Siharfīs, Doharās, Bārāmāhā, Athvārās and Gandhs.

Kāfi, as some scholars believe, is a distortion of the word *qafiyāh* meaning rhyme. But that does not seem appropriate, because the rhyme occurs in many verse forms. For some it means "several times" connoting the repetition of a verse, which is very often done when the burden of *kāfi* is repeated in the style of a *qawwālī*. Generally the two words *kāfi* and *qawwālī* are combined together. It seems that the word *kāfi* is related to the word *kaifi*, which means "intoxicated person". Kāfis have generally been written by mystics, who are God-intoxicated persons. But *kāfi* is also a *raginī*, a musical mode. Since Bulhe Shah wrote his kāfis in several musical modes, it is doubtful whether the Kāfi can be considered in this sense. It may be taken in the sense of *Kāfi qawwālī*, sung by God-intoxicated persons, not only Muslims, but belonging to other religions also. Kāfi is essentially a lyric which is meant to sung. In Punjabi literature, the practice of writing Kāfis is as old as the Bhakti movement. Kāfis have been composed by the Sikh Gurus, which are included in the *1di Granth*. Several Sufi poets and Hindu saints have also written Kāfis. The kāfi has remained a popular medium of poetry in western Punjab. Prior to Bulhe Shah, the Sufi poet who wrote Kāfis was Shah Hussain, whose Kāfis are as popular in the Punjab as the Kāfis of Bulhe Shah.

Šiharfī is an alphabetical poem like *Bāwan Akhrī* and *Paintī Akhrī*. Whereas *Bāwan Akhrī* is based on the Devanagari alphabet and *Paintī Akhrī* on the Gurmukhi alphabet, *Šiharfī* is based on the Persian alphabet. Each stanza of the poem begins with a letter of the alphabet. The stanzas are in alphabetical order. The Sufi poet who wrote *Šiharfī* before Bulhe Shah, was Sultan Bahū. Three *Šiharfīs* are available in the name of Bulhe Shah. Qadir Yar, a Qissa poet of the nineteenth century, wrote his Qissa of Puran Bhagat in *Šiharfīs*. The *Šiharfīs* of the above-mentioned Sufi poets have a mystical theme. Each stanza of their *Šiharfīs* contains an independent thought, but the repetition of ideas is there. Out of the three *Šiharfīs* of Bulhe Shah two are complete and the third is incomplete. *Šiharfī* also a lyrical poem like *Kafī* and is subjective in content, keeping in view the *Šiharfīs* of the Sufi poets.

A *Bārāmāhā* is a poem based on the months of the year. Therefore it must contain at least twelve stanzas, if not more. With each month the description of the surroundings and the mental attitude changes. The oldest *Bārāmāhās* available in Punjabi are those of Guru Nanak Dev (in *Rāga Tukhārī*) and Guru Arjan Dev (in *Rāga Mājh*), which are included in the *Adi Granth*. Among earlier Sufis Bulhe Shah is the first to write a *Bārāmāhā*. In a *Bārāmāhā*, the months of the Indian calendar year are mentioned. Whereas ordinarily, the poem begins with *Chet* as the first month, the *Bārāmāhā* of Bulhe Shah begins with the month *Asu* (*Asuj*). *Bārāmāhās* like *Šiharfīs* have been written by Qissa poets also.

*Athvārā* is the poem based on seven days of the week. It is also known as *satvārā*, which should be, the correct name for this poem. But since Sunday is repeated again, therefore it has been called *Athvārā*. There are two *Satvārās* in the *Adi Granth*, one by Kabir and the other by Guru Amar Das, third Guru of the Sikhs. Ordinarily the poem begins with Sunday, but Bulhe Shah begins his poem with Saturday and ends with Friday. In the last longer stanza Friday is repeated. The names of the days used by Bulhe Shah are those which were used by the Muslims. Monday is called *Som* and *Pīr*, Thursday as *Jumārāt* and Friday as *Jumā*.

Dohare are generally small poems of four verses, all rhyming together. Doha or Dohira, a form of versification is a couplet.

But *dohare* of Bulhe Shah are either couplets or small poems of four verses. Out of 49 *Dohare* in the name of Bulhe Shah, only seven are actually poems of four verses, the rest are couplets.

*Gandh* is a short poem related to the nuptial ceremony. There are references to the arrangements for marriage, fixing its date, the reception of the marriage party and the departure of the wedded couple. Like *Kāfī*, *Gandh* is a form of poetry. Bulhe Shah has composed forty *Gandhā*. The first and the last *Gandh* consist of eight verses each, others are in four verses each. *Gandhā* of Bulhe Shah contain a description of the spiritual wedding. In the last verse, the word *Abdullah* occurs, which was the real name of Bulhe Shah.

The *Kāfīs* of Bulhe Shah are mainly poems of spiritual love, wherein various moods of the lover are depicted. Though love is the main theme, still there are *Kāfīs* containing advice for the seeker. They are didactic in character. The love element and the didactic element both overlap sometimes not only in *Kāfīs*, but other poems also.

## 4

# Religious Philosophy of Bulhe Shah

### *Concept of God*

The main theme of the works of Sufis has been the love of God.

Bulhe Shah believes in both aspects of God : His Transcendence and His Immanence. He says :

Ahd Ahmad vich farak na Bulhiā,  
ik rattā bhet maroṛī dā.

(There is no difference between *Ahd* and *Ahmad*, the only secret is that of the twist of "M".)

*Ahd* is the unmanifested Brahman (*nirguna*) and *Ahmad* is the manifested Brahman (*saguna*). The twist of "M" is the *maya*. The Lord devoid of all attributes (*ahd*) appears as the world of Name and Form. This idea has also been expressed by Bulhe Shah in another way :

Ain Ghain dī hikkā sūrat,  
Vich nukte shor machāyā hai

(The letter of the persian alphabet 'Ain' and 'Ghain' have the same shape. Only a dot above the latter has created the tumult )

In this case *Ain* is the unmanifested Brahman and *Ghain*, the manifested Brahman. In Sufi teaching, this doctrine is known as *Tanazzulāt* or the descent of the Absolute.

Bulhe Shah belongs to the monistic school of Muslim thought, which holds that there is only One Essence. Everything is God and of the Essence of God. This school is known as *Wujūdiyyā*.

Bulha says :

1. Tusī sabhanī bhekhī thhīde ho  
Har jā tusī diside ho

(You are there in all guises. You are seen at every place.)

2. Kahū bair paṛā kahū belī hai  
Kahū Majnū hai kahū lelī hai  
Kahū āp Gurū Kahū chelī hai

(Somewhere He is an enemy, somewhere a friend; somewhere He is Majnu and somewhere Laila; somewhere He is a preceptor and somewhere a disciple.)

3. Kahū Turk musalmā paṛhte ho  
Kahū Bhagat Hindū jāp karte ho  
Kahū ghor ghungaṭ main paṛte ho  
Kahū ghar ghar lādīdāī hai.

(Somewhere you are a Turk reciting *Kalimah*; somewhere you are a devoted Hindu absorbed in meditation; somewhere you hide yourselves in a thick veil and somewhere you indulge in love in every home.)

4. Kadī ho asmānī behnde ho  
Kadī is jag te dukh sehnde ho

(Sometimes you take a seat in heavens and sometimes you bear the sufferings in this world.)

Such examples can be multiplied. Just as many kinds of ornaments are made out of gold, as depicted in the Vedanta, Bulhe Shah gives the example of the earth from which numerous kinds of *jīvas* and other articles are produced. He says :

Vāh Vāh mātī dī Gulzār  
Mātī ghorā mātī jāṛā mātī dā asvār  
Mātī mātī nū dorāve mātī dā kharkār

(Wonderful is the garden of earth. The horse, the suit of clothes and the rider are all made of earth. The earth makes the earth run and the noise thus created is of earth.)

According to Bulhe Shah, whereas the Lord is Omnipresent and All-Pervading, He appears as Light (*for*) and is Most Beautiful

(*jamāl*). He is both *Az-Zāhir* (the Evident) and is *Al-Bātin* (the Hidden). He is both *Al-Awwal* (the First) and *al-Ākhir* (the Last). He is *Al-Wāhid* (the one). He is *al-Khāliq* (the creator). He is *Ar-Ruhmān* (the merciful), and *ar-Rahīm* (The Compassionate). But above all He is *Al-Wadūd* (the Loving). He is the Beloved, who responds our love. He is also *Al-Gaffār* (The Forgiver) and *Al-Karīm* (the Generous). He, the *Al-Haqq* (the Truth) is *Al-Basīr* (the Seer) and *Al-Adl* (the Just).

Bulhe Shah had full faith in the Grace of God. Though God is Just, He is also Graceful. Bulha says :

Adl Karē ta jaa nā kāi

Fazlon bakhṛāpāvē

(O, God, if you do justice, I cannot stand anywhere, but you can give me some share because of your bounty).

About the Grace of the Lord, Bulha says :

Vah jis par karam avehā hai

Tehqīq uh bhī tai jehā hai

Sach sahī ravāit chā hai

Terī nazar mehar tar jāi dā

(It is wonderful that whosoever comes under your Grace, he undoubtedly becomes one with you. Truly, this is the tradition that one ferries across (the world-ocean) with your Grace).

God plays a hide and seek with the lovers, who want not only to have a sight of Him, but also to be one with Him eternally. Bulha says :

Tusī chhipade sī asī pakare ho

Asī vich jigar de jakare ho

Tusī aje chhipan nū takare ho

(You are hiding yourself, but I have caught you. I have imprisoned you in the heart, but still you are powerful to hide yourself.)

*Concept of Self*

About the self Bulhe Shah says :

Nā ham khākī, nā ham ātash,

nā pāṇī nā paṇ



Kuppī de vich roṛ kharakdā,  
mūrakh ākhe bole kaṇ,  
Bulha Sāi ghat ghat raviā,  
jiō āte vich laṇ.

(I am neither physical entity, nor made of fire; neither I am water nor air; a clod sounds in the physical frame, the fool says, who speaks in it? Bulha says that the Lord pervades every heart, just as salt is mixed in flour.)

According to Bulha, the soul or self is a part and parcel of God. He sits in every soul and speaks at Will. The soul which speaks is called "an-nafsu 'n-natiqah". The word *nafs* occurs in the *Quran* and the Traditions. It means Soul or Conscience. *Qalb* or heart is the meeting place of subtle *rūh* and the physical body. The word *rūh* is used for spirit and *nafs* for soul in Muslim theology.

The soul is also light, which resides in the heart. Bulha says:

Nāl mehboob sire dī baazī  
Jis ne kul tabak lai sāji  
Man mere vich Jot birājī  
Āpe zāhir hāl batāyā.

(I have staked my head for the Beloved, who has created all the regions. In my heart, there is the light [of the soul], which exhibits itself through the body.)

