

SACH

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Journey of SACH began in 2005. As an effort to bring on a common platform cultural heritage that connects us. An effort to remind each other of the cultural treasure we have. To equip ourselves with answers to those who benefit from conflict. Strength of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India lie in the culture they have and the common culture they share. This journey continues and we bring to the fore those aspects of Composite Heritage which shape our lives in one way or the other. *Baba Farid, Waris Shah, Lalon Fakir, Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Sahir Ludhyanwi, Habib Jalib*, to name a few have been the guiding light of our society. The great *Amir Khusro, Ghalib, Thyagaraja, Thiruvalluvar* and numerous other guiding lights, have centuries back propagated and voiced their opinions against those who deny people the right to a dignified life. They continue to do so.

In this issue we present 'Life of Bulleh Shah' and 'Heer Waris Shah'. These philosophers, sufi saints gave us answers to our problems then and are equally relevant today. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have common problems and we need a common solution. We once more need these guiding lights to lead us towards a peaceful South Asia.



—Bulleh Shah

Bulleh! to me, I am not known

Not a believer inside the mosque, am I
Nor a pagan disciple of false rites
Not the pure amongst the impure
Neither Moses, nor the Pharaoh

Bulleh! to me, I am not known

Not in the holy Vedas, am I
Nor in opium, neither in wine
Not in the drunkard's intoxicated craze
Neither awake, nor in a sleeping daze

Bulleh! to me, I am not known
In happiness nor in sorrow, am I
Neither clean, nor a filthy mire
Not from water, nor from earth
Neither fire, nor from air, is my birth

Bulleh! to me, I am not known
Not an Arab, nor Lahori
Neither Hindi, nor Nagauri
Hindu, Turk, nor Peshawari
Nor do I live in Nadaun

Bulleh! to me, I am not known
Secrets of religion, I have not known
From Adam and Eve, I am not born
I am not the name I assume
Not in stillness, nor on the move

Bulleh! to me, I am not known
I am the first, I am the last
None other, have I ever known
I am the wisest of them all
Bulleh! do I stand alone?

Bulleh! to me, I am not known

I have been pierced by the arrow of love, what shall I do ?

I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
I can neither live, nor can I die.
Listen ye to my ceaseless outpourings,
I have peace neither by night, nor by day.
I cannot do without my Beloved even for a moment.
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
The fire of separation is unceasing !
Let someone take care of my love.
How can I be saved without seeing him?
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?

O Bullah, I am in dire trouble !
Let someone come to help me out.
How shall I endure such torture ?
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
I can neither live, nor can I die.

What a carefree game He plays!

He said, "Let there be," and it happened.
He made the latent turn into the manifest,
Out of the formless He created the form.
What a wondrous game He played!
What a carefree game He plays!

When He disclosed the hidden secret,
He lifted the veil from over His face.
Why does He now hide from me?
The Real permeates everyone.
What a carefree game He plays!

He said, "We have honored mankind;
None has been created like you;
You are the crown of all creation."
What a proclamation with the beat of drum!
What a carefree game He plays!

He himself indulges in these carefree acts;
He himself feels frightened of himself;
He has taken abode in every house;
And the people keep wandering in delusion.
What a carefree game He plays!

He himself aroused longing to become mad in love.
He himself became Laila to steal Majnun's heart.
Himself He wept, himself consoled himself.
0, what a game of love He plays!
What a carefree game He plays!

Himself the lover, He himself is the Beloved.
Here logic and reason have no part to play.
Bullah rejoices in his union with the Beloved.
Why does He create separation now?
What a carefree game He plays!

The Life of Bulleh Shah

By : J. R. Puri and T. R. Shangari

Mysterious is the turn of time. The man who had been refused by the mullahs to be buried after his death in the community graveyard because of his unorthodox views, today enjoys worldwide reverence and recognition. The tomb of Bulleh Shah in Qasur and the area around it is today the only place free of collective refuse, and the privileged of the city pay handsomely to be buried in the proximity of the man they had once rejected. This radical change has been possible because people have been impressed in the course of time by the holy way of Bullah's life and the efficacy of his teachings.

"The greatest Sufi poet of the Punjab was Mir Bulleh Shah Qadiri Shatari. " Because of his pure life and high spiritual attainments, he is equally popular among all communities. Scholars and dervishes have called him "The Sheikh of Both the Worlds," "The man of God," "The Knower of Spiritual Grace" and by other equally edifying titles. Considered as the greatest mystic poet of the Punjab, his compositions have been regarded as "the pinnacle of Sufi literature." His admirers compare his writings and philosophy to those of Rumi and Shams-i-Tabriz. At present, he is held in equally great esteem in Northern India and Pakistan.

Bulleh Shah's real name was Abdullah Shah. From Abdullah Shah it changed to Bullah Shah or Bulleh Shah. "Out of affection some call him Baba Bulleh Shah, Saint Bulleh Shah and some others mere Bullah. "The 40th Knot" gives evidence of his name. "Invoking the name of God, now pray to Him the Lord pervades everywhere Abdullah exists more."

There is some difference of opinion among research scholars about the time of his birth and death. Majority, however, believes that he lived from 1680 to 1758. Even about his birthplace there are some controversies. Some researchers hold the view that he was born in the village Uch Gilaniyan in Bahawalpur (Pakistan). They believe that Bulleh Shah remained in this village up to the age of six months, when parents were residing here, but who

shifted to village Malakwal (Tehsil Sahiwal, District Multan) for some reasons. They had not been in Malakwal for a long time when the owner of village Pandoke felt the need (preacher for the village mosque). On the recommendations of the people of Malakwal, he approached Bulleh Shah's father, Shah Mohammed Dervish, took to Pandoke where he performed the duties not only of the preacher but also of the village teacher for children.

All researchers agree on the point that the ancestors' village of Bulleh Shah's parents was Uch Gilaniyan, it is from there that they shifted first to Malakwal later to Pandoke. However, some researchers hold view that Bulleh Shah's birth took place after his parents had shifted to Pandoke. Today it is known as Pandoke Bhatian. It is about 14 miles southeast of Qasur and is quite well-known. In fact, Bulleh Shah's contribution to make it famous is considerable. It is said that from among the ancestors of Bulleh Shah, Sayeed Jallalluddin Bukhari came to Multan from Surakh-Bukhara three hundred years earlier. Here he got initiated from Hazarat Sheikh Ghous Bahauddin Zakriya of Multan, and here eventually he settled down. Bulleh Shah's grandfather, Sayyid Abdur Razzaq, descended from the same line. Thus Bulleh Shah's family, being of Sayyid caste, was related to prophet Mohammed on one hand and on the other hand with Sufi thought and mystic traditions, for centuries.

Bulleh Shah's father, Shah Mohammed Dervish, was well-versed in Arabic, Persian and the holy Quran. He was a noble soul with spiritual learnings. It is said that out of the whole family, Bulleh Shah's sister had the greatest love for him, who, like her brother, remained celibate all her life, and spent much of her time in meditation. Both, brother and sister, had been greatly influenced by the high moral character of their father who, out of respect for him, had been given the title "Dervish." The tomb of Bulleh Shah's father still exists in Pandoke Bhatian. Every year an urs is performed at the tomb and Bulleh Shah's kafis are sung there. In this way a tribute is paid to both, father and son, and it has assumed the form of a tradition to perpetuate their memory.

Bulleh Shah's childhood was spent under the care of his father at Pandoke. He received his early education, like that of other children, from his father. Later, for higher education he was sent to Qasur, which was a well-known educational center those days. In Qasur there were eminent teachers such as Hazarat Ghulam Murtaza and Maulana Mohiyuddin. Their fame had spread far and wide. Bulleh Shah too became a pupil of Hazarat Ghulam Murtaza. With his native intelligence and moral inclination, he gained much from his contact with his teacher.

There is a strong historical evidence to show that Bulleh Shah was an eminent scholar of Arabic and Persian. From his own compositions we can find many references to Islamic thought and mystic literature. Later, when he attained mystic realization, his erudition and learning acquired a new significance. But Bulleh Shah had to pass through a hard struggle before he could attain the inner knowledge. This attainment was possible only through his contact with his Murshid or Master, Inayat Shah. The study of scriptures and other holy books had only aroused his interest and curiosity about spiritual realization. His longing for union with the Lord reached its consummation only after he met a perfect Master in the person of Shah Inayat Qadiri.

Inayat Shah was a well-known Qadiri Sufi of his time. From the historical point of view the Qadiri Sufis can be traced back to the Sufi Saint Abdul Qadri Jilani of Bagdad. Jilani is also known by the names Pir Dastgir and Piran-i-Pir. Bulleh Shah himself has also given a hint that his "Master of Masters" was born in Bagdad but his own Master belonged to Lahore :

*My Master of Masters hailed from Bagdad,
but my Master belongs to the throne of Lahore.
It is all the same. For He himself is the kite
and He himself is the string.*

Two collections of Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani's sermons, al Fathal Rabbani, comprising 62 and the Futuh al-Ghaib, containing 78 of them, are well known to Islamic readers. In one of the sermons, he strongly denounced his contemporaries for their materialistic way of life. In another sermon he said, "Good and evil were two fruits emerging from two branches of a single tree. One of the branches yielded sweet fruit and the other bitter; it would be wise, therefore, for

people to move to areas where the sweet fruits were to be found." Also, "A jihad fought against self-will was, to Sheikh Abdul-Qadir far superior to that waged with the sword. Through this struggle the idolatry of the self and the worship of created things (the hidden shirk) could be vanquished. Sheikh Jilani advised his audience that seekers of God had to be indifferent towards even the life hereafter and to cultivate pleasure only in the thought of annihilation and abiding poverty in this life.

In India the influence of the Sufi Qadiri thought was felt after three centuries in 1432 through the person of Mohammed Ghaus, a Sufi dervish. Mohammed Ghaus first settled in Bahawalpur, but later his teachings reached far and wide.

