

# Devotional Poetry Of Faith In Kashmir

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## Abstract

The Devotional (spiritual) poetry of Kashmir has a great influence in the life of Kashmiris. It is a way to express their emotionality, spirituality, religiousness, prayer and religious worship. The Kashmiri saint poets nourished it by their blood. All the spiritual forms of poetry have a greater importance in the life of Kashmiris. This poetry is mostly recited on different occasions, religious gatherings and festivals also. It also plays a rich cultural heritage in Kashmir. In this way, all the forms of spiritual poetry implies a fact accepted as truth and preserved in heart with love and respect.

**Keywords:** Devotion, faith, poetry, kashmiriyat etc.

## Introduction

The valley of Kashmir has been an abode of different cultures and civilizations. Many famous religious currents like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam have played a prominent role in shaping the socio cultural fabric of Kashmir valley, It has been a home of famous saints, pirs and reshis and is commonly known as Reshvaer that is abode of Reshis. Given this background it is no wonder that Kashmir valley has produced famous and rich spiritual or devotional poetry produced by famous mystic poets. The present paper is based on the poetry of faith in Kashmir. Its origin and its influence in the life of Kashmiris have also been taken into consideration.

## Devotional poetry

Spiritual poetry of Kashmir is also known as 'devotional poetry'. In the Indian tradition, the term to denote devotion is 'bhakti' derived from a Sanskrit verbal root bhaj-which bears two primary connotations that may take us closer to a definition of devotion. Dictionary definitions will be of little use in explaining the essence of the term, though all attempts to describe devotion throw in expressions relating to emotionality, spirituality and religiousness. Devotion is at times identified with intense love then again with prayer and religious worship and else with passionate attachment. Devotion is not itself prayer or

worship, but it is the invigorative quality of devotion that makes religious pursuits meaningful. It is devotion, an immense sense of living devotion concealed in the innermost layer of the musical reality. It is a devotion coupled with readiness for complete self-sacrifice, a devotion that reaches out beyond even the cosmic stream of love. It is likewise true that devotion constitutes the quintessence of spirituality which is again the fundament of religiousness, but the intensity of devotion exceeds by far the depth of spiritual perception and resulting concerns of religiosity. The devotional poetry or poetry of faith are equally related an 'Aqeedat' meaning 'Faith' has been derived from Arabic language. Its literal meaning implies "a fact accepted as truth and preserved in heart with love and respect".

Since the birth of man, human being is in search of solution why and for what purpose he has been derived from Arabic language. Its literal meaning implies "a fact accepted as truth and preserved in heart with love and respect"

Since the birth of man, human being is in search of solution why and for what purpose he has been created by the creator? A huge mountain of questions continuously hover over his mind, what is the main source behind his creation and which climax he has to attain? Various philosophers of the world at different times tried to delineate this continuous cycle of questions. Some philosophers neither have faith in the existence of a creator nor

in his power of creation whom we call disbelievers or atheists. Unlike atheists, many philosophers neither have faith in the existence of a creator and his power of rewarding the good and punishing the evil, whom we call believers and their belief is called faith. They believe a reason behind the birth. The faith is a delicate issue which is to be strengthened by meditation and unveil the human undoes. This faith endeavors the man to reveal the spiritual truth. It is the faith by virtue of which humanity prevails by means of love and the faith by virtue of which humanity prevails by means of love and affection. Believers understand that humankind originated from the duo Adam and Eve, which is affirmed by ever thought and every religion. One similar thing found in all religions of world is faith. The reality behind this faith/belief is that the birth to Adam has been given by some strong and immortal authority who is called Allah, Bhagwan, Christ, Shiva, Creator etc. The ultimate essence of faith is achieved only by making strong bond with divine souls. This acquaintance arose high spiritual consciousness or inculcate its quest. This Desire let him negligent and express all his thoughts and feelings through his poems/verses. All the poets of such thoughts are perpetual resource of philosophy/literature. As far as birth scripts and historic books of Kashmir are concerned, it reflects that Kashmir is the storehouse of faith related knowledge. In fact every era of Kashmir is blooming with such kind of literature, however the point of discussion and the famous became the written part that is also cause of acquaintance.

### **Kashmiriyat: culture and identity**

Kashmiriyat was the result of shared religiosity and cultural practices between Hindus and Muslims. Even though many centuries have passed (and there is a religious difference among the diverse ethnic groups in Kashmir) most of the Kashmiri traditions remain very close to their original form. Indeed, modernization is transforming customs and rituals at a fast pace. However, the whole of the native people (who call themselves Kashmiri) are trying to stick with their traditions. For instance, when a child is born both Hindus and Muslims undertake similar rituals.