This light of the soul is involved in the love for the Beloved, i.e. God. But it has no independent Will. It moves and speaks in various moods according to the Will of the Lord. It dances in the garb of earth under the Will of the Supreme. Bulha says :

Main merī hai nā terī hai  
Eh ant khāk dī dherī hai  
Eh dherī hoī kherī hai  
Dherī nu nāch nachāī dā  
Huṛ kis tō aap lukāī dā.

(This self is neither mine nor yours. Its end appears as a heap of earth, which spreads here and there. This heap of earth dances [when infused with self]. From whom you are now concealing yourself?)

*Concept of the World*

For Bulhe Shah, this world is not a delusion. It is relatively real. It has been created by God, who himself appears in it in a myriad forms. It is the manifestation of the unmanifested Brahman. This world is a world of time and space. Because of fleeting time, everything is prone to change. The world of yesterday becomes a dream for to-day. After birth the things grow and then decay. For a man birth, childhood, youth, old age and death are a must. Those who are dead and gone are a dream for us. Bulhe Shah writes :

Main suphnā sabh jag vī suphnā,  
Suphnā lok Bibāṇā  
Khakī khak sion ral jāṇā  
kujh nahī zor dhīngāṇā.

(I am a dream, the whole world is a dream; the people and relatives are also a dream. The one born from the earth will ultimately mingle with the earth. It will happen without any force.)

This word is a play of the soul and matter. The mystic Bulha thinks more of the soul than matter. The soul must move as a lover towards the Beloved Lord, in order to attain Unity with Him. The soul appears to Bulha as a seed, which when sown in the world of matter grows into a large banyan tree. But with the decay of the tree the seed remains there in a state of passivity. Bulhe Shah says :

Bulha bī bohar dā boyā sī  
Uh birkh vadā chā hoyā sī  
Jad birkh uh fānī hoyā sī  
Phir reh gayā bi akārā hai

(The seed of the banyan was sown and it grew into a huge tree. When this tree decayed, the seed was left behind with no activity.)

The pleasures of the world are short-lived. They end in misery. Bulha says :

Khāven mās chabāven birā  
 Ang pushāk lagāiyā ee  
 Tedhi pagrī aakar challen,  
 Juttī pab arāiyā ee  
 Ik din azal dā bakrā ho ke  
 apnā aap kuhāvē gā

Hijāb karē darveshī kolō kab lag hukam chalāvē gā.

(You eat meat and chew the betel leaf. You are dressed in a costly costume. With a crooked turban, you walk with an air of vanity. You hang your shoe on your foot. One day you will be made the he-goat of death and slaughtered.)

Keeping this in view one must lead a noble life and not become ill-disposed and malignant towards others.

All the worldly relatives are self-centred. They have their own axe to grind. Bulha says :

Eh ammā bābā betā betī  
 Puchh vekhā kiō rovan ge  
 Eh rannā kanjā puttār dhīā  
 virse nū āñ khalovan ge  
 Eh jo luttar tū kiō nāhī  
 mar ke aap lutavē gā  
 Hijāb karē darveshī kolō  
 kab lag kukam chalāvē gā.

(We may ask these mother, father, son, daughter, why will they weep? These wives, sons and daughters will claim for their inheritance. If they rob, why do you not rob? You will be robbed, when you die).

For the above reasons Bulha looks towards the Lord as father, mother, sister and brother. He has no relation except the Lord.

Ma tūdh bin avar nā koī,  
 Ammā, bābal, bhain nā bhāī.

(Except you I have no other relative, mother, father, sister or brother.)

Bulhe Shah is very clear about the ultimate end in this world. The life and pleasures in the world are short-lived and

the ultimate home is the grave, where the soul will remain till the doomsday.

Ithhe goil vāsā vasan nū  
rahn nū uththe derā hai

(Here [in this world] one has to live like a cowherd on the pasture ground; his dwelling is there [in the grave].)

### Religion in Practice

The goal for Bulhe Shah is the realisation of the Lord. For this purpose, the chief means for him is *ishq* (Love). For a Quranic Sufi love takes the form of performance of the worship of God and other duties like saying prayers and observing fasts. Considering *Al-Jabbār* (the Repairer) and *Al-Qahhār* (the Dominant) as the attributes of God, he remains in constant fear of the Lord. The fear of death and hell also haunt him. In consequence, he forsakes all the attachments of the world and concentrates only on the Lord. According to him the entity of the human being is separate from the Lord, therefore he cannot claim oneness with him. He has to work very hard for conquering his passions. He practises abstinence in respect of worldly pleasures. This state is known as *zuhd*. He becomes a *faqir*. But still he is prone to the attacks of *nafs*, therefore he practises poverty and *sabr* (Patience). He is ever watchful about his own attitude and always considers himself in the presence of 'the Lord'. He performs *Murāqabāh* (an act of devotion) and he observes severe practices of meditation and contemplation. After such practices, he experiences the state of *ishq* or divine love and also the state of ecstasy. This *ishq* is, of course, in accordance with the *Tariqah* (the Path).

Religious faqirs are of two kinds: 1. Those who follow closely the principles of Islam; they are known as *ba shiar* (who follow *Shariat* or law); 2. Those who do not follow closely the principles of Islam, though they call themselves Muhammadans. These faqirs are called *be shiar* (who do not follow *shariat* or law). The former are known as *sālik* because they follow the *tariqah* (Path) and the latter are called *majzūb* (abstracted) faqirs. The latter are totally engrossed in religious reverie. Bulhe Shah belonged to the latter class of faqirs.

Bawa Budh Singh in his book entitled *Hans Chog* has called Bulhe Shah the Rūmī of Punjab. Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, a great mystic Sufi of Persia was also a poet of Love. His love, like Bulhe Shah was God's Love. He had said, "Put away the tale of love that travellers tell; Do thou serve God with all thy might". He also said, "It were better that the spirit which wears not true Love as a garment, had not been: its being is but shame. Without the dealing of Love there is no entrance to the Beloved". Hadland Davis, while writing about Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, in his book entitled *The Persian Mystics*, in the "Wisdom of the East Series", has written about the Divine Love in the following manner: "But Love is a Divine Essence working through and through innumerable lives for its own eternal glory. Personality is limited only to the finite world—perhaps a phase or two beyond the grave. Even that is sum-total of countless so-called personalities in the past. We love instinctively. If it was wholly physical, then it dies with the death of the object. If it was infinitely more than that, if it was the love of Goodness and Purity and the Beautiful it lives on for ever. But these things live not eternally in humanity. They are parts of that all-pervading Essence—the Love Divine. Love God's light in men and women, and not the lanterns through which it shines, for human bodies must turn to dust; human memories, human desires, fade away. But the love of the All-Good, All Beautiful remains, and when such is found in earthly love, it is God finding Himself in you, and you in Him. That is the supreme teaching of Sufism, the religion of Love."

Like Rūmī, Bulhe Shah preached the religion of Love. His surrender to the Beloved was total. It was love for love's sake and there was no other objective. He looked towards the Lord in all eventualities. This sort of devotion is known as *anin bhakti* in Indian literature. Bulha says:

Pīyā bas kar bahutī hoī  
 Terā Ishq merī diljot  
 Merā tudh bin avar nā koī  
 Amma bābal bhaīn nā bhāī.

(O Beloved, I have suffered much; now end with it. *Ishq* is the prop of my heart. I have none other except you, neither mother nor father nor sister nor brother.)

The love (*ishq*) of Bulhe Shah is quite different from the love of the those Sufis who follow *tariqah*, as has been said above. According to Bulha *shariat* (the Law) instructs in *adab adāb* or the duties of life in this world, but he has nothing to do with such formalism. He wants to meet the Lord and the path he adopts is that of *ishq*. He says:

Karam sharā de dharam batāwan.

sangal pāwan pairī,

Zāt mazhab eh Ishq nā puchhdā

Ishq sharā dā vairī.

(The duties of *Sharā* constitute the Path, which enchains us. But the *Ishq* does not ask for the caste or faith. *Ishq* is the enemy of *Sharā*.)

The main theme of the poetry of Bulhe Shah is *ishq*. He sings again and again of Divine Love, which according to him is a tiger, who drinks blood and eats meat. Besides *ishq*, the words used by Bulhe Shah for Love in his *Kāfis* are: *prem, peet (preet), nehon, lagan, chetak, muhabbat*. But the word *ishq* has been used many times. The words allied with *ishq* are *Āshiq* (Lover) and *māshūq* (Beloved). The *Kāfis* of Bulhe Shah abound in thoughts of Love and Lover. About Love (*ishq*) Bulhe Shah says:

Bulha kī jāne zāt Ishq di kaun

Nā sūnan nā kam bakhere vanje jāgan saun

(What does Bulha know about the nature of *Ishq*? No acquaintance, no work and no wrangling; the sense of awaking and sleeping vanishes.)

The Love is of two kinds: 1. *Ishq-i-majāzī*, i. e., the love of man and woman and 2. *ishq haqīqī*, the love for God. Though Bulhe Shah is strongly imbued with love for God, he has also talked about *ishq majāzī*. He says:

Jichar nā Ishq majāzī lāge

Sūce seeve nā bin dhāge

Ishq majāzī dātā hai

Jis pichhe mast ho jātā hai

(As long as *Ishq majāzī* is not observed, one is not successful in his love for God, just as the needle does not sew without the thread, *ishq-i-majāzī* is benefactor, by the virtue of which one experiences ecstasy.)

Such is the view of Bulhe Shah about *ishq-i-majāzī*. He had adopted the romance of Heer Ranjha. He himself takes the garb of Heer and goes in search of his beloved Ranjha, i. e. God. In the words of Reynold Nicholson, "God, as the poets conceive him, is the eternal Beauty which by the necessity of its nature desires to be loved, manifests itself for the sake of love, and is the real object of all love. Even earthly love is a type of spiritual, a bridge leading to reality. The soul, being divine in its essence, longs for union with that from which it separated by the illusion of individuality and this longing aspiration, which urges it to pass away from self-hood and rise on the wings of ecstasy, is the only means, whereby, it can return to its original home. Love transmutes into pure gold the base Phenomenal alloy of which every creature partakes."

*Ishq* is not an easy affair. It is a field of thorns. Whosoever entered this field, underwent a great deal of suffering. Bulha has given examples of Yusuf Zulaikhā, Ishmā'el, Yunus, Ibrahim, Suleimān, Sābar, Mansūr, Zakaryā, Sarmad, Shamas, Sharaf, Qalandar, Heer, Lailā Majnūn, Sassī Punnū, Sohni Mahiwāl, Mirzā Sāhibān, Rodā Jalālī, etc. With every example he repeats:

Raho raho oay Ishqa māryā ee

Kaho kis nū pār utāryā ee.

(O Ishq, remain there, you have given me a good thrashing; tell me whom you have carried away to the destination?)

The divine love is ever afresh. This is the burden of one of the Kāfis. This love does not discriminate between a Muslim and a Hindu. Bulha says:

Ishq dī navīō navī bahār

Jad main sabak ishq dā paṛhyā

masjid kolō jiorā daryā.

dere jā Thākur de varyā,

Jithe vajde nād hazār.