The Sufi saint of Punjab, Mian Mir (1550-1635 A. D.) was also connected with the Qadiri tradition. It is well-known that Guru Ram Das got the foundation of Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar laid by Mian Mir. The story is also current that at the time of the Mughal emperor Jahangir's persecution of the fifth Guru, Shri Arjun Dev, Mian Mir sought the approval of Guru Arjun Dev to raze the town of Delhi to the ground if he so permitted. The Guru replied that he could also do it, but under all conditions one must live in the will of God. It is obvious from this that there was great love between Mian Mir and the Gurus, and that he was held in great esteem by them.

The date of birth of Inayat Shah Qadiri (died 1728 A.D.) is not known. But, from one of his own hand-written manuscripts, it is evident that he was enjoying good health in 1699 A.D. He was an eminent Sufi saint of the Qadiri tradition and is said to be a scholarly author. He wrote a number of Persian books on mysticism, from among which Dastur-ul-Amal, Islah-ul-Amal, Lataif-i-Ghaibya, and Ishartul Talibin are particularly well-known. In Dastur-ul-Amal he has made a mention of seven spiritual stages. The ancient Hindu rishis considered passing through these stages as necessary for God-realization.

Inayat Shah lived in Lahore, so he was called Inayat Shah Lahori. He belonged to the Arain caste and earned his living through agriculture or gardening. He also lived in Qasur for some time, but due to the animosity of the ruler of Qasur he shifted to Lahore, where he remained till the end of his life. His tomb is also situated near Lahore. In

Bang-i-Auliya-i-Hind we find the following reference about him:

*From the tribe of gardeners was brother Shah Inayat,
He received honor from Shah Raza Wali Allah.
He earned his living in the small town of Qasur Pathana.
The ruler Husein Khan of this town was his arch enemy.
From there Inayat Shah came to the city of Lahore;
Two miles to the south of the city he made his habitation.
It is at this place that we find his tomb.
In 1141 he departed from this world.*

It is said that even before coming in contact with Inayat Shah, Bulleh Shah used to do some spiritual practice, and had acquired certain miraculous powers. When Bulleh Shah, the seeker, passed near the small field of Inayat Shah, he saw fruit laden trees on both sides of the road. Inayat Shah himself was engaged in planting onion seedlings. It occurred to Bulleh Shah to test Inayat Shah of his spiritual powers. Invoking the name of God, Bullah looked at the trees, and the fruit started falling on the ground. Inayat Shah looked back and saw that unripe fruit was falling from the trees without any reason. He immediately realized that it was due to the mischief played by the young man passing by. He looked towards Bulleh Shah and said, "Well, young man, why have you brought down the unripe fruit from the trees?" This is what Bulleh Shah wanted, to find an opportunity to talk to Inayat Shah. He went up to him and said, "Sir, I neither climbed up the trees, nor did I throw any stones at the fruit, how could I tear it from the trees?" Inayat Shah cast a full glance at Bulleh Shah and said, "o you are not only a thief, you are also being clever!" Inayat's glance was so penetrating that it touched Bullah's heart and he instantly fell at his feet. Inayat Shah asked him his name and the purpose for coming to him. Bullah replied, "Sir, my name is Bullah and I wish to know how I can realize God." Inayat Shah said, "Why do you look down? Get up and look at me." As soon as Bullah raised his head and looked at Inayat Shah, the Master again cast at him a full glance, laden with love, shaking him all through. He said "O Bullah, what problem is there in finding God ? It only

needs to be uprooted from here and planted there." This was enough for Bulleh Shah. He got what he had wished for .

Inayat Shah had poured the essence of spirituality in these few words. He conveyed to Bulleh Shah that the secret of spiritual progress lay in detaching one's mind from the world outside and attaching it to God within. In Bang-i-Auliya-i-Hind this instance has been described as below:

"In the city of Qasur Pathana it happened to a man of God, a descendent of prophet Mohammed, the grandson of Pir Jilani, that he achieved greatness from Hazrat Shah Inayat whose tomb lies in Lahore, south of the city. Bulleh Shah said to himself, "I must get my Master after testing him. I must fully satisfy myself, I must drink water after straining it." In his intense search for his Master he first looked towards Lahore, then he came there and took his residence, where the garden of Shah Inayat was situated. There he saw a mango on a tree at that time, he looked at it, invoked the name of God, and the mango fell on the ground. Shah Inayat gave a call to him and said, "Listen, you wayfarer, you have stolen my mango. Give it back to me." Bulleh Shah replied, "I did not climb up the tree; your mangoes are far from my reach. It is with the wind that the mango broke from the branch and came into my lap. Invoking the name of God, you got the mango. You have committed a theft." Bulleh Shah realized the spiritual power and knowledge of Inayat Shah. He fell at his feet, was graced by initiation from the Master and attained the secret knowledge."

Bulleh Shah's meeting with the Master, getting initiation from him and being deeply impressed has been described by a scholar in these words :

"Bulleh Shah had all those virtues in him which Shah Inayat was looking for in a disciple. He opened his inner treasure and placed it before him. He got the vision, he became oblivious of his surroundings, and in that state of rapture he proclaimed the gift of his inner grace in the manner of Mansur."

Bulleh Shah started to pass his time in a state of strange ecstasy. In the company of his Master and with the practice of the path he had been shown, Bulleh Shah's spiritual condition started changing day by day. His kafi, "Whatever color I am dyed in " makes it clear how great was the

effect of his Master on him. In it he mentions that his inner eye had been opened, all his doubts had been removed, and he had been blessed with the light of realization. Through the grace of his Master he had the vision of the Lord within and that for him no difference existed between his Master and the Lord.

The effect of his master was so profound that but for his Master nothing else mattered for him. He became strangely selfless and impervious to affairs of the world. Prof. Purn Singh has described an interesting incidence of this phase of Bulleh Shah's life in his book *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry*. One day he saw a young girl whose husband was expected to come home, and in whose preparation she was putting plaits in her hair. A strange desire arose in his mind. He also dressed himself like that woman, put the same type of plaits in his hair, and went in this guise to meet his Master. For the worldly people such an act would look ridiculous, but it shows not only the great love for his Master but also his unconcern with public opinion and his desire to sacrifice himself for his beloved. In the manner of true lovers he shed his mescalline pride and assumed the form of a helpless women who renounces her ego and surrenders herself completely to her lord.

Whatever questions or doubts Bulleh Shah had in his mind before he met his Master, were all drowned in the experience of inner light. When he had made up his mind to come to Inayat Shah, people had dissuaded him from doing so, saying, "You are a great scholar, a master of miraculous powers and a descendent of prophet Mohammed. Does it seem right to you to go to an ordinary gardener of low caste and become his disciple? Is it not shameful?" But his Master was true to his name. He showered such grace on Bulleh Shah that a single glance of his made him saturated with spiritual light. In ecstatic gratitude Bullah proclaimed: "*O Bullah, if you seek the pleasure of a garden in spring, go and become a servant of the Arain.*" Bulleh Shah held the hem of his Master's cloak so firmly that he never let it go from his hand for the rest of his life. All of Bulleh Shah's compositions are suffused with love and gratitude for his Master. In this love he identified his Master with the Lord. He has addressed Shah Inayat with such words as guide, as one who unites people with God, besides calling him spouse, husband, Lord, friend, and beloved.

1. *He listens to my tale of woe;
Shah Inayat guides me and takes me across.
(Week)*
- 2 a. *Shah Inayat is my Master, who has come to
grace me.
All my wrangles and strife's are over.
Who can now delude me ?
(Acrostic)*
- b. *Bullah has fallen in love with the Lord.
He has given his life and body as earnest.
His Lord and Master is Shah Inayat
who has captivated his heart.
(Baran Maha)*
- c. *He pervades in everyone.
Shah Inayat himself showed it, And then
alone I could see.
(Baran Maha)*
- 3 a. *Inayat will come to my nuptial couch;
I am in great delight.
(Knot)*
- b. *My friends have come to congratulate me.
Shah Inayat, my Lord, has fulfilled my hopes.
(Baran Maha)*
- c. *I left my parents to take your shelter,
O my beloved King Inayat!
Now honor this bond of love,
for I am entirely in your hands.
Pray, walk into my courtyard !
(Kafi)*
- d. *Come Love, fold me in your arms,
Why this estrangement ? Says Bullah:
Ever since I found Shah Inayat, The Lord has
taken abode in me.
(Kafi)*
- e. *Bulleh Shah has no caste ;
He has found Shah Inayat.
(Kafi)*

He calls his Master the Lord of the soul and the philosopher's stone, which can turn iron into gold.

*O Bullah, my Lord Inayat knows God,
He is the Master of my heart.
I am iron, he is the philosopher's stone.
Again,
"The Master is an adept in swimming, he
can take across an inept and helpless woman."*

Bullah also calls him the one who can embellish the soul with spiritual apparel and jewelry and transform widow into a bride.

**O Bullah, the Lord brought me to the door
of Inayat,**

Who embellished me with clothes green and red.

For a distinguished scholar, who belonged to the line of prophet Mohammed, to accept an ordinary vegetable grower as his Master was a very extraordinary event in the social conditions of Bulleh Shah's times. It was like an explosion which shook the prevailing social structure. Bullah had to suffer the taunts and ridicule not only of men of his religion, clan and caste, but also of all members of his family. He says :

1. *O, what has love done to me?
People hurl at me taunts and rebukes.*
2. *For the sake of my true friend,
I have to bear the reproaches of people.*
3. *To admonish Bullah came his sisters and
sisters-in-law,
"Why have you brought disgrace to the
prophet
and to the progeny of Ali?
Listen to our advice, O Bullah, and leave the
hem of the Arain's skirt.*

Bullah preached fearlessly that the guidance of a Master was indispensable for spiritual realization, and the caste of the Master did not at all matter in this pursuit. Even if he belonged to the lowest caste, his help would still remain indispensable. Thus, he proclaimed at the top of his voice that pride in being a Sayyid would land one in hell, and the one who held the skirt of a Master like Inayat Shah would enjoy the pleasures of heaven.