First, the new born will only be named after fixed days (11 for Hindus and 7 for Muslims). Second, once the name has been assigned, they will proceed to shave the baby's head and do some prayers to prevent any dreadful thing to occur to the child. This is an example of how some common elements in two distinct religions can become a source of gathering rather than separation of cultures.

The origin of faith in history commenced in the verses of Rig Veda, continued its journey, adorn in the nectar of Gautama Buddha, sprout the flowers of Shiv Nath and bear the flowers of Islam. All these times witnessed grandeur personalities/believers of faith but religious scripts which precisely or in a systematic manner advanced to our times is one that flourishes in Shiv's countenance or magnanimous personalities of Islam. Time and again the divine and faith believers of Kashmir, with the eternity accept to praise almightiness of one god, laid the foundation of faith in such a manner that no dare to shake or alter it. Although with the onset of Islam in Kashmir majority embraced it but the essence of faith continued in all ethnic sects that is oneness of god as reflected in following stanza (Wakh) of great and pioneer Kashmiri poetess Lal Ded:

**Shive chue thale thale ruzith Trukhai chukh  
paan parzenav Mo zaan huend musalman Soi  
chae sahibas seeth zaan**

The dawn of poetry of faith in Kashmir brightened in the poetry of Lal Ded. Despite long before her the reflexes of such poetry could be traced in the verses of Shashikant and Saad Moul but Lal Ded is considered the pioneer of poetry of faith rid from materialistic luxuries cause the sea of faith to rise. Her faith is magnanimous and eternity of god, brotherhood and trust in god reflected in each of his verses. Her concept of faith is pure and unrival. Irrespective of any thought, she believes in worship and integrity which cannot be observed after her. Lal believes in self-realization. She is of the opinion and belief that god's contiguity is achieved through apprenticeship of spiritual guide. By nature she was an empathetic lady and had inherited Shivism from her ancestors. Her faith was mere discernment and free from dogmatism.

Among the philosophies and different thoughts, Shivism is the most famous and interesting with evident testimony that is the mystery of its popularity even after a number of centuries. Lal hums divinity in the following stanza:

**Lal be chayas somen bagas Wuchum shivas  
shakath meelith Teti lai kaemas amratsaras  
Zindai maras te mae kya kare**

Contrary to present understanding: man as idol and female as power of Shivism, Lal imagines herself as idol of Shaivism, and to achieve her end she do penance and tried to purify herself of anger, hatred and prejudice. She believes that her ends if not achieved here cannot be achieved hereafter which is expressed in the following verses:

**Shiv chue zaevuil zaal wathraevith Krenzan  
manz chae taerith kath Zinde nai wuchhan ade  
kath maerith Paane manz paan kad  
waechnaevith kath**

She credence that contiguity makes her immortal as can be understood by following lines;

**Kus mare te kasu maran Maari kus te maaran  
kas  
Yus haeri traevith gar gar kare Ade sui mare tai  
maaran tas**

This concept and faith of Lal's self-realization is endorsed and affirmed by Muslim Sufi poets through their poetry and philosophy. It authenticated and confirms Lal as the mother of Kashmiri faith who gave birth to Shaivism, Reshism and Sufism all together. The revolution brought by Lal is reflected in the poetry of great saint of Kashmir Sheikh Noor-ud-din WALI (R.A). austerly exists in Kashmiri faith from its birth that motivates one about self realization under the guidance of an abstinent. Sheikh innovated the concept of faith by molding it in Islamic framework. Islam does not permit all the practices of Reshism but Shiekh (R.a) modified and preached the real essence of Reshism that can be accepted in Islam too. Despite embracing and practicing the authentic concept of Islam. Sheikh(R.A), by exhibiting the qualities of his

progenitors, proved that the pious souls unanimously worship the integrity of god in spiritual motif irrespective of caste, creed, religion, colour and so on.

**Awal reshi Ahmad reshi dayem hazrat owais  
aav Trayem reshi ruma reshi chourem hazrat  
pulas aav Punchem reshi zulka reshi shayem  
hazrat meeran aav Saetmis kaemas dishna  
hishi ba kus rash tai mai kya nav**

The appellation, "Ruma Reshi" is merely native to Kashmir long before looming of islam, endorses strongly that Shiekh (R.A) believed in brotherhood and preached philanthropy. Sheikh is followed by numerous poets of faith who touched sky in leaps and bounds while expressing their affection and affiliation without a sign of faith intolerance. Among these were Lakshman Ju and Prakash Ram whose representation of Kashmiri faith will be remembered forever. The Prophet(PBUH) has been praised by great ascetic poets of Islam and in this way inculcated that no religion preaches hatred, prejudice, hostility for humanity.