(The divine love ever brings a new spring. When I learnt the lesson of *Ishq*, I developed the fear of the mosque and entered the temple, where a thousand of musical instruments resound.)

The ecstatic mood created by love made him a rebel. A free translation of the other stanzas of this *Kāfī* is being given here:

...When I came to know the secret of this *Ishq*, all the mineness and thinness ceased. The interior and exterior became pure and wherever I look, see the Beloved. Heer has met Rānjhā. She had been led astray, searching in the wilderness. But Beloved Rānjhā was playing in the enwrapped sheet. On seeing Him I did not remain in senses. I became tired of reciting Vedas and Purāṇas. My forehead was worn away in prostrations. God is neither in the holy places nor in Mecca. He whoever realised Him, had the sight of the Supreme Light. Burn the prayer-mat and break the jug. Do not catch the rosary and the staff. The lovers say loudly: leave the path of Law and eat the forbidden food. I have wasted my life in the mosque. The interior was full of dirt. I never performed the prayer and *tauhid*. Why do you raise now the loud cries? The *ishq* has led me astray from the path of prostration. Why do you quarrel with me now? Bulha keeps silent greatly, when the *ishq* raises its powerful head.

Bulha has also talked of *ishq Haqīqī*. He says:

Ishq Haqīqī ne muththī kure  
mainū dasso piā dā des.

(The love of God has captivated my heart. Tell me where is the country of the Beloved?)

In the state of love, Bulhe Shah questions thus:

Kiō Ishq asā te āyā hai  
Tū āyā hain main pāyā hai

(Why *Ishq* has come to me? O *Ishq*, you have come and I have realised thee.)



For the sake of meeting the Lord, Bulha makes his body a furnace, the mind an anvil, on which the hammer of love is struck. In this way the iron-heart melts.

### *Ishq (Love) and Ilm (Knowledge)*

According to Muslim Theology, the religious knowledge is called *ilm*. It is of three kinds; 1. *Ilm-ul-mabādī*—It is elementary knowledge and relates to the text of the Qurān and Hadith. 2. *Ilm-ul-maqāsīd*—It is the perfected knowledge which relates to the faith. 3. *Ilm-ul-makushafah*—It is the revealed knowledge. It is also called *Ilm-ul-haqīqah* or the knowledge of Truth. Bulhe Shah believes only in the last kind of knowledge. Regarding the first two kinds of *ilm*, Bulha says:

Ilmon bas karī o yār,

Ikko alif terā darkār.

(O friend, do away with the knowledge; only the *Alif* the first letter of the alphabet is enough.)

*Alif* has the formation similar to the figure One. It conveys the idea of One God. Since Bulha wants the knowledge of Truth or God, he does not like to proceed away from *Alif*, the symbol of God. The burden of one of his *Kāfis* is:

Ikko Alif parho chhutkārā ay

(If you want to obtain release, then read only *Alif*.)

In this *Kāfī*, Bulhe Shah says: "The single *Alif* became two, three and four; then a thousand, a lakh and a crore; then it became innumerable. The dot of the single *Alif* is singular. Why do you read the cartload of books, and thus carry a bundle of troubles? You have been transformed into an executioner. Still you have to traverse a most difficult terrain. If you want to obtain release, then do not proceed beyond *Alif*."

The *ba-shar* Sufis, who followed closely the *shariāh* and *tarīqah* considered the knowledge of *Shariat*, a pre-condition for becoming a Sufi. But Bulha, who is one of the *be-shar* sufis does not think so. He considers the *Vēdas* and the *Quran*, the

scriptures for the men of the world and not men of God. God cannot be realised by their study. Only the knowledge gained through devotion is useful. Bulha says:

Haraf Ishq dā ikko nukta

kāhe kū ūṭh ladāven gā.

(There is only one dot of letter *Ishq*; why should you cause the camels to be loaded?)

*The State of Separation:*

While undergoing the experience of divine love, Bulha feels very often the pangs of separation. Therefore he calls his Beloved cruel and hard-hearted. He says:

Kīh bedardā sang yārī

Rovan akhiā zāro zārī

Sanū gaye bedardī chhaḍ ke

Hijre sang seene vich gaḍ ke

Jismō jind nu lai gaye kaḍh ke

Eh gal kar gaye hainsayārī.

(What to say of love with the hard-hearted; my eyes weep continuously. The cruel Beloved left me after fixing the spear of separation in my bosom and taking out the vitality from my body. He did this thing in a cruel manner.)

The lover does not care for the world. He bears all the reproaches. He experiences great anguish because of separation from the Lord. Bulha says:

Birhon aa varṃyā vich vehre,

Zoro zor deve tan ghare

Dārū dard nā bajhon tere,

Main sajnā bājh marinī hā.

Mittar piāre kārān nī main lok alāhme lainī hā.

(*Birhon* [separation personified] came into my courtyard and kept me in swoon with its force. There is no other remedy for pain except thee. I am dying without the Beloved. For my Beloved friend I bear the reproaches from the people.)

The lover gets impatient and cries in anguish:

Jāgdiā main ghar vich muṭṭhī,  
 Kadī nahī sā baiṭhī uṭṭhī,  
 Jis dī sū main ose kuṭṭhī,  
 Huṇ kī kar gayā beparvāhī,  
 Mere kiō chir lāyā māhī.

(While waking, I was robbed in my home; I did not move away from the Lord. But He Himself, to whom I belong, has given me a blow. What careless attitude He has borne towards me now? Why my Beloved has not come for a long time?)

Sometimes the lover in extreme love dreams of the Lord, who appears for an instant and then disappears. The lover cries in great agony:

Vekho nī piārā mainū sufne mē chhal gayā  
 (Look, my Beloved has played a trick with me in my dream.).

### *The State of union*

A time comes in the life of the lover, when the night of separation ends and the day of union dawns. The lover dances in ecstasy. He asks the other seekers to congratulate him:

Aao saiyyo raḍ dīo nī vadhāī  
 Main var pāyā Rānjhā Māhī.  
 (Come, O friends, and congratulate me collectively; I have met my Beloved Lord, Rānjha).

As Heer, the mystic had been in search of the Beloved Rānjha. The Beloved comes in the garb of a Yogi and the lover calls himself Yogini of Rānjha (Beloved). Bulha says:

Rānjhā Jogīrā baṇ āyā,  
 Vāh sāgī sāg rachāyā  
 Rānjhā Jogī te main Jugīānī,  
 Is dī khātar bharsā pānī  
 Aivē picchhlī umar viḥānī,  
 Is huṇ mainū bharmāyā.

(Rānjha (Beloved) has come as a Yogi: a wonderful play has been enacted by the actor. Rānjha is a Yogi and I am his

Yoginī. For him I am ready to do any service. My previous life has passed in vain. He has now deluded me.)

The Beloved realised by Bulhe Shah is All-pervading:

Saiyyo huṇ main sājan pāyo nī  
Har hirde vich samāyo nī.

(O friends, I have now realised my Beloved, who resides in every heart.)

Sometimes the mystic asks in wonder:

Kaun āyā pehn libās kuṛe  
Tusī puchho nāl ikhlās kuṛe.

(Who has come in this new garb, O girls; Ask him with affection.)

When in union with the Lord, Bulha wants the removal of the timekeeper from service, so that he may not disturb the state of "Wasal" (union). He says:

Gharaīālī deho nikāl nī  
Aj pī ghar āyā lāl nī  
Gharaī gharaī gharaīāl vajāve  
Rain wasal di piā ghatāve  
Mere man di bāt je pāve,  
Haththon chā saṭṭe gharaīāl nī.

(Turn out the time-keeper; to-day my Beloved Lord has come home. He strikes the hour at intervals and in this way reduces the night of the union. If he understands me, he should throw away the gong from his hand.)

A stage comes in the life of the mystic when he visualises the Lord in everything in the world. Bulha says:

Main pāyā hai main pāyā hai  
Tain aap sarūp vatāyā hai  
Kahū Turk kitābā paṛhte ho  
Kahū Bhagat Hindū jap karte ho  
Kahū ghor ghungat mē paṛte ho  
Har ghar ghar lād ladāyā hai.

(I have realised, I have realised. Thou hast changed Thy form. Somewhere you are a Turk studying scripture. Somewhere you are a Hindu absorbed in devotion. Somewhere you conceal yourself in a thick veil. You also fondle in every home.)

When the Supreme light appears, the mystic becomes dumb. He cannot divulge the secrets. Bulhe Shah has conveyed this fact in his verses:

Jadō zāhīr hoe nūr horī  
 Jal gaye pahār Koh Tūr horī  
 Tadon dār charhe Mansūr horī  
 Othe shekhī mehnđī nā tehndī ay  
 Mūh aai bāt nā rehndī ay  
 Je zāhīr karā isrār tāi  
 Sabh bhul jāwan takrār tāi  
 Phir māran Bulhe yaar tāi,  
 Ethe makhfī gal sohendī ay  
 Mūh aai bāt nā rehndī ay.

(When the Supreme Light became apparent, the Tūr mountain was burnt down. Then Mansūr was hanged on the gallows. None can boast there. I cannot restrain myself from speaking. If I divulge the secret, every one will forget his quarrels. They will give a thrashing to their friend Bulha. It is appropriate here to keep the secret. I cannot restrain myself from speaking.)

Just as a dumb person cannot explain the taste of sugar, in a similar manner the mystic cannot relate the ecstatic state of the union. Bulha says:

Jad wasal wasāl bahāīai gā  
 Tā gunge kā gur khāīai gā  
 Sir pair nā apnā pāīai gā

(When the state of union will be realised, then it will be realised like sugar by a dumb person. The sense of self (duality) will come to an end.)

The nature of the union has been related by Bulha in the following few words:

Gal karde sã

Gal ghuḍde sī

(When I talked about it, my throat was squeezed.)

In this state of union, Bulhe Shah forgets his entity. There is oneness and unity only. There is complete merger and this is the state of *fanā* or *Lahūt*. Bulha says:

1. Mainū kī hoyā maithō gāī gavāṭt main  
Jiō kamlī ākhe lokā mainū kī hoyā  
Main vich vekhan te main nahī baṇdī  
Main vich vasnā en tū  
Sir to pairī teek vī tu hī  
Andar bāhar tū.

(What has happened to me? 'Mineness' has disappeared from me. Like a mad woman I say, "O people, what has happened to me? when I see within myself, I do not see myself, you live within me. From head to feet you are there; you are there in both interior and exterior.)

2. Bulha kī jāṇā main kauṇ.

(Bulha says, "I do not know, who I am?"')

The Lord plays hide and seek with the mystic. In the words of Bulha:

Tusī chhipade sī, asī pakare ho

Tusī aje chhapan nū takare ho.

(You were hiding yourself, but I caught you. But still you are powerful to conceal yourself.)