*Let anyone, who calls me a Sayyid,
be punished with tortures of hell,
And let him revel in the pleasures of heaven,
who labels me an Arain.
If you seek the pleasures of the spring season,
become a slave of the Arain.*

An interesting incident of this period in the life of Bulleh Shah presents a graphic picture of his ecstasy, generosity and fearlessness of public opinion. It is said that as a result of disgust from people's attitude, Bulleh Shah purchased a few donkeys so that people should ridicule him. They started calling him "The man with donkeys." During those days, a poor man's wife was abducted by a Muslim Chieftain. In despair, the husband went to Bulleh Shah, and asked for his help in recovering his beloved wife. After a few moments spent in thought, Bulleh Shah told the man, "Go and see, my friend, if there is any music or dance

going on somewhere near about." The man soon came back and reported that a group of eunuchs was dancing in the village nearby, accompanied by a band of musicians. "That is good," said Bulleh Shah. "Come now and sit on one of my donkeys, and we shall both go to watch the dance." As soon as the saint arrived at the dance, he joined the group and also started dancing. He got into an ecstasy and asked the man, "Where does the Muslim Chieftain live?" The man told him that he lived in a certain part of the city near the orchard of dates and the grove of mangoes. Then Bulleh Shah called out with directed attention :

*There is a mango grove, it is said,
and an orchard of dates.
The owner of donkeys calls you,
Wake up, if you are asleep.
Sorrel is thus hulled in the mortar,
Sorrel is thus hulled, my friend!*

The moment he uttered these words, the abducted woman ran out from the nearby garden and came to Bulleh Shah. Bulleh Shah stopped dancing and called to the husband, "Here is your beloved wife, brother! Take her home and guard her well."

Then once more wrapped in ecstasy, he continued to dance to the bewitching music. The gossips lost no time in going to Bulleh Shah's father, an orthodox Muslim, and told him all that had happened. Not only was his son now hiring out donkeys, but he had also started to dance with the eunuchs. Greatly distressed and enraged, the saint's father, with a rosary in one hand and a staff in the other, hastened to the place where his son was dancing. " Ah! it is you, father" said Bulleh Shah as he heard his name called. He looked at his father intently and began to sing :

*People have only chaplets but my father has
a rosary.*

*The whole of his life he has toiled hard,
But has not been able to uproot a single hair.
Sorrel is thus hulled in the mortar .
Sorrel is thus hulled, my friend !*

As the son, filled with spiritual ardor, gazed at his father, the inner eye of the father was opened and he had a divine vision. With a serene and radiant smile on his face, he joined his son in the ecstatic dancing and singing, and as he danced, he sang over and over again :

*Blessed are the parents whose sons
are dyed in such divine color !*

*They bring salvation even to their parents.
Sorrel is thus hulled in the mortar.
Sorrel is thus hulled, my friend !*

The beginning of love is fascinating, but its path is difficult and its destination far. Even a small error or omission on the part of the lover can become a cause of great annoyance for the beloved. That creates a mountain of calamities for the lover. Such a thing happened to Bulleh Shah, when his Master got annoyed with him for an omission on his part.

Some writers have attributed the reason for his Master's annoyance to Bulleh Shah's open criticism of rituals and customs practiced by Muslims, and this was not to the liking of Inayat Shah. This reason, however, does not appear plausible, because criticism of external observance is common to all Sufi saints, and it was not unknown in the Qadiri tradition. They were certainly not the worshippers of this system.

The second reason given for the annoyance is quite different in nature. It is said that once Bulleh Shah invited his Master on the marriage of one of his relatives, the Saint deputed one of his disciples to represent him at the function. This disciple belonged to the Arain caste and was poorly clad. Now, Bulleh Shah's family was proud of belonging to the clan of Sayyids. They did not give proper attention in receiving this poorly clad man. Even Bullah happened to make this omission. At least he should have shown proper respect to the representative of his Master, but under the pressure of his family or the fear of public opinion, he did not give the guest due honor. When the disciple returned from the marriage, the Saint asked him how the marriage was celebrated. He told his Master the whole story, and complained that because of his low caste and tattered clothes, neither Bulleh Shah nor his family showed him due respect. The Saint replied, "How dare Bullah behave like this ?" And then added, "What have we to get from this useless man ? We shall change the direction of the flow of water from his fields to yours !" He had only to utter these words to bring a calamity in Bullah's life. As soon as the Master changed the direction of his grace, his spring turned into autumn. His inner visions vanished, leaving him dry and barren. Light changed into darkness and bliss into mourning. It was a stunning blow to Bullah.

One who has never experienced inner bliss

and who has never had a glimpse of the divine glory of his Master within, his case is quite different. But the one who has enjoyed the wealth of inner experience and who is suddenly deprived of this treasure, he alone knows the pangs of such a torture. In fact, the lord of spiritual wealth is the perfect Master, and there is nothing in the hands of the disciple. Apparently, the disciple is himself seeking the Master, and with his own effort treads the path and progresses on it, as shown by the Master. But, in reality the disciple cannot search for the Master with his mind and meager intellect, nor can he find the true path with his own power and cleverness. Nor can he rise to spiritual realms with his own endeavor. Finding the true path and achieving spiritual progress are all gifts of the Master's grace. Bulleh Shah has himself written, "The Guru does whatever he wills." But to realize this he had to suffer the annoyance of his Master and cross the frightening ocean of the fire of separation.

As soon as his spiritual experiences were stopped, Bullah hastened to his Master, but the Master turned his back on him and asked him to leave the place. For one thing, the annoyance of his Master, for another the command not to see him! What greater torture could there be for a disciple ? Bullah was miserable. He began to burn in the fire of repentance, and his condition was like that of a fish out of water .

In the compositions of Bullah, many references can be found of this heart-rending state of his mind. In many of his kafis there is a touch of his personal life. No one can say with certainty when these kafis were written. But the descriptions in these poems speak of such a mental state. The pain of separation erupts in them like turbulent waves. "In poignancy of emotion, sincerity of feeling, ardor and longing, these kafis are matchless. "

From the kafi given below it is evident; that the memory of the bliss of union with the beloved and the pain of separation from him are continuing to burn Bullah to ashes like a house on fire. He cannot give up love, but in the separation of his beloved, he can find peace neither by day nor by night. He is not blessed with the sight of his beloved, but without seeing him, fire rages within his breast, and his heart is breaking. It is hard to bear such a state of mind, but it is also impossible to relinquish love. So he hangs between life and

death :

*I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
I can neither live, nor can I die.
Listen ye to my ceaseless outpourings,
I have peace neither by night, nor by day.
I cannot do without my Beloved even for a
moment.
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
The fire of separation is unceasing !
Let someone take care of my love.
How can I be saved without seeing him?
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?*

*O Bullah, I am in dire trouble !
Let someone come to help me out.
How shall I endure such torture ?
I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
what shall I do ?
I can neither live, nor can I die.
In another kafi he describes his pain thus :
*He left me, and himself he departed;
What fault was there in me ?**

*Neither at night nor in the day do I sleep in
peace;
My eyes pour out tears !
Sharper than swords and spears are the
arrows of love !
There is no one as cruel as love ;
This malady no physician can cure.
There is no peace, not for a moment,
So intense is the pain of separation !
O Bullah, if the Lord were to shower
His grace, My days would radically change !
He left me, and himself he departed.
What fault was there in me ?*

As the period of separation became longer, Bullah's condition became worse. On the one hand there was the pain of separation, on the other, the ridicule of people. He prostrates before the memory of his Master, and repeatedly entreats him to show his face to him at the earliest.

*Why do you tarry , my Beloved ?
O Bullah, now narrate your love story.
He alone knows who has experienced love.
There are rebukes within, taunts without
Such is the comfort I have found in love !
My eyes have taken to the habit of weeping.*

*For one, it is death, for another, reproach
from the world.*

*The pain of separation has tightly squeezed
my life.*

O Love, I have cried out my heart in anguish!

Bullah was full of repentance over his blunder. He was keenly desirous to be forgiven by his Master. In his mind he pleads to his Master to heal his wound of separation, and to apply balm to his heart by showing his face to him.

I suffer from the pain of my mad love.

*Come, dear Ranjha, cast a glance at me,
and forgive me my faults.*

*From the throne of Hazara set out Ranjha,
the Master of artless Heer.*

*The bridegroom visits the homes of all others;
What is the flaw that vitiates Bullah?*

Bullah does not only describe the state of his suffering, but also hurls complaints at his Master. On the one hand, he regrets his own lack of wisdom, on the other, he reproaches his Master, who, after piercing his heart with the arrow of love, has hidden himself and has never inquired after him.

*Inflicting a wound you hid your face;
Who has taught you such thefts, my Love?*

*With your fancy you captivated my heart,
But then you never showed your face. This
cup of poison I have drunk myself ; Indeed I was
unripe in wisdom!*

He calls his Master "the beloved Thug of Lahore" and complains that he has robbed him with his love, and made him useless for the world.

*Never be taken in by its guiles ;
It gives not peace in forest or city.*

*When the traveler left after casting a glance,
Suddenly a noose was hung round my neck.
He then showed no concern for me.*

Oh, I have met the "beloved Thug of Lahore" !

To be incessantly weeping in separation of his Master had become the usual routine for Bullah. This separation of his had assumed the proportions of madness, and he started roaming in streets and lanes. The intense longing to see his Master produced a kind of fire within him, to extinguish which he began to think out some plans. He knew that his Master was a lover of music. It is said that Bulleh put on the garb of a woman, got hold of a sarangi and went to the house of a dancing girl. He learnt dancing from her and became an adept in it. He then took along with him a drummer and a harmonium player and went to the tomb of a

holy man in whose memory an annual function was being celebrated. Shah Inayat had also come to attend it. While all other dancers and singers got tired and sat down, Bullah, in ecstasy, continued to dance. His voice was extremely doleful and heart-rending. It is said that Bullah sang many kafis on the occasion. At last even Inayat Shah's heart melted. With a voice full of compassion he said, "Are you Bullah?" Bullah ran and fell at his Master's feet and replied with his eyes full of tears, "Sir, I am not Bullah but Bhulla."