In Kashmiri poetry the poets have formulated different beautiful ways of poetry of faith viz; Naat, Manqabat, Leela, Bhajan and Elegy. In Kashmiri literature the poetry of faith has a considerable and perpetual share and enlightened the part of Kashmiri history, which unveils the glory of Kashmir that was deliberately, out of prejudice kept delitescent by egotists and opprtunists. Poetry of faith is the only means that persuade Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims to live as comrades.

The Kashmiri poetry introduced by Sheikh-ul Alam, a saint poet of Kashmir in his Sheikh-faith formulated facts of religious saints. Sheikh-ul-alam has versified the laudable qualities and characteristics of god with a melodious attractive and unique way of praises eg.;

**Khodai chuh akoei naw chis lachah Zikri rous  
akh kachah mo**

**Wombrei vanden akaie bachah Rizke rous akh  
mechah mo.**

**Ie., god is one with names billion**

**Bowing, praising and praying whom everyone  
He is eternal without a peer**

### **Sends food to all before the set of sun**

The ontic poetry of faith, began by Sheikh (R.A) is Habibullah Nowshehri. The poet who without hesitation and fear express love and faith openly, consequently owned rivalry with contemporary religious scholars and critics.

### **Kun te kanzun aavaye Suratan manz tsavaye Chhus Muhammad naavaye Yaar gachvo deevaye**

This era produced a number of such poets who express their faith in Prophet (PBUH) and Shiv. In the faith of this era the sufi poetry flourished the most. The poets of Hindu and Muslim brethren perpetrated revelation of their utmost and reverence from their beloved through sufi poetry in a unique way. Every poet in his typical style imagines the presence of his ones as revealed in the Leela of Hari Krishan.

### **Bel tai madal vani gulab pumposh tai Pujaye lagas parmeshivas shivnathas tai Hasrat Hameed expresses the same faith in Shiv by quoting: Man shivkaras cham lo lo Anand kotah aav lo lo Bagtan cho jigras ghav lo lo Anand kotah aav lo lo**

While as the great poet Fakhir expresses his affection for his beloved in the verses of Naat as:

### **Roi choun Qabai mehrab bumai Dam dam sajdai demai na**

To make acquaintance to god, it is evident that poetry of faith has its majesty over all other kinds and beliefs of poetry. In case of Sufism besides almighty god, the poets in a systematic manner express their faith and love with those too who are beloved to almighty like; messengers, walis, saints and ascetics. In this context the Kashmiri poets follow and acclimatize other means of literature to meet the requirements of such poetry. Other than Wakhs (verses of Lal) and Shrukhs (verses of Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali) the Kashmiri poets have formulated and introduced Ghazals, Masnavi, Naat, Leela, Bhajan etc. which arose volumes of faith. This wealth of faith sweepsevery corner of Kashmir, from homes of every Kashmiri it

flourished to temples and mosques. A reflex of this faith exists in Sanaullah Kari's prayer that still sounds in mosques during dawn prayer (Dua-e-Subha):

### **Ha waave watakh na totei Yeti daaf traevith Mustafa Awhal saene tas wanakh Sue ho kaream daadaen dawa**

In short, faith strengthens and unites the nation, triumph over aweary and teaches love among humans besides keep checking inhuman behaviour. The literature of faith has been an important part of educational curriculum in Kashmir but unfortunately it is being ignored from last few years and was replaced by hatred and hostility. Kashmiri people lived as an entity as long as they were concentrated on faith without any religious apartheid. The people were fond of Lal wakh (verses of Lal) and Sheikh Shrukhs (verses of Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali). Pilgrims who throng to visit Mattan teerath (a hindu shrine of south Kashmir) always payed a visit to Zain Shah Shrine (a muslim shrine in south kashmir), every human soul had faith in Hazrat Gausul Azam Dastegeer (a great saint of Islam, one among the descendants of Prophet {PBUH}). Means prosperity of brotherhood and unity reigned during those times. Unfortunately, the faith which kept the humanity united was veiled and disintegration has been led flourish. Kashmir's real faith was brotherhood, unity, love, affection, philanthropy and what not; as reflected in following of a towering personality and poet of Kashmir Abdul Ahad Azad:

### **Haendes musulmanas shehrith chu aekse banas Zanun tage insaanas kya manae chus misalae**

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