Bulhe Shah realises the Lord both outwardly and inwardly; outwardly in various forms and inwardly as Supreme Light. Heer (The seeker) meets Rānjhā (The Lord). Bulha says:

Heer Rānjhe de ho gaye mele

Bhullī Heer dhundhēdī bele,

Rānjhā Yār baghal vich khele

Mainū sudh budh rahī nā kī.

(Heer and Rānjhā have met. Heer had gone astray in seeking him, but the Beloved Rānjhā was playing in her own enclosure. I had lost all my senses.)

*The part of murshid in the development of a Sufi*

Through the guidance of the *murshid*, the seeker can realise the final spiritual stage i. e. the realisation of God. It is the *murshid*, who gives the primary formula (*mantra*, *Kalimah*) and the Name of the Lord to the *Sālik*. This intoxicates his soul and his heart is divested of the passions. The *Sālik* is inspired by the *murshid*, and he beholds the secret knowledge of God, with which the heart of the preceptor is filled. The *murshid*, is a *kalāl* or the wine-vendor for him, from whom he gets the wine of the love of God.

The *sālik* rejoices in the company of his *murshid* because he is endowed with divine qualities. The *sālik* under the guidance of the *murshid* adopts the godly attributes in his life, whereby he makes steady progress on the spiritual path.

Bulhe Shah has named his *murshid* in several of his verses, about which we have already written earlier. He speaks of him with great reverence. At one place he says:

1. Pāyā hai kichh pāyā hai  
Mere satgur alakh lakhāyā hai

(I have realised, I have realised something. My true Guru (*murshid*) has enabled me to know the Unknowable.)

2. Binā murshidon kāmīl Bulhia  
Teri aivē gayī ibādat kītī.

(Without the guidance of the perfect *murshid*, your worship has gone waste.)

For the union with the Lord, the *sālik* has to pass through several stages. Bulha himself has mentioned these stages in one of his Kāfīs:

Shariat merī māī hai,  
Tariqat merī dāī hai,  
Aggon haq haqīqat āī hai  
Te mārīfatō kujh pāyā hai,  
Tuk boojh kaun luk āyā hai.

(*Shariat* is my mother, *tariqat* is my nurse, then comes *haqīqat*. I have realised something from *mārīfat* also. Try to understand a little, who has come hidden towards me?)

The above verses are a clear proof that the Sufi has to accept *shari'at* as the indivisible body of doctrine and practice. Like Bulhe Shah, though the Sufis claimed that they followed *shari'at*, they were governed by the requirements of the truly spiritual life. The discipline of the *shari'at* prepared the *sālik* for the path, i. e. *tarīqat*. The custodians of *shari'at* were the *mullahs*, who sometimes followed the corrupt methods, the truly spiritual Sufis like Bulhe Shah revolted against them. The Sufi imbued with *Ishq* could not tolerate formalism enjoined by the priests. That is why Bulhe Shah is dubbed as a rebel. When a Sufi rises high on the path of realisation, he feels disturbed at the deviations from discipline and revolts against the prevalent *shari'at*. Moreover, the higher perch of divine love makes him say:

Ishq Sharā kī nātā

(What is the relation of Ishq (love) and Sharā (law) ?)

He lives in freedom and rises above bondage of law. *Shari'at* is the lowest form of spiritual existence. It is called humanity (*nāsūt*). In *shari'at* the disciple lives according to law. Then he enters the next stage of nature of angels (*malakūt*) or the pathway of purity (*Tarīqat*). The third stage is the possession of power (*Jabarūt*), for which there is knowledge (*mārifat*). The fourth and the last stage is *fanā* for which there is truth (*haqīqat*). Bulhe Shah experienced all these stages by the grace of his murshid Shāh Ināyat Qādiri. Various steps towards the knowledge of God experienced by Bulhe Shah were service (*ubūdīyah*), love (*ishq*), seclusion (*zuhd*), knowledge (*mārifah*), ecstasy (*wajd*), truth (*Haqīqat*), union with God (*wasl*), and total absorption into God (*fanā*). Recitations (*dhikr*) played an important part in all this development.

#### *The Impact of other Religious Systems*

While studying the lyrics of Bulhe Shah, one notices, the impact of the following religious and other systems:

1. Buddhism
2. Neo-Platonism
3. Vedantic thought



4. Nathism
5. Vaishnavism and
6. Sikhism.

The saints of the Qādirī order in India extend very far the process of compromise with Hindu thought and custom. They studied in depth the philosophy of India. Prince Dara Shikoh wrote a commentary on some of the Upanishads. Ināyat Shāh, the murshid of Bulhe Shah in one of his books *Dastūr-ul-Amal*, has related various methods for the attainment of salvation. The most important of these methods raises the seeker to status of *param-hamsa*. This knowledge has its impact on Greek mystics, where it was carried by the solidiers of Alexander the Great. Afterwards this knowledge was borrowed from Greece by the mystics of Islam.

*Impact of Buddhism:* In the time of Bulhe Shah, Buddhism had not been living force in India. It had cast its influence on Sufism in its original stages. It had spread in Middle Eastern countries and Egypt. The earlier influences of Buddhism on Sufism can only be traced in the poetry of Bulhe Shah in the context of the following major points:

1. Renunciation
2. Mystical thinking.

They are fundamentals of Sufism. Besides them the other elements of Buddhism in Sufism are consideration of this world as the house of sorrows and the withdrawal from it: realisation of the state of *hal* through introspection; passing the life in a *khangah*, the worshipping of the *pīrs* and *faqīrs*. Bulhe Shah adopted these elements of Buddhism through tradition.

The concept of sorrow in Bulhe's poetry emanates from the separation from the Lord, and also from the prevalent selfishness among all the relatives.

*Impact of Neo-Platonism:* Neo-Platonists believed that the Supreme Good was the source of all things. It was self-existent and the creation was the reflection of its own Being. Thus the whole nature was permeated with God. Matter was a temporary but ever-moving shadow in which the Divine embodied itself. The Neo-Platonists were of the view that man could merge in the Supreme Good by ecstasy and contemplation. We

find all these thoughts in Sufi poetry and also in the poetry of Bulhe Shah. There was however, one important difference between Neo-Platonists and the Sufis regarding the conception of God. Whereas God of Neo-Platonists was purely abstract, God of Sufis was essentially personal. In short, Neo-Platonism was the doctrine of ecstasy, which can be easily verified from the poetry of Bulhe Shah.

*Impact of Hindu Thought:* There are several similarities in Hindu and Sufi thought. Hindu thought, in its climax, is the Vedantic thought. *Brahm Sutra*, *Upanishads* and *Gita* constitute the *Prasthanas Treya* in which we have *Brahm-Vidyā* (Learning about God). We have already seen that the *Wujūdiyyā* school of Sufis is monistic. It believes only in one Essence, i. e. God. For this school everything is God and its creed is *Hama Osi* (All is He). The school of Vedānta is very old. Shankaracharya, who wrote commentaries on *Prasthanas Treya*, was a monist. His philosophy is called *Advaita*. His creed was "*Tat Tvam Asi*" (Thou art That), which connotes that everything is God. According to Shankaracharya, God is the only Reality. God is Transcendent as well as Immanent. Thus *Wahdatul-Wujūdiyyā* is similar to *Advaita*. There is also the Sufi doctrine of *Shūhūdiyyā* very similar to the *Vishishtā-Advaita* of Ramanuja. It conveys the idea of "Multiplicity within God." The Hindu philosophy of the "modifications of Brahman" has a close resemblance to the Sufi doctrine of *tanazzulāt*. The Sufi *fanā* can be compared with the Upanishadic *moksha*.

The Hindu doctrine of transmigration does not find a place in Muslim philosophy. Since Bulhe Shah has used the word *Āwāgaun* in one of his *Kāfis*, Lajwanti Rama Krishna, the author of *Panjabi Sufi Poets*, thought that Bulhe Shah had belief in reincarnation. The word *Āwāgaun* only points to the general coming (birth) and going (death) in the world. Dr. Mujeeb, author of *The Indian Muslims* has also refuted the above claim on the basis of the examples given in proof of this viewpoint.

In practical life, the *Sālik* needs the guidance of a *pīr-murshid* or a *shaikh*. It has close correspondence with the practical life of a Hindu *sādhak* (practiser), who must work on the spiritual plane under the supervision of a Guru (preceptor).

*Impact of Nathism:* The Shattārī saint Shaikh Muhammad Ghawth of Gwalior is said to have studied Sanskrit and wrote

some books. His work *Kālid-i-Makhāzin* (Key to Treasures) combines Sufi doctrines with astrological theories. Another work written by him entitled *Bahr-al-Hāyāt* (Sea of Life) gives an insight into the methods of self-discipline and breath-control as practised by the Yogis. The Shattārī practice of Yoga and breath-control had its impact on the Qādirīs also. The breath-control aspect of *samā* had its parallel in the practices of individual *dhikr* techniques. The Arabic and Persian translations of *Amrit-Kunda*, a Sanskrit work dealing with the principles of Yoga, were also available.

Bulhe Shah inherited his interest in breath-control of the Yogis through his Shattārī elders. He has written in one of his Kāfis:

Tain Kāran habsī hoe hā  
 Nau darwāje band kar soe hā  
 Dar daswē ān khāloe hā  
 Kade man merī asnāi.

(On account of Thee, I have become a *habsi* (a Yogi practising breath-control) I have closed the nine doors (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth and the organs of procreation and elimination) and have slept in their context. I am standing at the tenth door. Kindly accept my love).

Bulhe Shah also talks of *anahat shabda* (Unstruck sound).

*Impact of Vaishnavism:* Vaishnavism had been a prominent Bhakti cult in India. The highest stage in love of God in Vaishnavism, is called *prapatti*, which is absolute self-surrender. In this stage the lover wishes for what is agreeable to the Beloved Lord. He has firm faith that he would be saved by the Lord. He places himself at the service of the Lord with a feeling of littleness and solicits His protection. We find all these elements in the verses of Bulhe Shah. The ultimate goal in Vaishnavism consists in enjoying the presence of Narayana (Lord), but without His Grace, the goal cannot be achieved. Bulhe Shah also talks of the *Fadl* (grace) of the Beloved. In his Kāfis, we find wifely devotion for the Lord. This is known as *kāntā bhakti* in Vaishnavism. At times, the Vaishnava colour becomes very dominant in Bulhe's poetry. He talks of Krishna or Sham Sundar as his Lord. In one of his Kāfis, he says:

Murli bāj uṭhṭhī anghātā.  
Sun sun bhul gayyā sabh bātā  
Sun sun Shām Sundar dia bātā  
Bulhe Shah main tad birlāī  
Jad dī murli Kāhn bajār  
Bauri ho ke tain wal dhāī  
Kahō jī kit wal dast barātā.

(The flute is being played suddenly (by Lord Krishna). Hearing the flute of (the Beloved) and also the talk about Him, I have forgotten everything else. When the Lord played on the flute, I, Bulhe Shah, cried in agony. I became mad and ran towards the Lord. The lover (gopi) asks, with whom the gift of love is being shared?)