The Master is never indifferent to his disciple. When he realized that the fire of repentance and separation had purified Bullah and turned him into pure gold, he forgave him his lapse and pressed him to his heart.

The reason why the Master put Bulleh Shah to such a hard test—the torture of burning in the fire of separation and longing was to make him fit to receive the invaluable wealth of the Word of God. With this spiritual treasure he was not only to become rich himself, but also to make other seekers the recipients of this wealth.

When the fountain of the Master's grace started flowing once again, the arid fields of Bullah began to revive, and the fragrance of the flowers of bliss spread all around. According to the author of Qanun-i-Ishq, the Master pressed Bullah to his heart, took him along with him, and intoxicated him with the wine of union. Bullah's soul got dyed in the hue of his Master's soul, so that no distinction remained between the two. One of Bulleh Shah's kafis gives a graphic description of his state of merging in the Master (Fana-fil-Sheikh) :

*Repeating the name of Ranjha
I have become Ranjha myself.
O call me ye all "Dhido-Ranjha,"
let no one call me Heer .
Ranjha is in me, I am in Ranjha,
no other thought exists in my mind.
I am not, He alone is.
He alone is amusing himself.*

The Master is one with the Lord. So, merging in the Master is transformed into merging in the Lord. This state is expressed by Bullah in the following lines of two kafis :

1. *You alone exist, I do not, O Beloved!*
2. *Repeating the name of the Beloved
I have become the Beloved myself.*

Whom shall I call the Beloved now?

The same thought is conveyed by Jesus Christ in the Bible thus :

"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

Arriving at this stage, the illusion of duality disappears, and the glory of the Beloved is seen to pervade everywhere. Bulleh Shah declares that love for the Lord has so radically changed him that his individual self or ego has been totally eliminated. He has now realized his true Self hidden behind the veil of the physical body. His identification with the Supreme Being has opened for him the floodgates of divine light. In this light no one has remained a stranger. All have become His own.

*I have got lost in the city of love,
I am being cleansed, withdrawing myself
from my head, hands and feet.*

*I have got rid of my ego,
and have attained my goal.
Thus it has all ended well.*

*O Bullah, the Lord pervades both the worlds;
None now appears a stranger to me.*

In the transcendence of the finite to the Infinite; all disputes of religion, of good and evil, disappear. To Bullah now all began to appear as virtuous; none seemed to him as evil or a stranger.

Remove duality and do away with all disputes;

The Hindus and Muslims are not other than He.

*Deem everyone virtuous, there are no thieves.
For, within every body He himself resides.
How the Trickster has put on a mask!*

Saturated with the love of God, Bullah became the personification of compassion and forgiveness. He began to see the divine in every being, and distinctions of caste and religion, friend and foe, ceased to have any meaning for him. The following incident of his life illustrates this sublime state of his mind in a beautiful way:

It is said that once Bulleh Shah was engaged in meditation inside his chamber. It was the month of Ramzan. Some of his disciples were sitting outside eating carrots. After some time a group of orthodox Muslims who were keeping the fast happened to pass them. When they saw the disciples sitting at a faqir's abode

and violating the fast, they were enraged. "They shouted in an angry voice, "Are you not ashamed of eating in the month of Ramzan, and that also at the abode of a faqir?" The disciples replied, "Brother believers, take your path. We are feeling hungry. That is why we are eating."

The group of believers felt suspicious about their faith. So they asked, "Who are you?" They replied, "We are Muslims. Don't the Muslims feel hungry?". The believers again commanded them to stop eating, but the disciples did not heed. The believers who were on horses, alighted. They snatched the carrots from the hands of the disciples, and threw them away. They also gave a few blows to them. As they were about to leave, it struck them that the pir of these impious people must have been cast in the same mould. So they turned back to ask him what kind of instruction he had given to his disciples. They went to his chamber and said, "Who are you?" Bullah who was meditating with his eyes closed, raised his arms and moved his hands. They asked him again, "Why don't you speak? Who are you?" Bullah once again raised his arms. The riders taking him to be a mad man, went away. Soon after they left, the disciples entered the chamber, raising a hue and cry that they had been beaten. Bullah told them that they must have done something to provoke the believers. The disciples denied to have done any such thing. Bullah said, "What did they ask you?" The disciples replied, "They asked us who we were, and we said we were Muslims." Bullah retorted, "That's why you were beaten. You became something and you suffered. I didn't become anything, and they said nothing to me."

To consider oneself something emanates from the sense of ego. Such a person is still under the sway of maya, and has not had a vision of Truth so far. One who has had such a vision comes to know his true self and gets liberated from the bondage of caste, religion and country. There are numerous instances in the poems of Bulleh Shah, which show that the soul, like the Lord, has no religion, no caste, no country. All these distinctions are born out of time and space, but the soul is unborn and timeless. It has neither a beginning, nor an end,

nor is it bound by the limitations of caste and religion. Bullah recognizes only the primeval relationship of soul with God :

I take myself to be the beginning and the end;

I do not recognize aught except the One.

Having realized the Truth within, Bulleh Shah became the embodiment of Truth himself. He spent the rest of his life in disseminating the message of this Reality. Till the end of his sojourn in this transient world he was engaged in meditation of the Lord, and guided all those who came in contact with him, on the same path. His magnetic personality, his pure living and his divine writings spread his fame far and wide. Many a seeker after Truth was attracted by his charm and derived much spiritual gain under his guidance. The last years of his life he passed in Qasur, and here he died in 1758-1759. His tomb can be seen in Qasur even today. It is mentioned in Bang-i-Auli-va-i-Hind :

*When 1171 (Hijiri) had come to pass,
In Qasur his shrine was well raised.*

Bulleh Shah was an evolved soul, a perfect faqir and a true lover. Through the love for his Master he realized the Lord. In his love one finds poignancy, ardor and longing besides sincerity, sacrifice and renunciation. Under the canopy of love he made his offerings of caste and learning. His love for his Master never wavered for a moment despite the fire of separation and longing through which he passed. His writings, as also his life, manifest transcendence of physical love (of the Master) to divine love (of the Lord). Indeed, this is the path of all true mystics, all true lovers of God.

Whosoever has attained union with the Lord has done so by traveling on this path, and whosoever will attain this union, will do so by becoming a traveler on this path of love. Bulleh Shah's life and writings are replete with subtle secrets of the path. They do not only strengthen the love of a true lover, but also encourage him to undergo the severest hardships for reaching the spiritual goal. The life and compositions of Bulleh Shah will serve as a lighthouse for times immemorial to true seekers of spiritual realization.

Courtesy : <http://www.apnaorg.com>

Heer Warris Shah

Ranjha quarrels with his brothers and their wives and leaves his home in Takht Hazara

Takht Hazara is a pleasant place on the banks of the river Chenab. It is the abode of the Ranjhas who live there in proud luxury. Mauju Chaudhri was chief land owner in the village. He had eight sons and two daughters. Of all his sons Ranjha was the most beloved of his father; and as his father loved him, so his brother hated him. Now it came to pass on the Night of Nights that the leaves of the Tree of Life were shaken and by the decree of God, Mauju died.

After Mauju's death, the good land was given to the brothers and the land barren and inhospitable land was given to Ranjha: and Ranjha's enemies flapped their arms exultantly and said, 'Now Ranjha's brother have entangled him in a net' And they jeered at the Jatt, saying, ' How can a man plough who wears long hair and anoints his head with curds?' His brothers jeered saying, 'He wears a looking glass on his thumb like a woman. He plays on the flute all day and sings all night.'

So Ranjha, with his flute under his arm, left his father's country declaring that he would no longer eat or drink in Takht Hazara. Ranjha quarrelled with his brother and left Takht Hazara.

Ranjha reaches the mosque

After much journeying he reached a mosque, hunger and cold fell upon him and weariness of travel. Then he took up his flute and played, and strange things happened. Some became senseless and others hearts yearned when they heard the music. Not a man or woman remained in the village. They all thronged around the mosque. Last of all out came the Mullah who was a very bag of quarrels.

The Mullah protested that he knew all the doctrines of the faith and all the prayers ordained for believers, and could lead the pious across the bridge of salvation. 'But', said he, 'lewd fellows like Ranjha should be spurned from the assemblies of honest men.'

Hearing this, Ranjha jested right merrily at the Mullah's morals and his bawdy tricks, so that his hearers were much astonished and not a few were mightily pleased. He teased the Mullah sorely,

'Mullahs run after women in mosques and cultivated land like laymen. They are like curses clinging to the house of God'. The Mullahs face was blackened. So Ranjha slept in the mosque during the night and at early dawn he set forth on his travels.

Ranjha reaches the bank of the Chenab

At the third watch of the day, when the sun began to slope to the west, Ranjha reached the bank of the river Chenab. Many travellers were assembled at the ferry waiting for Luddan, the ferryman, to take them across. Ranjha said, 'Master ferryman, for the love of God take me across the river.'

Ranjha, weary of entreating the ferryman, sat down in a corner by himself. He drew out his flute and played the sad music of separation from one's beloved. Ranjha, having solaced his soul with music, paid no heed to the entreaties of the folk at the ferry, but taking his shoes in his hands, set his feet in the river. Luddan's wives tried to prevail on him to return and caught the skirt of his clothing. But Ranjha replied to them, 'It is best that those in trouble should die.'