In another Kāfī Bulhe Shah addresses His Lord as *Kāhn* (Krishna:)

Bansī Kāhn achraj bajāī  
(Lord Krishna has played wonderfully on his flute.)

*Impact of Sikhism:* The Qādirīs had great regard for the Sikh movement. On a request from Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, the great Qādirī saint Mian Mīr laid the foundation-stone of the Golden Temple. Bulhe Shah himself remembers with great reverence Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs for his unique martyrdom and also Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru for organising the peasantry into a militant force against the corrupt rulers. He says:

Kahū Tegh Bahādur Ghāzī ho  
Kahū apnā Panth banāyā hai.  
(Somewhere you (O God) appear as the Martyr, Tegh Bahadur and somewhere you have created your own Panth (Path).)

The Panth seems to be a reference to the Sikh Movement. The Sikh peasants attired in coarse cloth are called *Bhooriā wāle* by Bulha, who rose against the Mughal tyrants.

The Sikhs and Sufis were both lovers of one God, who in their spiritual endeavours, were guided by their preceptors. Both held musical festivals and sang the praises of the Lord Almighty. The musical modes (*Rāgas* and *Rāginīs*) were dear to both. Bulhe Shah composed his Kāfīs in various *Rāgas*.

## Poetic Style of Bulhe Shah (in the context of Punjabi Sufi poetry)

### *A Short Note on Punjabi Sufi Poetry*

Punjabi Sufi poetry is generally lyric poetry. The Kāfis of Shah Hussain and Bulhe Shah are melodious songs, which delve deep into the hearts of seekers. These songs exhibit their philosophy. Since the time of Baba Farid, the Sufi poets have adopted the popular forms of versification and poetry. Baba Farid wrote *shlokas* (mostly couplets) and *padās* (hymns). His *padās* and the Kāfis of Shah Hussain and Bulhe Shah had been composed in *Rāgas* and *Rāginīs* (musical modes). The forms of versification generally used by the Sufi poets are *Dohirā*, *Davayyā*, *Chaupāī* and *Baint*. The forms of poetry used by them are *Kāfī*, *Dohare*, *Bārāmāhā*, *Siharfī*, *Athvārā*, etc.

The Sufi poetry is also rich in imagery and symbols. Whereas the images of *Surāhī* and *Piālā*, Tigris and Euphrates were popular in Persian Sufi poetry, the popular images in Punjabi Sufi poetry are those of *trinjhan* (sisters of the spinning-wheel) and *ghanā* (Chenab, the river of love). Whereas the romance of Heer and Rānjhā has attracted the Qissa poets, it has given two symbols of Heer (*aashiq*—lover) and Rānjhā (*maashūq*—Beloved) to the Sufi poets. The seeker is symbolised as Heer who pines to meet her Beloved Rānjhā. The symbol for the world is *pekā ghar* (the house of the parents) and that of the abode of the Lord (*Sāhurā ghar*—the house of in-laws). There is *trinjhan* in *pekā ghar*, where in the company of her friends, the virgin has to prepare a suitable gift for the Lord. She has to work on the *Charkhā* (spinning wheel) of her body and has to prepare the cotton thread of virtues. In Sufi poetry, the man of the world has also been symbolised as a *musāfir* (a wayfarer) and a *saudāgar* (a trader). This world is a *sarāi* (an inn) in the

way, where the stay of the traveller and trader is short-lived. Bulhe Shah has used the symbols of Krishna and Rama for God. He says:

Bindrāban mē gaoō charaē  
Lankā charḥ ke nād vajāē  
Makke dā Hājī ban aāē  
Vāhvā rang vatāī dā  
Hun kistō aap chhapāī dā

(You graze the cows in Vrindavan and sound the horn in Lanka. You become the Hājī of Mecca also. You change your colour (and from) wonderfully. From whom you conceal yourself now?)

The Sufi poets have greatly enriched Punjabi poetry. They have significantly exhibited Punjabi culture in their verses. They have contributed a great deal towards the betterment of Indian life in general like Indian saints and Gurus, because of their spiritual trend.

#### *Poetic Style of Bulhe Shah*

Carlyle wrote in *Sartor Resartus*: "The universe is but one vast symbol of God, nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a symbol of God." The Creator has, thus created innumerable symbols in the universe. The poet or the artist, who creates poesy or a piece of art, creates several symbols in his work. They are the act of his imagination. The mind of a mystic or lover of God may visualise God anywhere and everywhere in the vast creation. He may see God in any garb; in heaven, netherworld or earth. Bulhe Shah is both monotheist and a monist. Therefore, the One Lord for him is All-pervading. He is Omnipresent. In the moment of realisation, Bulha says:

Hun kis thī aap chhapāī dā  
Kite Mullā ho bulende ho  
Kite sunnat farz dasende ho  
Kite Ram duhāī dende ho  
Kite maththe tilak lagāī dā  
Belī Allah wālī mālīk ho  
Tusī aape apne sālīk ho  
Aape khalqat aape Kālīq ho

Aape amar māruf karāi dā  
 Kidhre chor ho kidhre qāzi ho  
 Kite mimbar te beh waazī ho  
 Kite Tegh Bahādūr ghāzi ho  
 Aape apna katak chaḥḥāi dā  
 Bulha Shah huṇ saḥi sinjhāte ho  
 Har sūrat nāl pachhāte ho  
 Kite aate ho kite jaate ho  
 Huṇ maithō bhul nā jāi dā  
 Huṇ kis tō aap chhapāi dā.

(From whom wilt Thou conceal Thyself now? Somewhere Thou art a Mullah and call (the faithful for prayers). Somewhere Thou givest instructions regarding the discipline. Somewhere Thou criest out for Justice in the name of Rama. Somewhere Thou putst frontal mark on the forehead. O Lord, Thou art the Master as well as the *sālik*; Thou hast created Thyself; Thou also makest Thy order cognisable. Somewhere Thou art a thief and somewhere a Qāzi (Judge). Somewhere Thou art a preacher on the stage. Somewhere Thou art the Martyr Tegh Bahadur; somewhere Thou sendst Thy own forces for war. I have now rightly recognised Thee, says Bulha. I have now recognised Thee in every form. Thou comest somewhere and goest somewhere. Now do not make me forget Thee. From whom wilt Thou conceal Thyself now?)

But Bulha also adopts one particular garb for himself and particular allied garb for God. Since he loves his Lord passionately, he acts as the wife/woman of the Lord, whereby he can exhibit the intensity of his love. He puts himself in the garb of a popular lover Heer, who is in search of her beloved Rānjhā. The Punjabi Sufi adopts the symbol of a woman for himself like other saints of the Bhakti Movement. This tendency may be compared with the trend of the Persian Sūfīs, who adopt the garb of men (like Majnū and Farhād) and languish in separation from their beloved women (like Lailā and Shīri). The Indian Sufis have adopted the symbols like Indian saints. They became the sons of the soil.

The symbols of Heer and Rānjhā were earlier used by Shah Hussain in his Kāfīs. Bulhe Shah followed him in this respect. With the *dhikr* of the Beloved Rānjhā in her heart, Heer attain-

ed unity with her Lord. The mystic Bulha, on the realisation of the Lord sings in the following manner:

Rājhā Rājhā kardī nī main aape Rājhā hoī  
Saddo nī mainu Dhīdo Rājhā Heer nā aakho koī)

(Repeating the name of may Lord Rānjhā, I have become Rānjhā myself. Nobody should call me by name Heer; call me Dhīdo Rānjhā.)

In the romance of Heer Rānjhā, Rānjha comes in the garb of a Yogi from his village Takhat Hazara in order to meet Heer in the house of her in-laws. Heer after a long spell of separation, is overjoyed to meet her beloved. Bulhe Shah as Heer sings on the arrival of the Lord in the following manner:

Bulha Shah dī eh gat pāī  
Peet purānī shor macāī  
Eh gal keekū chhapāī chhapāī  
Nī Takhat Hazārīō dhāyā.  
Rānjhā jogīrā ban āyā  
Vāh sāgi sāg rachāyā.

(Bulha has known this secret of the Lord; he has responded the old love. How can this fact be concealed? He has come from Takhat Hazārā. Rānjhā has come in the garb of a Yogi. What a wonderful mimicry this mimic has enacted.)

Since *Ishq* (Love) is the central theme of the poetry of Bulhe Shah, he has created several images in this context. The *ishq* has been given the form of a tiger, a butcher, a forest, a trumpet, a Mullah, etc. As a tiger, it eats meat and drinks blood. As a butcher, it has done away with many God-lovers, whose names have been mentioned by Bulhe Shah from Middle Eastern and Indian history and mythology.

The ultimate aim of every human being is the realisation of God, whose abode is the real abode of every soul. Therefore, the symbol used for every human being is that of a virgin, who has to leave the home of her parents and ultimately go to the abode of her Lord. In this sense, this world, is *pekā ghar* (the house of the parents) and the abode of the Lord is *suāhrā ghar* (the house of the in-laws). But that virgin will be



received with respect in the house of the Lord, who in the house of her parents (i.e. in this world) has prepared a gift in order to become worthy of the Lord. Bulhe Shah addresses the man of the world as a virgin (*kurī*). The virgin has to prepare her own dowry (of godly qualities) on her spinning wheel (the body). While our soul is in the body, we have to inculcate the godly qualities in order to become dear to the Lord. Bulhe Shah says :

Kar kattan wal dhiān kuṛe  
 Charkhā baṇiā khātir terī  
 Khedan dī kar hiras thoṛerī,  
 Hoṇā nahiō hor vaderī  
 Mat kar koī agyān kuṛe. . . .  
 Rāj pekā din chār kuṛe  
 Nā khedo khed guzar kuṛe,  
 Nā ho vehlī kar kār kuṛe  
 Ghar bār nā kar veerān kuṛe. . . .  
 Jad ghar begānc jāvē gī  
 Muṛ vat nā othō āvē gī  
 Othe jā ke pachhotavē gī  
 Kujh agdon kar samiān kuṛe.

(O virgin, pay attention towards spinning. The spinning-wheel has been made for you. Pay very little attention towards playing; you are already a major one and be not ignorant about this. You have to enjoy the parental home for a short period, which should not be spent in playing. You should work and not waste time. Do not make your home a waste solitude. When you will go to another's home, you will not be able to come back and then you will repent.)

The main objective before Bulhe Shah is the realisation of God, but that can only be achieved through the guidance of *murshid* (preceptor). Therefore love and reverence for the preceptor is exhibited symbolically in his verses. Ināyat Shāh, the *murshid*, is often addressed as *Yār* (Beloved), *Piāriā* (Beloved), *Māhī* (Rānjhā) *Tabīb* (Doctor), etc. Some of these epithets are used by Bulhe Shah for God, because in the higher spiritual stages, God and *Murshid* becomes one.

For Bulhe Shah, Chandal or Jhanā (river Chenab) is a

symbol of love because the romance of Heer 'Rānjhā' occurred on its banks. Like Rānjhā, the word *Dholā* has been used for God. The *murshid* is also called *kalāl* (wine-seller). One who strikes at the gong (*ghaṛiālī*) symbolises time. The seeker (*Sādhak/sālik*) is called the *bakrā* (He-goat). The letter "meem" added with *Ahd* (*nirguna*/Transcendent Lord) or a *dot* placed under *Ain* are symbols for the Immanent Lord (*saguna*). *Ahd* with "meem" becomes Ahmed or *Nūr-ul-Muhammadiyyā*. The man of the world is called a *Saudāgar* (*trader*) and the world itself is a *Sarāi* (a caravan-sarai or an inn). Death is symbolised as a crow, who may suddenly snatch away the cotton or cotton-thread prepared by the virgin. A deer is also a symbol for death. Whereas the word *Kāhn* has been used for God, the word *gopi* is meant for the seeker and the sound of *murlī* for the spark of love. The *murshid* is symbolised as weaver, who gives shape to the cotton thread in a warp (*tāñī*), which has been prepared by the virgin (*seeker*). Such like images, we find in the poetry of Bulhe Shah.

## 6

### Select Kafis of Bulhe Shah

#### I

Pāyā hai kich Pāyā hai  
Mere Satgur Alakh lakhāyā hai—Rahao

Kahū bair paṛā kahū belī hai  
Kahū Majnu haī kahū Lelī hai  
Kahū āp Gurū kahū chelī hai

Āp āp kā panth batāyā hai 1  
Kahū mahjat kā vartārā hai  
Kahū baṇiā Thākurdwārā hai  
Kahū Bairāgī Jat dhārā hai  
Kahū Shekhan ban ban āyā hai 2  
Kahū Turk musalmā paṛhte ho  
Kahū bhagat Hindu Jap karte ho  
Kahū ghor ghungat mē paṛte ho  
Har ghar ghar lāḍ lāḍāyā hai 3  
Bulha main thī bemohtaj hoā  
Mahārāj miliā merā kāj hoā  
Darsan piā kā mujhai ilāj hoā  
Āp āp main āp samāyā hai 4

#### II

Bas kar jī huṇ bas kar jī  
Kāī gal asā nāl bas kar jī  
Tū moiā nū mār nā mukdā saī  
Phaṛ khiddo vāgū kuṭdā saī  
gal karde sā gal ghutdā saī  
Huṇ tīr lāioee kas kar jī 1

I

I have realised, I have realised something  
My true Guru hath helped me in knowing the Unknowable.

—Pause

Somewhere He is inimical, somewhere He is friendly,  
Somewhere He is Majnu, somewhere He is Laila,  
Somewhere He is preceptor Himself, somewhere He is  
disciple,

He himself hath shown the Path leading towards Him. 1

Somewhere He is known to reside in a mosque,  
Somewhere He is known to live in a temple,  
Somewhere He poses as a recluse with matted hair,  
Somewhere He appears as a Shaikh. 2  
Somewhere He is a Turk reading holy books,  
Somewhere He is a Hindu saint busy in recitations,  
Somewhere He conceals Himself in thick veils,  
Somewhere He showers affection in every house. 3

I solely depend upon the Lord, says Bulha,

I realised Him and my wish was fulfilled:

His sight was the remedy for me,

He hath merged Himself in every being. 4

II

Put an end to it, now put an end to it  
Talk something to me smilingly  
You did not cease to hurt the afflicted one  
You used to catch him and beat him like a ball;  
You stifled the throat on every uttering  
Now You have shot an arrow violently. 1

Tusī chipade so asī pakṛe ho  
 Tusi aje chapaṇ nū takṛe ho  
 asā hirde andar jakṛe ho  
 Huṇ kidhar jāso nas kar jī 2  
 Bulhē Shah tere asī barde sā  
 Terā mukh dekhan nū masde sā  
 Teriā arzā mīntā karde sā  
 Huṇ baith pinjar vic kas kar jī 3

## III

Hoe naiṇ naiṇā de barde  
 Darshan Saiā kohā tō karde  
 Pal pal doṛan zarā na ḍarde 1  
 Lag giā nehō tā sharam sidhāi  
 (Main vic) haumai rahī nā kāi  
 Jab kī tum siō prīt lagāi. 2 Rahao—  
 Dō dō ishq nagāre vajade  
 Āshiq dekh use val bhajade  
 tar tar tarak gae lar lajde  
 Tain koī lālāc ghat bharmāi. 3  
 main jātā ishq sukhālā hai  
 choh nadiā vahṇ ujālā hai  
 Kadi ag bharke kadi pālā hai  
 Nit birhō jarāt lagāi. 4  
 Piā bas kar bohti hoī  
 Terā ishq merī diljoi  
 merā tudh bin avar na koī  
 Ammā bābal bhain nā bhāi. 5  
 Jab wasal wasāl bahāiaigā  
 Tab gunge kā guṛ khāiaigā  
 Sir pair na apnā pāiaigā  
 meri sudh budh rahī nā kāi. 6  
 Tain kāran habsī hoe hā  
 Naū darwāje band kar soe hā  
 Dar daswe ān kharoe hā  
 Kade man merī ashnāi. 7  
 Bulhe shah main tain pah vāre hā  
 Tere dekhan ke vaṇjāre hā  
 Kuch asī bhī tainū piāre hā  
 ki maihiō ghol ghumāi. 8

I have caught You in spite of your concealment  
But You are strong enough to conceal Yourself  
I have imprisoned You in my heart,  
Where will You run away now? 2  
I was Your slave, says Bulhe Shah,  
I was dying to have Your sight,  
I requested and supplicated You  
Now keep seated firmly in the body. 3

### III

Mine eyes have become the slaves of Thine eyes  
Whom they see from hundreds of miles  
They run every moment fearlessly. 1  
With the growth of love the shyness ended  
Not an iota of ego was left,  
When I fell in love with Thee. 2 *Pause*  
The trumpets of love are resounding,  
Hearing them, the lovers run towards the place  
All the strings of shyness broke down  
Thou hast enticed me. 3  
I thought that love was an easy affair  
But it is a high current of four streams,  
At times the fire bursts, at times it is cold  
The separation works as conflagration. 4  
O Beloved, end with it, I have suffered much  
Thy love is my prop,  
For me there is none other than Thee  
Neither mother nor father, nor sister nor brother. 5  
When the hour of meeting comes,  
Then the bliss will be inexpressible  
No sense of self will be left  
I shall not be in senses. 6  
For Thee I have regularised my breath  
I have closed nine doors for sleep  
I am standing at the tenth door  
Kindly accept my love. 7  
I am a sacrifice to Thee, my Lord, says Bulha,  
I wish to have a sight of Thee  
Dost Thou respond my love?  
Or it is only from my side. 8

## IV

Belī jit ghar terā pher hoā  
 uh jal bal mātt dher hoā  
 Tan rākh uḍi tā ser hoā  
 Ishqā maithe āyā hain  
 Tū āyā hain main pāyā hain.—1—Rahao  
 Jakrīe sir kalvatar dittoī  
 Jūsab hato hat vikioī  
 Ibrahim chikha vic Pāioī  
 Au mainū kiā lai āyā hain. 2  
 Ikñā de posh labāī de  
 Ik āria nal chivāī de  
 Ik sūlī chāe divāī de  
 kar kis gal da sadhrāīā hain. 3  
 Bulhā shah de kārān karan kar  
 Tan Bhaththī et man āhraṇ kar  
 vic dil da lohā māvaṇ kar  
 Lohāra kin atkaiā hain. 4

## V

Dilbar sambhal ke neh lāē  
 Pichō Pachotavahgā  
 Othai Ishq Zalikhā hai  
 Othai āshiq tarfan sai  
 Othai majnū kardā hai  
 Othai tū kiā liāvah gā. 1  
 Jāhi je janā pher  
 Othai beparvāhiā dher  
 Othai dahl khalōde sher  
 Othai tū bhī chaliā jāvehgā. 2  
 Kalālā da ghar pāse  
 Othoi āveṇ mast piāse  
 Bhar bhar piṇ piāle khāse  
 Othai tū bhī jio lalcavah gā. 2  
 Bulhā ghair-sharā na hoe  
 Sukh dī nīdar bhar kar soe  
 Analhaq nā mukhō bugoe  
 Chaṛ sūlī dholū gāvah gā. 4

IV

O Friend, the house you entered  
Burnt down and became a heap of ashes.  
Thou wert satisfied when the ashes blew away  
O love, Thou hast come to me  
Thou hast come and I have owned thee. | *Pause*  
Thou didst put the saw over the head of Zakriya,  
Thou wert the cause of the sale of Joseph at various shops  
Thou didst throw Ibrahim in the funeral pyre  
What hast thou in store for me? 2  
There are some whose skin was peeled  
There are some who were sawed alive  
There are some who were hanged  
What hast thou in store for me? 3  
For the sake of the Lord, says Bulha  
The body is made the furnace and the mind the anvil  
On which the hammer of love is struck  
Then melted the iron in the fire. 4

V

O lover, be cautious in thy love  
Otherwise thou wilt repent  
There the love is of Zulaikha  
There hundreds of lovers writhe in pain  
There Majnu sighs aloud  
What wilt thou get there? 1  
Go, if thou art adamant  
There are many irregularities there  
There the tigers tremble with fear  
Thou wilt also be beguiled there. 2  
The house of the wine-vendors is aside  
Where the addicts and thirsty come  
And drink the cups filled to the brim  
Thou wilt also feel tempted. 3  
Do not over-ride the formal religion  
And sleep in comfort all the time  
Do not utter "Anal Haq" (I am God)  
Otherwise thou wilt be hanged singing  
the song of love. 4



VI

Huṇ kis the āp chapāida  
 Mansūr bhī taithe āyā hai  
 Tain sūlī pakar chaḡhāyā hai  
 Tain khof nā kīto sāī da 1  
 Kahū shekh mashāiq bonā hain  
 Kahū udiāni baithā ronā hain  
 Tera ant nā kahū pāī da. 2  
 Bulhe Nalō chulhā changā  
 Jis te Tām pakāī da  
 Ral Faqirā maslat kītī  
 Bhorā bhorā pāī da 3

VII

Kī karda kī kardā vo  
 Pucho to Dilbar kī kardā vo—Pause  
 Ikse ghar vic vasdiā rasdiā  
 Nahī baṇḍā vic paṛdā vo 1  
 Vahdat da dariāo satrāṇā  
 Kōi dubdā kōi tardā vo 2  
 Balha Shah nu āṇ milavo  
 Māhram hai is ghar dā vo. 3

VIII

Meri bukkal de vic cor  
 Sādho kisnū kūk suṇāvā  
 Meri bukkal de vic cor  
 Kite Rāmdas kite Fateh muhammad  
 Iho kadīmī shor  
 Musalmān Sive tō chiḡhde  
 Hindu chiḡhde gor  
 Chuk gaye sabh jhagre jheṛe  
 Nikal gaya kōī hor  
 Sadho kisnū kūk sunāvā  
 Meri bukkal de vic cor 1