But the people ran and caught him and brought him back saying, 'Friend, enter not the river or you will be drowned.' So they caught Ranjha by the arms, put him in the boat and seated him on the couch of Heer. Enquiring as to who's couch it was, the people replied, 'This is the couch of a Jatt damsel, the daughter of Mihr Chuchak. She is as lovely as the moon. The queen of the fairies always seeks Gods protection from her beauty. Those who have become a prey to her charms can find no shelter on earth. Her beauty slays rich Khojas and Khatris in the bazaar, like a murderous Kizilbash trooper riding out of the royal camp armed with a sword. Luddan and his boatmen are afraid of her, even as a goat fears the wolf. She is the pride of the Sial assembly. Her name is Heer.'

Heer and her companions come to the ferry

Heer and her girl friends came to the river to bathe. The tinkling of their anklets was heard from a far. They descended on the boatman as a hailstorm sweeps over a field. They ordered the

guards to be bound hand and foot. Heer spoke straightaway and said, 'Luddan, you black-faced rogue, why have you defiled my couch? Whom have you allowed to sleep on my bed? have you no respect for me or fear of God that you have done this thing?'

Luddan lifted his hands and said, 'Spare me, Lady, I am innocent. I did not invite the lad to sleep on your bed. The songs that he sings have cast a spell over our hearts.' Heer made answer in her anger, 'Does he not know that this is the kingdom of my father Chuchak; I care for no one, be he a lion, an elephant or the son of a noble. Does he think he is the son of Nadhu Shah or that he is the Pir of Bagdad?'

Heer turning to Ranjha said, 'Sleeper, arise from my bed. Who are you and why have you chosen my sleeping place?' Heer cried aloud in her wrath to her maid servants to be labour him with cudgels. The queen in her wrath was furious to behold.

The meeting of Ranjha and Heer

Ranjha opened his eyes and beheld Heer and said, 'Be gentle with me sweetheart.' Heer's heart melted within her even as the snow of Kashmir melts under the tyrannous sun of June.

Ranjha had his flute under his arm, and earrings in his ears. His beauty was as that of the full moon. Their four eyes met and clashed on the battlefield of love. The heart of Heer swelled with happiness even as a loaf swells with heaven. She sat in his lap as lovingly as arrows nestle in the embrace of a quiver. They conversed happily, one with the other. Love triumphant rode on the field of victory.

'It is well,' quoth she, 'that I did not beat you or say anything that was unbecoming.' Ranjha replied, 'This world is a dream. Even you, proud lady, will have to die. Take back your couch and quilt and I will depart hence and be seen no more.'

Heer made reply, 'This couch, Heer and everything of mine is yours. I have been wandering masterless amongst my friends, and now God has sent me Ranjha to be my Master.'

Ranjha replied, 'Oh beauteous Lady. The wine of your beauty has intoxicated me, but you walk disdainfully.' Heer replied, 'I am your slave. Tell me, friend, when have you come?'

Ranjha replied, 'Girl, I am Ranjha and a Jatt by caste. I am from Takht Hazara.' And he told her

his story. Heer replied with folded hands, 'I will remain your slave and all my hand maidens will do your bidding. Journeys end in lovers' meeting. **Ranjha becomes Chuchaks Cowherd**

So Heer pledged her faith and Ranjha trusting her, stood before Mihr Chuchak. Heer went into the presence of her father and made Ranjha stand beside her. Heer said, 'My father, hail. My father, I have found a servant who can tend our buffaloes.'

Chuchak said, 'He seems to be a mere lad, but he has wise eyes and a kindly disposition. You are championing his cause with zeal. We will see how the boy turns out. We accept what you say; the boy can be given charge of the buffaloes, but bid him take care, as it is no easy task to tend buffaloes in the Bar.'

Thus it came to pass that after a while Heer came to Ranjha and consoled him with sweet talk. Heer said, 'I will bring you butter and sugar and sweat bread. Go and drive the buffaloes into the forest and trust in God. I and my sixty maids will accompany you and together we will track the footprints of the lost cattle.'

Ranjha meets the Five Pirs in the forest.

Ranjha took upon himself the task of a herdsman. Good fortune however came to him and he met the Five Pirs on the way. Ranjha saw by their countenances that they were holy men and besought their help.

The Pirs replied, 'Child, eat your fill and drink grey buffaloes milk and live on fat of the land. Dismiss all sadness from your mind. God himself will set your affairs right.' Ranjha replied, 'Sirs, I am in great distress. I beseech you bestow the girl Heer upon me, for the fire of love is devouring me.'

The holy Pirs answered and said, 'Child, all your wishes will be fulfilled; your arrow will hit the target, and your boat will reach the shore. Heer has been bestowed on you by the Darbar of God.' Thus by the grace of God and the kindness of the Five Pirs, Heer, the Jatt girl, was bestowed on Ranjha.

Heer and Ranjha meet in the forest

Heer Jatti set out from the Jhang Sial. She came to fulfill the eagerness of her heart, for she was possessed with love for Ranjha. She brought him boiled rice, sugar, butter and milk, and she said, with weeping eyes, 'I have been searching for you all over the forest.' Ranjha said, 'God himself

hath said in the holy Koran, Verily your deceit is great. Satan is the lord of evil spirits and women. Women falsify the truth and feel no shame. Only if you intend to keep your word, Heer, can the son of Mauju endure the humiliation of being a servant.'

Heer comforted Ranjha with sweet words and poured out all her soul to him. She said, 'We shall be surrounded by enemies and you must confront all troubles with patience. But beware of Kaidu, my wicked uncle. The world will reproach us and those who are ignorant will cast taunts at us, but the true lover sacrifices his life for his beloved. Lovers have no support but God.'

Thus everyday Heer used to take a bowl of rice and pudding to Ranjha in the forest, and she swore to be true to him. She gave up her spinning and no longer sat with her girl friends. She was with Ranjha all the day. She set aside the blanket of beholding her wantonness.

The news spread over the whole of Jhang that Heer had fallen in love with a shepherd and that she went to visit him every day in the forest.

Heer's mother was angry with her and Kaidu finds her in the forest with Ranjha.

When Heer came back from the forest, her mother rebuked her, saying, 'The taunts of the village folk have consumed us utterly. If you cease not from wickedness your father Chuchak and your brother Sultan will cut you in pieces.'

Heer replied, 'Listen Milki, my mother, as long as breath remains in my body I will not leave Ranjha.' Heer would not listen to her mother and continued to visit Ranjha in the forest.

Meanwhile Kaidu the cripple, Heer's uncle, constantly urged Chuchak to Chastise Heer. He kept watch over her footsteps as a spy.

Heer had gone to the river to fetch water, and Ranjha was sitting alone, so Kaidu, in the guise of a mendicant faqir, came to him and begged for alms in the name of God, and retired towards the village.

When Heer came back from the river she asked Ranjha where the other half of the pastry was, and he told her that a crippled faqir had come and begged in God's name. Heer replied, 'Ranjha, where have your wits gone? That was no saintly faqir but my Satanic uncle Kaidu who goes about to destroy me.'

The heart of Heer was scorched with anger against Kaidu. So she ran and overtook him in the

way and fell upon him in her wrath like a tigress. Half of the pastry fell on the ground, and the other half Kaidu snatched from Heer, and having secured his prize, the cripple ran off as fast as his crooked legs would carry him to the village.

Kaidu came before the council of village elders and said, 'See, here are the pieces of pastry which Heer gave to Ranjha. Will you now believe when I tell you she is a shameless hussy?' The elders came and told Chuchak what Kaidu had been saying in the assembly of the elders. Chuchak was wroth and said, 'Kaidu is a talebearer and a liar; he chases moths all day.'

Kaidu said to Milki, 'For god's sake get your daughter married.' Heer withstood her parents to their faces and refused to give up Ranjha.

Scandal spread in the village and Chuchak dismissed Ranjha and then recalled him.

When Ranjha brought the cows back that night Chuchak was wroth, and he called Ranjha and in the presence of all his kinsfolk rebuked him saying, 'friend, give up the buffaloes and go away.'

There upon Ranjha threw down his shepherds crook and blanket and quit Chuchak's herd of cattle, just as a thief leaves the hole in the wall when he hears watchman's footsteps. And he spoke to Chuchak in his anger, 'for twelve years I have been grazing your buffaloes and now you turn me away without wages.' Ranjha in a rage shook the dust of the Sials off his feet and gave up the service of Chuchak.

Milki said to Chuchak, 'all the people curse us for having turned the cowherd out without paying him his wages. Go and beseech him to come back. Tell him Heer is disquieted by his absense.' Chuchak said to Milki, 'go you and pacify him.'

Milki having found him, she entreated him saying, 'do not fret over much about the quarrel you had with Chuchak. Parents and children often fall out in such small matters. Come back and milk our buffaloes and spread Heer's couch. Since you have gone she has been much displeased with us. Our cattle, our wealth, the Sials and heer are all yours.' So Ranjha hearkened to the words of Heer's mother, and once more became Chuchak's herdsman.

The Qazi admonishes Heer but she refuses to give up Ranjha

When Heer came back from the forest her

parents sent for the Qazi. The Qazi said, 'it is not becoming for the daughter of Chuchak to talk to cowherds and penniless coolies. In a few days the messengers of your wedding will be here. The preparations for the marriage are all but complete. The Kheras will bring a marriage procession in a few days to take you to the house of your husband.'

Heer replied to her father, 'as wine-bibblers cannot desert the bottle, as opium-eaters cannot live without opium, so i cannot live without Ranjha. The Qazi was wroth and said, 'nobody can stop or stay this wicked girl. Heer's pride knows no bounds. She must be given in marriage at once.'

Heer called aside one of her girl friends and sent her to Ranjha at once with the following message, 'my parents and the Qazi are oppressing me and my life is being taken from me just as sugar is pressed out of a sugar mill. You, friend, are living happily but an army of sorrows is invading me.'

Ranjha has audience of the Five Pirs and Mithi discourses on love.

Ranjha stood before the Five Pirs with folded hands and weeping eyes, and he prayed, 'for God's sake, help me, or my love will be ruined.' They said, 'ask any favour of us and we will give it up.' Ranjha replied, 'admit me to your holy order, make me Malang and give me Heer as my Malangan and Mate.'