VI

From whom dost thou hide thyself?  
Mansur didst come to thee  
And thou didst hang him  
Why didst thou not fear the Lord? 1  
Sometime thou dost appear as a Shaikh  
Sometime thou dost weep in the solitude  
None hath been able to know thee. 2  
The hearth is better than Bulha  
On which the bread is baked  
The Faqirs together came to a decision  
And distributed the small morsels. 3

VII

What does he do, what does he do?  
Ask the Beloved what does he do?—*Pause*  
Residing in the same house  
the curtain is not desirable. 1  
The powerful river of Unity flows  
someone is drowned and someone swims. 2  
Bring about the meeting of the Lord with Bulha  
Who knows the secrets of this house. 3

VIII

There is a thief in the wrappings around me  
in the wrappings around me  
O hermits, whom should I declare that  
there is a thief in the wrappings around me  
Somewhere He is Ramdas, somewhere He is Fateh Muhammad  
this is the cry from the ancient times  
The Muslims abhor the practice of burning the dead  
and Hindus detest the burials in graves  
All the quarrels have now ended  
Someone else hath appeared  
O hermits, whom should I declare that  
there is a thief in the wrappings around me, 1

Jis dhūdiā tis pāyo nāhī  
 Jhur jhur hoyā mor  
 Āp Sāhib jis nū bhāl laye  
 Mainū use di gat zor  
 Jehrā lekh mathe dā likhyā  
 Kaṇ kare bhan tor  
 Sadho kis nū kūk sunāvā  
 Meri bukkal de vic cor: 2  
 Pīr Pīrā Baghdad asādā  
 Murshid Takhat Lahore  
 Uh asī sabh ikko koi  
 Āp guddī āp dor  
 Tusī pakar laho main dasnā hā  
 Bulhā Shah da cughl-khor  
 Sadho kis nū kūk sunāvā  
 Meri bukkal de vic cor. 3

## IX

Rājha jogīrā baṇ āyā nī  
 Vāh vāh jogīrā baṇ āyā nī  
 Is jogī de nain katore  
 Bazā vāngū lainde dore  
 Mukh vekhiā dukh jāvan chore  
 Inhā akhiā ne lāl lakhāyā nī  
 Rājha Jogīrā baṇ āyā nī 1  
 Is jogi di kī ve nishānī  
 kan vic mundrā gal vic gānī  
 sūrat usdī yusaf sānī  
 Us alifō Ahd baṇāyā nī  
 Rajhā Jogīrā baṇ āyā nī. 2  
 Rājha jogi te main Jugiānī  
 Usdi khātar bharsā pānī  
 Evē ta pichlī umar vihanī  
 Us huṇ mainū barmāyā nī  
 Rājha jogīrā baṇ āyā nī. 3  
 Bulha Shah di huṇ gat pāi  
 Pit purānī muṛ macāi  
 eh gal kīkar cape capāi  
 huṇ Takhat Hazārīo dhāyā nī  
 Rājha jogīrā baṇ āyā nī. 4

The one who sought Him could not attain Him  
he pined away like a peacock  
Whomsoever the Lord seeks and finds  
I feel stronger because of him  
Whatsoever is written there in the forehead  
who can cause a change in it?  
O hermits, whom should I declare that  
there is a thief in the wrappings around me. 2  
My spiritual guide is at Baghdad  
and preceptor at Lahore  
They are one with me  
like the kite and the cord  
Catch him fast, I shall tell thee  
who is the back-biter of Bulhe Shah?  
O hermits, whom should I declare that  
there is a thief in the wrappings around me. 3

## IX

Ranjha hath come as a Yogi  
It is wonderful, Ranjha hath come as a Yogi.  
The eyes of this Yogi, in wide sockets  
Plunge over the victims like falcons  
All the sorrows end when He comes in sight  
My eyes have realised the dearest Lord. 1  
What is the sign of this Yogi?  
He has rings in his ears and the coloured  
string around his neck  
In his appearance he is like Joseph  
He as *alif* (Unity) hath created *Alid* (God with attributes). 2  
Ranjha is a Yogi and I am his Yogini,  
I shall serve him with all my heart  
My past life hath gone fruitlessly,  
Now He hath deluded me. 3  
Now I have known the Lord, says Bulha,  
The old love hath raised its head again  
How can this fact be concealed?  
He has swiftly come now from Takhat Hazara. 4

Ghariālī deho nikāl nī  
 Aj Pī ghar aya lāl  
 Mainū apnī khabar nā kūī  
 Kiyā jāna main kithai gavāī  
 eh gal kīkū chapal chapāī  
     Huṇ hoyā fazal kamal  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 1  
 Gharī gharī gharīāl vajāve  
 Rain wasal dī kiō ghatāve  
 Mere man dī bāt jo pāve  
     Hathō ca satte gharīāl  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 2  
 Anhad bājā baje shahānā  
 Mutrab sughrā tār tarānā  
 Namaz roza bhul gayā dugānā  
     Mad Piāle den kalāl  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 3  
 Ṭūṇē kāmāṇ karo sawere  
 Jādugar āvaṇ wade wadere  
 kivē kivē vas āyā mere  
     Lakh baras rahī horī nāl  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 4  
 Sāī mukh vekhan de ajab nazāre  
 Dukh duhlat gaye jo pās piāre  
 Cangī rāt vadhī kivē kari pasāre  
     Din agge dharo diwāl  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 5  
 Bulha Shah dī sej piārī  
 Tarī so Tāranhāre Tārī  
 Kivē kivē huṇ āiā vārī  
     Mainū Vichran hoyā muhāl  
     Ghariālī deho nikāl. 6

**X**

Turn out the time-keeper  
My Lord hath' come home to-day.  
I have no knowledge of myself  
I do not know where it hath been lost  
How can this fact be concealed?  
That now the highest of grace hath been  
    bestowed upon me. 1  
He, strikes the big gong time and again  
Why dost he reduce the night of union?  
If he considers the wish of my mind  
He should throw away the gong from his hand. 2  
The unlimited royal music resounds  
The wise singers set the tune  
The duality of prayer and fast has been forgotten  
The wine-vendors present the cups full of wine. 3  
Work out the magic and spells immediately  
Let the eminent magicians come  
With great hardship He hath been won by me  
    after living with others for lakhs of years. 4  
There are queer scenes of the sight of the Lord  
Because of the presence of the Lord all the  
    sorrows have ended  
How the advancing good night should be extended  
Place a wall before the day. 5  
The bed of the beloved Lord is lovely, says Bulha  
The ford-carrier hath ferried me across  
My turn hath come after a long time  
The separation will be most difficult. 6

## XI

Kī kardā huṇ kī kardā  
 Tusī kaho khā dilbar kī kardā  
 Ikse ghar vic vasdiā rasdiā nahī baṇdā huṇ pardā  
 Vic masīt namāz guzāre but-khāne jā sajdā  
 Āp ikko kāī lakh gharā de mālak hai ghar ghar dā  
 Jit val vekhā tit val tū hī har ik dā sang kardā  
 Mūsā te Phiraun baṇā ke do ho kiō kar laṛdā  
 Hāzar nāzar khud navīs hai dozakh kis nū khaṛdā  
 Nāzak bāt hai kiō kahndā nā kah sakda nā jardā  
 Vāh vāh watan kahīdā eho ik dabīda ik saṛdā  
 Wāhdat dā dariāo sacava, uthe disse sabh ko tardā  
 It wal āpe ut wal āpe, āpe sāhib āpe bardā  
 Bulha Shah dā ishq baghelā, rat pīda goshat cardā.

## XII

Mainu kī hoyā huṇ maithō gāī gavātī main  
 kiō kamlī ākhe lokā mainū kī hoyā hai  
 Main vic vekhā te main nahī bandī main vic vasnā ʿtain  
 Sirte pairī tīk bhī tu hī, andar bāhar hain  
 Ik pār ik urār suṇīdā ik berī ik nain  
 Chut paye urvarō parō nā beṛī nā nain  
 Mansūr piāre kihā Analhaq, kaho kahāiā kain  
 Bulhā Shah ose dā zshiq, apnā āp vanjāyā jain

XI

What does He do? now what does He do?  
Tell me, what does the Beloved do?  
Living in the same house, it is not proper to set the curtain  
He performs the prayer in the mosque, but also goes to the  
house of idols;  
He is one, the houses are several lakhs, He is the master  
of each house;  
Whereever I see, Thou art there, accompanying everyone  
Thou has created Moses and Pharoah; why dost Thou  
become two and quarrel?  
He, the All-pervading, prepares the writ Himself; whom does  
He take to the hell?  
It is a delicate affair. why do I not say that? I can  
neither say nor bear  
This is a wonderful land, where one is interred and the  
other is burnt;  
In the river of Unity and Truth every one appears swimming;  
He is on this side and He is on that side, He Himself is  
the Master and the serf;  
The *Ishq* (love) of the Beloved is the tiger, who drinks  
blood and eats meat.

XII

What hath happened-to me? My ego hath now been lost  
Why the people call me mad? What hath happened to me?  
When I see inward, there is no mineness, Thou dost reside in me  
Thou art there from head to feet, Thou art there inward  
and outward,  
I hear of the other bank and this bank, the boat is one  
and the stream is one  
I have risen above from this bank and that bank, there is  
no boat and no stream  
Dear Mansur sai "Anal Haq" (I am God), who caused him to  
say that?  
I am the love of that Lord, says Bulha, I have lost my ego.



## XIII

Pardā kistō rākhī dā  
 kiō ohle bah bah jhākī dā  
 Pahle āpe sājan sājī dā  
 Huṇ dasnā ē sabak namāzī dā  
 Huṇ āyā āp nazāre nū  
     vic Laili baṇ baṇ jhākī dā 1  
 Shah shamas dī khal lahāyo  
 Mansūr nū ca sūlī divāyo  
 Zakriē sir kalvattar dharāyo  
     ki likhya rah gaya bakī dā 2  
 Kun kihā Faikūn kahāyā  
 Becunī dā cūn bassāye  
 Khātar Terī jogat baṇāyā  
     Sir par chattar laulākī dā 3  
 Huṇ sādī val dhāyā hain  
 Na rahndā chapāyā chapāyā hain  
 Kite Bulha Nām dharāyā hain  
 vic ohlā rakhyā khākī dā 4

## XIV

Ishq dī naviō navi bahār  
 Phūk musallā bhan sit lotā  
 Na phaṛ tasbī kāsā sotā  
 Ālim kahndā de de hokā  
     Tark halālō khab murdār 1  
 Umar gavāi vic masitī  
 Andar bhariā nāl palitī  
 Kade namāz vāhdat nā kītī  
     Huṇ kiō karnā ē dhāro dhār 2  
 Jā main sabak ishq dā paṛhiā  
 Masjid kolō jivarā darīā  
 Bhaj bhaj Thakaṛdwāre varīā  
     Ghar vic pāyā māhram yār. 3  
 Ja main ramaz ishq dī pāi  
 mainā tūti mār gavāi  
 Andar bahar hoī safāi  
     Jit val vekhā yāro yār. 4

**XIII**

From whom dost Thou conceal Thy secret?  
Why dost Thou peep from behind the curtain?  
At first Thou didst create me, O Lord,  
Why dost Thou, now, point to the lesson of offering prayers  
Now Thou hast come on the scene  
And peep in the garb of Laili. 1  
Thou didst cause the flaying of the skin of Shah Shamas  
Thou didst cause the hanging of Mansūr  
Thou didst cause the sawing the head of Zakrīyā  
What is more to be accomplished according to the writ? 2  
Thou didst say "Kun" (let it be) and the world was created  
Thou didst cause the expression of the Inexpressible  
The world was created for Thyself  
With the canopy of the sky over the head. 3  
Now Thou hast come to us  
And dost not remain hidden  
Somewhere Thou hast taken the name of Bulha  
Keeping the curtain of the earth in between. 4

**XIV**

The *Ishq* (Love) is ever new and fresh  
Burn the prayer-mat and break the jug  
Do not catch the rosary, cup and staff  
The learned says in a loud voice  
Forsake the right one and adopt the forbidden, 1  
You have wasted the life in the mosque  
Your inner self is full of evil  
You have never performed the prayer for unity  
Why do you lament now? 2  
When I learnt the lesson of love  
My soul feared the mosque  
I ran towards the temple  
I realised the Beloved in my own home. 3  
When I came to know the secret of love  
Mineness and Thineness were destroyed  
I became pure inwardly and outwardly  
I see the Lord everywhere. 4

Hīr Rājā de ho gaye mele  
 Bhulli Hīr dhūdēdī bele  
 Rājā yār baghal vic khele  
     Mainū sudh būdh rahī nā sār. 5  
 Ved Qurānā parh parh thakke  
 Sijde kardiā ghas gaye maththe  
 Na Rabb tīrath na Rabb makke  
     Jin pāyā tin nūr anwār. 6  
 Ishq bhulāyā sijde terā  
 Huṇ kiō aivē aivē pāvē jheṛā  
 Bulha ho raho cup cuperā  
     Cukkī saglī kūk pukār. 7

## XV

Mātī kudam karēdi yār  
 Vāh vāh mātī dī gulzār  
 mātī ghorā mātī jorā mātī da asvār  
 Mātī mātī nu doṛāve mātī dā kharkār  
 Mātī mātī nū māran laggī mātī de hathiār  
 Jis mātī par bohtī mātī, so mātī hankār  
 Mātī bagh baghicā mātī, mātī dī gulzar  
 Mātī mātī nū dekhaṇ āi mātī dī behār  
 Has khed phir mātī hove paindi pān pasār  
 Bulha je eh bujhārat bujhē tā lah sirō bhuē mār

## XVI

Mainū kaṇ pachāne, main kujh ho goī hor nī  
 Hādī mainū sabak parhāiā  
 Othe ghair nā āyā jāyā  
 Mutlak zāt jamāl vikhāyā  
 Vahdat pāyā zor nī. 1  
 Avval ho ke lā-makānī  
 Zahir bātan disdā jānī  
 Rahī na merī nām nishānī  
     Mit gaya jhagrā shor nī. 2  
 Piāre āp jamāl vikhālī  
 Hoe Qalandar hoe mawālī  
 Hansā dī huṇ vekh ke chālī  
     Bhul gāī kīgā tor nī. 3

Heer and Ranjha have met  
Heer led astray searches Him in the wilderness  
But Beloved Ranjha is sporting within her  
I lost control over the senses. 5  
We are tired of studying the Vedas and the Quran,  
Our foreheads have been rubbed in prayers  
God is neither in the holy places nor in Mecca  
Those who realised, they were filled with light  
and beauty. 6  
The love hath made me forget the *sijda* (prostration)  
Why do you, now, raise a quarrel,  
Keep silent, says Bulha,  
All the hue and cry has ended. 7

XV

O friend, the earth is creating disturbance  
Wonderful is the garden of earth  
The horse is of earth, the clothes of earth and the  
driver of earth  
The earth causes the earth to run, the noise is of earth  
The earth goes to kill the earth. The arms are of earth  
The earth on which more earth is heaped, gets puffed up in ego  
The small or big gardens are all of earth  
The earth comes to see the earth and its blossoms  
The earth after enjoyment become earth and lies prostrate  
If you solve this riddle, says Bulha, then throw away all  
the ego from you head on the ground.

XVI

Who will recognise me? I have been transformed  
The preceptor gave me a lesson  
No stranger came there or left  
The Only One Lord exhibited His Beauty  
The Unity expressed its strength. 1  
The Lord, without any special abode, primarily  
Appears outwardly and inwardly  
My entity vanished away  
And all the quarrels and noises ceased. 2  
The Lord showed His Beauty Himself  
I became an intoxicated Faqir of the Lord  
Seeing the nature of the swans,  
The nature of crows was forgotten. 3

## XVII

Murli bāj uththī anghātā  
 Mainū bhul gaīā sabh bātā  
 Lag gaye anhad bāṇ niāre  
 Cuk gaye duniā de kūṛ pasāre  
 Asī mukh dekhaṇ de vaṇjārē

Dūyā bhul gaīā sabh bātā. 1

Asā huṇ cancel mirg phahāyā  
 Ose mainū banh bahāyā  
 Harf dugānā use paṛbhāyā

Rah gaīā do cār rukātā 2

... Bulhē Shah main tad birlāi

Jad dī murli Kāhn bajāi

Baurī hoī te tain val dhāi

Kaho jī kit val dast barātā. 3

## XVIII

Asā bhet sajan de pāe  
 ulte hor zamāne āe  
 Āṇṇia vic ulfat nāhī  
 kiā cāce kiā tāe  
 Pio putrā itfāk nā kāi  
 dhīā nāl nā mae  
 Saciā nū huṇ milde dhakke  
 Jhūṭhe kol bahāe

Irakīā nū cabak paunde  
 gaddō khūd khavāe

Agle jā Bangāle baithe  
 pichhliā farsh vichāe

Bulha jinhā Hukam Hazoorō ādā  
 tindhā nū koṇ hatāe

## XIX

Kujh kat kuṛe, na vat kuṛe  
 Challī lah bharote ghat kuṛe  
 Je pūṇī pūṇī kattē gī

Tā nangī mūl na vatte gi

Sai varhiā de je kattē gī

Tā kāg mārīgā jhut kuṛe. 1

XVII

The flute of the Lord resounded suddenly  
And I forgot all the things  
The queer arrows of *Anhad* (divine music) struck me  
I was freed from the false extensions of the world  
I trade in having the sight of the face of the Lord  
I have forgotten all other things. 1  
I have now entrapped the playful deer  
Who had drawn my whole attention  
He taught me the letters of prayer,  
Only a small portion of which is left to be recited. 2  
I was then deluded, says Bulha,  
When the Lord (Krishna) played on the flute  
I became mad and ran towards Thee  
Tell me which way Thou wilt shower Thy love? 3

XVIII

I have known the secrets of the Lord  
The adverse times have come  
There is no love in the near relatives  
no love in the uncles, younger or elder  
There is no unity in father and son  
in daughters and the mother  
The truthful ones are given blows  
The liars attain nearness  
The fine horses are whipped  
The asses eat green wheat  
The preceding ones have settled in Bengal  
The last ones have pitched their tents  
Those who have brought the orders from the Lord,  
Who has the audacity to remove them?

XIX

O Virgin, spin something, do not wander aimlessly  
Spin a hank of yarn and put it in the basket  
If you spin the small rolls of cotton,  
Then you will not remain naked.  
If you spin for a hundred of years  
The crow will snatch away the yarn. 1

Vic ghaflat jo tain din jāle  
Kat ke kujh na lio sambhāle  
Bajhō guṇ shah apṇe nāle

Terī kiō kar hosī gat kuṛe. 2

Je dāj vihūṇī jāvē gī  
Tā bhalh nā kise bhāvē gī  
uthe shah nu kivē rijhāvē gī

Kujh lai fakrā dī mat kuṛe. 3

Mā pio tere gandhī pāīā  
Aje na tainu khabrā āīā  
Din thoṛe te ca mangāīā

Nā āsē peke vat kuṛe. 4

Tere nāl diā dāj rangāe nī  
unhā sūhē salū pāe nī

Tū ulte pair kiō cae nī

Uthe jāē tā lagge tat kuṛe. 5

Bulhe Shah ghar apṇe āve

Cuṛā bīṛā sabh subāve

Guṇ hosī tā gal lāve

Nahī, rosē nainī rat kuṛe. 6

## XX

Hik alaf paṛho chutkārā hai

Is alfō do tin cār hoe

phir lakh karōṛ hazār hoe

Phir uthō beshumār hoe

Hik alaf dā nuktā niārā hai. 1

Kiō paṛhnā ē gadd kitābā dī

Sir cāīā pand azābā dī

Huṇ hoīā shakal jalādā dī

Agge paindī mushkal bhārā hai. 2

The days that you wasted in idleness  
When you did nothing and preserved nothing  
Without attributes, before the Lord,  
How will you justify yourself? 2  
If you will go without dowry  
You will not be liked by anyone  
How you will please the Lord there  
Take some advice of the Faqīrs. 3  
Your parents put some knots (Gandhā) for marriage  
But you are careless even now  
You have been engaged and a few days are left  
You will not come to your parental home again. 4  
Your fellow friends have got their dowry dyed  
They were wearing red thin cloth  
Why are you acting adversely?  
You will feel sad, when you reach there. 5  
When the Lord comes home, says Bulha,  
All the nuptial adornments look fine  
If you have the qualities, the Lord will embrace you  
Otherwise, you will weep with tears of blood. 6

XX

You will get release by reading only *alif*  
From this *alif* two, three and four were created  
Then they grew into thousands, lakhs and crores  
Then they became innumerable  
The only dot of *alif* is very queer. 1  
Why do you study the cartload of books  
You are carrying the bundle of sorrows  
on your head,  
You have taken the form of an executioner  
You have to travel a very difficult distance. 2



Baṇ hāfaz hifaz Qurān karē  
Paṛh paṛh ke sāl zabān karē  
Phir nemat vic dhiān karē

Man phirdā jiō halkārā hai. 3

Bulhā bī bohaṛ da boya sī  
Oh birch vadā cā hoyā sī  
Jad birch oh fāni hoyā sī  
Phir rah gayā bī akārā hai. 4

As a Muliah you remember the Quran by heart  
You purify your tongue by reciting it  
You absorb your mind in worldly precious things  
Your mind wanders like a messenger. 3  
The seed of the banyan tree was sown  
Which grew into a big tree  
When that tree perished,  
Then the lonely seed is left behind. 4



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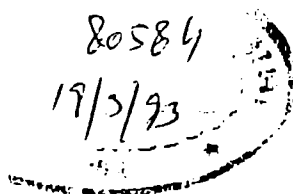
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