Ranjha and Heer took counsel how they might conceal their plans from Heer's parents, so they decided to take Mithi, the barber woman, into their confidence so that they might meet in Mithi's house. Mithi's house was near the watering place of the cattle.

Heer used to come during the night and stay till one watch of the night remained and then slip back to her own house. In the morning Ranjha drove the buffaloes out to graze in the forest. Under the pretence of bathing, Heer and her friends used to meet him in the forest on the banks of the Chenab.

But the shephards heard of these things and came and told the news to Kaidu, and Kaidu told Milki. Milki sent for Heer as Kaidu went about the village saying, 'I tell you the girl walks arm in arm with Ranjha all day in the forest.'

Heer thrashed Kaidu and Kaidu complained to the village elders.

Heer's girl friends came to her saying, 'Your evil uncle is stirring up the whole assembly of elders

against you. So Heer took counsel together with her girls, and at her bidding they waited for an opportunity and caught Kaidu and surrounded him. They tore off his beggars girdle and threw him on the ground. Their blows resounded like the hammers of the coppersmiths. They then burnt his hut and let the dogs and chickens loose all over his property.

So Kaidu resolved in his own mind how he might catch Heer and Ranjha in the forest, and bring Chuchak to see them. The next morning Ranjha drove the cattle into the forest, and after two watches of the day had gone, Heer and her companions in their scarlet clothes came into the forest. The girls played together and then went back to their homes. Ranjha and Heer stayed behind and slept together peacefully in the forest. Kaidu ran off to the village as fast as his cripple legs would carry him, and said to the Assembly of Elders, 'come and see the strange things in the forest.'

Chuchak finds Heer and Ranjha in the forest.

Chuchak muttered to himself, 'we have been dishonoured before the whole assembly.' He saddled his horse and took a spear in his hand. Heer heard the noise of the oncoming horse, and said to Ranjha, 'get up, my father is coming.' Then she wept and said, 'I shall not come here again, so forgive me.' And she hurried from Ranjha's side.

Mihr Chuchak was tortured with rage and said, 'I will break your legs in two and cut off your head. Only thus will the scandal be stopped.' Heer turned towards Ranjha and said, 'shepherd, leave your buffaloes and go away to your home. No one in future will care for what has happened. I am your own dear daughter and it is not meet for men of gentle birth to bring their own disgrace by publishing abroad their daughters' defects.' Chuchak bewildered and bethought that Heer ought to be given away in marriage soon.

When Ranjha became a shepherd, news was taken to his brethren in Takht Hazara. The brothers of Ranjha wrote to the Sials. 'Ranjha has cut off our nose by becoming a grazier of buffaloes. We shall be grateful to you if you will send him back; otherwise we shall have to come with a special embassage to lay our request before you.'

Chuchak replied, 'We have employed Ranjha as Heer's servant. Why have you turned such a young man as this out of your house? He is neither

lame nor lazy nor clumsy fingered. We will not turn him over, but if he wishes to see his brothers no one will prevent him.'

Ranjhas brothers and their wives wrote tauntingly to Heer. Heer had the letter read out to her and she told the contents to Ranjha, and after consulting him, she caused the following answer to be written on her behalf. 'Your letter has been received. We are shocked at its contents. We have employed Ranjha as a grazier of buffaloes and we will not let him go.'

Chuchak proposes to get Heer married.

Chuchak was determined to marry Heer somewhere to avert disgrace, and his brethren agreed with him, but they urged that the Sials had never given their daughters to the lowly Ranjha tribe and that they would be disgraced if they give their daughters to such lowly and needy folk. The brotherhood recommended an alliance with the house of the Kheras as being Jatts of good lineage whom Chuchak would be proud to win as relations. So Chuchak took the advice of the brotherhood and announced the betrothal to his friends and relations. They sang songs and made merry. The Kheras received the news with great joy. They assembled in crowds and danced with delight. But when Heer and Ranjha heard the merriment, Heer was angry with her mother for betrothing her against her will and said she would never go with the Kheras however much her mother tried to make her.

Heer said to Ranjha, 'great tyranny has fallen upon us. Let us go away to some distant part of the country, for when once I am admitted into the house of the Kheras they will never allow me to come back. Ranjha replied, 'love does not taste well if it is composed of theft and stealth and abduction.'

The girls of the Jhang Sial assembled together and came before Ranjha and asked, 'How fares it with you now? You should say to her, "if you intended to turn your face from me why did you make me undergo such hardships?"' Ranjha replied to the girls and said, 'the uttering of many words is folly; all ills must be borne with patience. If God is good, the Kheras and Heer Sial will never mate together. The patience of the heart is victorious over the world. Those who keep silent always succeed.'

Heer's girls came and said to her, 'you have

been insincere and have deserted your faith. If you intended to break faith with him why did you first encourage him and then break his heart? He has borne the taunts of the whole world for your sake and you have been a great tyrant. Remember that the throne of God trembles when a man is deprived of his right.'

Heer replied to the girls, 'hide him under your sheet and bring him to me disguised as a girl, but do not let my parents know.' So one night the girls brought Ranjha disguised as a girl, and Heer and Ranjha once again pledged their troth to be true to one another.

Heer is married to Saida against her will.

Meanwhile the Kheras asked the Brahmans to consult the Stars and to fix the marriage. The Brahmans fixed Virwati (thursday) in the month of Sawan for the wedding. The guests turned green with jealousy when they saw the abundance of good things. A large host of people came to enjoy Chuchak's hospitality.

Ranjha left his buffaloes and sat in a corner sad at heart.

Meanwhile flocks of beautiful women lined the tops of all the houses to watch the marriage procession. The crowd and the noise was great as at the Fairs of Pakpattan. The girls went wild with jealousy when they saw the costly robes of the married Sial women. Then came the musicians, the dancing girls and the jesters and the minstrels with trumpets and cymbals even from Kashmir and the Dekhan.

When the procession arrived Ranjha's soul and his heart were scorched like roasted meat; and said to himself sadly, 'Saida is drunk with joy today though he has not touched wine. Saida has become a Nawab and Heer his princess. Who cares for Ranjha the poor shepherd? Death is better than life without my beloved.'

When the relations of the bride and the bridegroom met they put the bridegroom and his best man on horseback.

The bride and bridegroom were made to sit facing each other and put 'surma' in each other's eyes. The Qazi who was to solemnise the marriage was given a seat on the floor. They appointed two witnesses and an attorney and prepared to offer prayers. They told her the definition of Faith and made her repeat, 'there is only one God and Muhammad is his Prophet.' They made her read

the six Kalmas and taught her the Five Times of Prayer.

The Qazi again admonished Heer but she was displeased and refused to say a word to him. The Qazi said to Heer, 'you should obey the orders of your religion, if you wish to live.'

Heer replied, 'I shall cry out in the Court of God that my mother betrothed me to Ranjha and has broken her promise. My love move is known to Dhul Bashak, to the Pen and the Tablet of Destiny and to the whole earth and sky. Where the love of Ranjha has entered there is no place for the authority of the Kheras. If I turn my face to Ranjha what shelter will there be for me in the Day of Judgement?'

For a whole watch of the day did the Qazi admonish Heer and urge her to accept the marriage arranged by her parents. Chuchak said to the Qazi, 'Listen to me. The marriage procession of the Kheras is sitting at my door, and if the marriage is not accomplished I shall be disgraced and the face of the Sials will be blackened.' The Qazi replied, 'you can only gain your object by deceit. Tell the bride's attorney that consent to the marriage must be wrung from Heer, even against her will. If Ranjha the shepherd makes trouble we will cast him into the fire.'

Heer is taken to Rangpur

Thus Heer was married by stratagem and put into the Doli by force. Heer cried out to Ranjha, 'today your wealth has been looted by the kheras. Takht Hazara and Jhang are left masterless. Other brides have clothes of green, red and yellow but I wear only mournful white.' The Kheras marched with the Doli of Heer, and at dawn they reached the forest, they halted and sat down to eat and drink and be merry.

The Kheras rode after deer and hunted lions and foxes and showed much cunning with their bows and arrows. They roasted the meat they had killed and set aside a portion for Heer. Heer finding herself alone and the Kheras merry making, made signal to Ranjha, called him into the Doli and embraced him tenderly. One of the Kheras noticed this and urged the procession to move on, and at last they reached the village of Rangpur. The girls lifted the bride out of the Doli and poured oil over the threshold. Heer's mother-in-law swung water round her bride's head and drank it and gave thanks to God.

When they espied Ranjha sitting near, they snatched the basket from his head and frightened him away. He drew near Heer by stealth and spoke to her. Heer said, 'Ranjha, this love of ours must last for all our life long. The Five Pirs stand witness between you and me. I swear I will never be the wife of Saida. I will write to you that you should come and see me in disguise of a fakir. If you do not come and see me, my soul will vanish away.'

Heer is unhappy in her new home.

Ranjha resolved to become a fakir and get his ears bored and bring back Heer captive or perish in the attempt. Meanwhile Heer languished in the house of her father-in-law. She refused to put on jewellery or gay clothes. She ate no food and lay awake all night thinking of Ranjha.

Sehti, her husband's sister, spoke to her saying, 'sister what spell has overcome you? You are growing weaker everyday. Tell me the secret of your heart that I may cure it.' So Heer told Sehti all her history and Sehti sat by Heer and consoled her saying she too had a lover, Murad Bakhsh, a camel driver, and that somehow they must contrive to help each other in their troubles.

One night Saida full of delight placed his foot on Heer's bed. Heer thrust him away saying, 'I have not yet said my prayers.' But Saida was wilful and would not heed, so Heer in her distress prayed to her Pir. The Pir at once appeared and Heer said, 'I am the betrothed of Ranjha. My love is pledged to him.' So the Pir chastised Saida, broke his bones and tied up his hands and feet.

The Five Pirs saw Heer sitting in devout meditation they appeared at once by the order of God. They awakened her and said, 'Child get up. What grief has overcome you?' Heer gave a deep sigh and tears came from her eyes as she replied, 'The love of the Jatt whom you gave to me has made me mad. This love of the shepherd has ruined me. God has made you my protector and I come to the Pirs for help in my trouble.'

The Pirs were overcome with compassion, and said, 'he will meet you in person very soon for so it has been ordained by God.'

Heer sends a message to Ranjha

After a year had passed a Jatt girl from Rangpur was returning to Jhang Sial to visit her own home and she came to Heer and offered to take any message she might want to send her parents. Heer replied, 'say, "you have given me

over into the hands of enemies. May my parents be drowned in the deep stream. I will have nothing to do with them." Then seek out Ranjha and say to him, "come to me or I shall die. I have thrown dust on the head of the Kheras and spat in the face of Saida."

When the girl reached Jhang of the Sials she asked the folk there, 'where is the boy Ranjha?' The girls replied, 'he is now a grown up lad and has given up all affections of the world. He roams about in the forest where there are wolves and tigers.'

So the girl went in search of Ranjha and said to him, 'Heer is on the point of death. She shows no affection for her husband's house, although they have made all efforts to please her. She will not allow Saida to touch her and she will not go near him. Go back to her disguised as a Jogi and manage to meet her somehow.'

Ranjha, heard this message, rejoiced exceedingly. He said to himself, 'the river of Love is deep but a boat must be fashioned to cross it. I must disguise myself as a fakir.'

Ranjha decides to become a Jogi

Ranjha set off for 'Tilla', the hill where Balnath the Jogi dwelt. After many days journeying, Ranjha reached Tilla, and bowed his head and placed a piece of gur before Balnath as an offering, and clasped the feet of the Jogis. Ranjha folded his hands before Balnath and said, 'Make me a fakir. Let me be your chela and be my Pir. He said to Ranjha, 'my lad, your looks are saucy and you have commanding airs. Your demeanour is not that of a servant but of one whom others obey. Only those whose souls are submissive can become Jogis.' 'Oh Jatt, tell the truth. What has befallen you that you wish to relinquish the pleasures of life and become a fakir? The taste of Jog is bitter and sour. You will have to dress as a Jogi, to wear dirty clothes, long hair, criped skull and to beg your way through life. You will have to become divinely intoxicated by taking kand, mul, post, opium and other narcotic drugs. You Jatts cannot attain Jog.'

Ranjha replied to Balnath, 'I accept all your conditions. I beseech you to give me Jog and to drown me in the deep waters of the Fakiri.'

The guru took Ranjha's clothes and having rubbed him in ashes and embarrassed him, made him sit by his side. Then he took a razor of

separation and shaved him completely. Then he bored his ears and put earrings on him. He gave him the beggar's bowl, the rosary, the horn and the shell in his hands, and made him learn the words of Allah. He taught him the way of God and the gurus from the beginning, 'your heart should be far from other men's women.

Ranjha having achieved his desire and having been granted Jog, shook off the disguise pentience. Balnath was sad and hung his head and he said, 'Verily I repent and am sorry for having given Jog to this youth.'

Ranjha laughed him to scorn saying, 'We Jatts are cunning strategists and we use all means to compass our hearts desire. I will invoke the name of my Pir, my guru and of God and pitch my flag in Rangpur where I will cut off the nose of the Kheras and spite the Sials. What can a Jatt do with a beggars bowl or horn, whose heart is set only on ploughing? My heart begs for Heer and for Heer alone.'

At last the guru understood that Ranjha had been wounded sore by the arrow of love and that he would never give up the search for his beloved. He closed his eyes in the Darbar of God and uttered this prayer:

'Oh God, the lord of earth and sky, Ranjha the jatt has given up his kith and kin and that he possesses and has become a fakir for love of the eyes of Heer, who has slain him with the arrow of love. Grant, Oh Lord, that he may get his heart's desire.'

The Five Pirs also prayed in the Court of God that Ranjha might receive that which his heart desired. Then there came a reply from the Darbar of God, 'Heer has been bestowed on Ranjha and his boat has been taken ashore.' Balnath opened his eyes and said to Ranjha, 'my son, your prayer has been granted. Go and invade the Kheras and utterly subdue them.'

Ranjha arrives at Rangpur

So it came to pass that Ranjha came to the village of the Kheras. The beauties of Rangpur thronged round the Jogi. When the women of the village saw the beauty of the Jogi they surrounded him in multitudes, old and young, fat and thin, married and unmarried. They poured out all their woes to the fakir and many wept as they told their stories. Some complained of their father-in-law or mother-in-law. Some complained that their

husbands beat them, others that neighbours were unkind. Ranjha made all the girls sit close to him and told them of ways to help themselves.

Saida's sister said to Heer, 'sister, this Jogi is as beautiful as the moon and as slender as a cypress tree. He cries "God be with you". Some say he has come from Jhang Sial. Others say he has come from Hazara. Some say he is not a Jogi at all but has got his ears bored for the sake of Heer.' Heer replied, 'I entreat you not to touch on this subject. It appears to me that this is a true message from God, and that it is Ranjha.' Heer said to the girls, 'Bring him somehow to me that we may find out where he comes from and who he is, who is his guru and who bored his ears.'

The girls encircled round the handsome Jogi and asked him ceaseless questions about himself. The girls then went and told Heer, 'Heer, we have enreated the Jogi but he will not listen to us.'

Meanwhile Heer's heart was rent with the pangs of separation from her lover and she was devising some way of seeing Ranjha. The Jogi at the same time decided to visit the house of Mehr Ajju. So Ranjha took up the beggars bowl and went from door to door, playing his shell and crying, 'you mistress of the courtyard, give alms, give alms.'

The Jogi passed on into the courtyard of a Jatt who was milking a cow. He blew his horn and played on his shell and roared like an intoxicated bull. The cow alarmed by the noise kicked the rope and spilt the milk. The Jatt in a fury exclaimed, 'Fancy giving alms to this poisonus snake.'

The Jatt's wife flew at Ranjha and abused him and all his kith an kin, his grandparents and great-grandparents for spoiling the milk. She pushed him away and tore his shirt and flung taunts at him. The Jogi in his wrath kicked her and knocked out all her teeth. The jatt seeing his wife on the ground raised a hue and cry and shouted, 'The bear has killed the fairy. He has killed my wife. Firends, bring sticks and come to my aid.' The men cried, 'We are coming, we are coming.'

And the Jogi in alarm took to his heels. As he passed by one of the houses he saw a beautiful girl sitting all alone like a princess in a jewelled chamber of the king. He knocked at the door and said, 'Heer, bride of the Kheras, are you well? Give me alms, give me alms.'

Saida's sister Sehti appears, and begins to

quarrel with the Jogi.

Ranjha meets Heer

Sehti said, 'Jogi, if you have all these powers perhaps you can cure our bride Heer. Everyday she is getting weaker.' Ranjha replied, 'Sehti, beguile me not with vain words. Bring your bride here that I may see her and inspect the colour of her eyes and face.'

About this time Heer came into the courtyard and from one of the inner chambers she overheard the words of the Jogi. She wondered who the speaker might be and she said to herself, 'Perhaps he is my king Ranjha!' Heer said to the Jogi, 'Jogi, go away from here. Those who are unhappy cannot laugh.' The Jogi replied to Heer, 'We are the perfect fakirs of God. Ask anything from us, fair beauty, and we can bring it about.' Heer replied, 'It is not true, Jogi; parted friends cannot be reunited. Tell me when the true God will bring back the lover I have lost?' The Jogi replied, 'I know all the secrets of the universe. On the Resurrection Day everything will be revealed.'

Heer stood up and said, 'This Jogi has read the signs of the stars correctly. He is a true pandit and Jotshi. Tell me Jogi, where is my lover who stole my heart away and brought ruin on himself.' The Jogi replied, 'Why are you searching outside, your lover is in your house. Put off your veil, my beautiful bride and look if you cannot see your lost lover.'

Heer said, 'Jogi, it cannot be true. He cannot be in the house.' Then she decided to draw aside her veil. She glanced at the Jogi and behold! It was her lost lover. And she said to him softly, 'Our secret must be hidden from the eyes of Sehti.' The Jogi replied, 'Bride of the Kheras, do not teach wisdom to the wise. Be not proud of your beauty but be kind to old friends.'

Sehti quarrels with the Jogi and turns him out of the house

When Sehti saw the hearts of Heer and the Jogi had become one and that Heer had fallen under his spell, she began abusing the Jogi to her, 'Sister, all Jogis are liars. This snub-nosed squat dirty-faced wicked Jogi cannot be trusted.'

The Jogi: 'A Jatt woman is only good for four things, pressing wool, scaring sparrows, grazing lambs and nursing a baby. She loves quarrels and beats fakirs. She looks after her own family and abuses others.'

Heer glanced at the Jogi and made signs to him to stop quarrelling and she urged Sehti not to quarrel with the Jogi. Sehti lost her temper and said to her maid-servant Rabel, 'Let us give this fakir alms and turn him out. Give him a handful of millet and tell him to go away.' The Jogi and Sehti continue to quarrel.

Heer said to Sehti, 'What strange perverseness is this? Why quarrel with holy fakirs whose only support is God?' Sehti replied, 'O virtuous one whose sheet is as stainless as a praying mat! The whole house is yours and who are we? You are as important as if you had brought a shipload of clothes from your father's house. You flirting hussy and milker of buffaloes! You are still running after men. You never speak a word to your husband Saida, but you are hand in glove with the Jogi.'

Heer replied, 'You have picked up a quarrel with the fakir. Beware the fakir is dangerous.' Sehti replied, 'As sure as I am a woman, I will tell my brother of your disgraceful conduct with the shepherd.'

Ranjha complained bitterly to Heer of the way he had been used, and he entreated God, saying, 'Why has they separated me from my beloved after bringing us together?' And the Jogi wept bitterly and he said to himself, 'I will fast forty days and forty nights and I will recite powerful enchantments which will overcome all difficulties and will unite me to my beloved.'

Ranjha retires to Kalabagh

Ranjha meditated deeply in his heart, and he collected ashes from the hearth and sat down on a hillock in the garden of Kalabagh. Then he recited spells and incantations and a voice came from the Five Pirs saying, 'go my child, your grief is gone. You will meet your beloved in the morning.'

It came to pass that on Friday all the girls of the village assembled to pay a visit to the garden in Kalabagh. They put out his fire, threw away his beggars bowl and wallet and scattered his bhang. They broke his pestle and mortar. They threw away his turban, his chain and his tongs, his cup and his horn. Then the Jogi gave a loud roar from inside the garden and with a stick in his hand advanced to attack them. The girls hearing the terrible roar of the Jogi, all ran away, all save one beautiful sparrow whom he caught.

She cried, 'Help, help,' and threw off all her

clothes and ornaments to save her life. If you touch us we shall die. What have you to tell me? My aunt Heer has been your friend from the beginning. We all know she is your beloved. I will take her any message you give me.'

The Jogi sighed when he heard the name of Heer and he sent a message through the girl to Heer complaining how badly she had treated him, and the girl ran off and told Heer. Heer replied to the girl, 'Ranjha has been foolish to babble the secret of his heart to a woman.'

The next day in order to compass the object of her desire, Heer went to Sehti and clasped her feet and tried to win her over with soft words saying, 'help me to meet my Ranjha. Those who do good actions will be rewarded in Paradise. If you restore Heer to her lover, you will meet your lover Murad.'

Sehti and Heer make Friends

Sehti's heart leapt with joy and she said to Heer, 'go, I have forgiven your fault, as you have been faithful in love from the beginning. Let us go and bring about a reconciliation of the lovers'. So Sehti filled a big dish with sugar and cream and covered it with a cloth and put five rupees therein. Then she went to the garden of Kalabagh and stood with her offering near the Jogi.

Ranjha said, 'The dish is filled with sugar and rice and you have out five rupees on the top of it. Go and see, if you have any doubt in your mind.' Sehti uncovered the dish and looked at it, and behold, it was full of sugar and rice. When Sehti beheld the miracle which the fakir had performed, she besought him with folded hands saying, 'I have been your slave from the beginning with all my heart and soul. I will follow your footsteps and serve you with devotion as your maid-servant. My heart, my property, all my girl friends and Heer herself belong to you. I now put all my trust in God's fakir.'

Ranjha said to Sehti, 'I have grazed buffaloes for many years for the sake of Heer. Tell her that a grazer of buffaloes is calling her. Bring Heer, the Sial, to me, and then you will obtain your lover Murad.'

Sehti takes Ranjha's Message to Heer and Heer meets Ranjha in the garden

Sehti went to Heer and gave the message of the Jogi, saying, 'You got him to tend your buffaloes by deceit and now you have broken your promise

and married Saida. By the practise of great austerities, he has obtained the help of the Five Pirs, and he has shown me his power by a miracle. Go to him at once as a submissive subject with a present in your hand, for a new governor has been appointed to rule over us.

So Heer took a bath and clothed herself in silk and scented her hair with attar of roses and all manne of sweet scents. She painted her eyes with antimony and rubbed 'watna' and 'dandasa' on her face and lips, and the beauty of them was doubled. She put handfuls of earrings in her ears and anklets on her feet. Jewels shone on her forehead. She was as beautiful as a peacock.

Heer salaamed with folded hands and caught Ranjha's feet, saying 'Embrace me, Ranjha, for the fire of separation is burning me. My heart has been burnt to a cinder. I return your deposit untouched. Since I plighted my troth to you I have embraced no other man. Let us go away together, my beloved, wherever you will. I obey your orders.' And Heer threw herself round his neck. Like mas things they swung together in the intoxication of love. The poison of love ran fire through their blood.

Heer left Ranjha and consulted Sehti on how she might arrange to meet him again.

Sehti and Heer plan a stratagem

Sehti and Heer consulted together how Heer might leave the Kheras and be united to Ranjha. Sehti went to her mother and spoke about Heer. Heer came before her mother-in-law like Umar the Trickster and wove a cunning web of deceit saying, 'Mother, I am weary of staying indoors. May I go into the fields with Sehti?'

Sehti's mother replied, 'Heer may go and walk about, and may be she will recover her health and strength. But remember Heer, be prudent, and when you leave this house do not do what is unbecoming to a bride. Take God and the Prophet to witness.'

Sehti assembled her girl friends together. To please the bride Heer, she is to be taken into the garden and she will also pick cotton in the fields. So in the morning they all assembled together.

They laughed and sang and played games together, and one of them took a sharp thorn from an acacia bush and pricked Heer's foot. Sehti bit it with her teeth and caused blood to flow, and they pretended like Heer had been bitten by a snake. Sehti raised a cry, 'The bride has been bitten by a

black snake.'

The people of the village when they saw Heer said, 'Search out an enchanter who knows powerful spells.' And the Kheras brought hundreds of fakirs and hakims and enchanters and they gave her cunning drugs.

Heer's mother-in-law beat her breast and said, 'these cures do no good. Heer is going to die. Heer's fate will soon be accomplished.' Sehti said, 'This snake will not be subdued by ordinary spells. There is a very cunning Jogi in the Kalabagh garden in whose flute there are thousands of spells.'

So Aju said to Saida, 'Son, brides are precious things. Go to the fakir and salaam him with folded hands.' When the Jogi heard Saida's voice his heart leapt within him and he suspected that Sehti and Heer had invented some cunning strategy.

Ranjha is called in to cure Heer's snake bite

Aju went and stood before the Jogi with folded hands and besought him to come and cure Heer. Nad the Jogi at last consented, and as he went to the house of Aju a partridge sang on the right for good luck.

Meanwhile, Sehti took charge of the Jogi and lodged him in the hut belonging to the village minstrel. He gave orders that bread must be cooked for the holy man. 'No man or woman must come near or cast their shadow on it. A separate place must be prepared and Heer's couch placed on it. Only Sehti may come; only a virgin girl must be allowed to cross the threshold.'

Ranjha went outside the house and made ready to depart, and Sehti came to him and salaamed to him saying, 'For the love of god, take my poor boat ashore. I have set all plans of the Kheras at naught and tarnished the reputation of the whole family. For the sake of your love, I have given Heer into your hand. Now give me my lover Murad. This is the only request I make of you.'

And Ranjha lifted his hands and prayed to god, 'O god restore this jatti's lover to her.' So god showed his kindness and Murad, her lover stood before her. So Murad took Sehti on his camel and Ranjha took Heer. Thus the bridegrooms set forth with their brides.

The discovery of Heer's escape with Ranjha

The next morning the ploughmen yoked their oxen and went forth to plough, and so, the house of the sick bride was empty. They looked inside and outside and they woke up the

watchman who was asleep near the door. There was a great stir in the town and everybody said, 'Those wicked girls Heer and Sehti have brought great disgrace on the whole village. They have cut off our nose and we shall be defamed through the whole world.'

So the Kheras drew up their armies on hearing the news. Now the armies of the Kheras succeeded in overtaking Murad, but the Balooches drew up their forces and drove back the Kheras.

Destiny overwhelmed both the lovers. For the Kheras came in pursuit and found Ranjha asleep, his head resting on Heer. They took Heer away and beat Ranjha unmercifully with whips until body was swollen.

Heer advised Ranjha to seek for justice from Raja Adali. So Ranjha cried out aloud, and the Raja heard it and said, 'what is this noise?'

Ranjha and Heer before the Raja

Ranjha came before the raja and his body was sore with the blows of the Kheras' whips and he said, 'May you and your kingdom live long. I have been beaten in your kingdom and have committed no fault.'

So the Raja issued orders to his armies and they overtook the Kheras and brought them before the Darbar of the Raja.

The Raja was angry with the Kheras and said, 'you have committed a great sin in troubling this holy fakir. I will cut your nose and ears off and hang you all, if the Qazi says you are liars.'

So they came before the Qazi, and the Qazi said, 'Let each side make a statement on oath and I will administer the justice of Umer Khattab.' So the Kheras spoke.

Then the Qazi turned to Ranjha and said, 'Fakir, have you got any witnesses? Without witnesses to the marriage she can be no wife.' Ranjha replied, 'Listen to my words, you who know the law and the principles of religion. On the day our souls said yes, I was betrothed to Heer. In the Tablet of Destiny, God has written the union of our souls. What need have we of earthly love when our souls have attained the Divine Love?'

The Qazi was angered and snatched heer from Ranjha and gave her to the Kheras saying, 'This fakir is a swindler and a pious fraud.'

Heer sighed with grief and said, 'O God, see how we are consumed as with fire. Fire is before us and snakes and tigers behind us and our power is of no avail. O Master, either unite me with Ranjha or slay both of us. The people of this country have exercised tyranny against us.'

Thus did Heer invoke curses on the city. And Ranjha lifted up his hands likewise and invoked curses on the city.

See the power of God. Owing to the sighs of the lovers, the city caught fire. Fire broke out in all four quarters of the city. It destroyed houses both small and great.

The astrologers cast their lots and said to the raja, 'The pens of your officials are free from sin. But God has listened to the sighs of lovers. Hence this misfortune has overwhelmed us. Fire has descended from the city. If you will call up and conciliate the lovers, perhaps god will forgive all those who have sinned.'

So the raja sent out his soldiers, and they caught the Kheras and brought them into his presence. And the Raja took Heer from the Kheras saying, 'I will hang you all. Heer the Jatti belongs to Ranjha. Why do you oppress strangers?'

So Ranjha and Heer stood before the Raja, and he said to them, 'God's curses on those who tell lies. I will kill those who oppress the poor. I will cut off the nose of those who take brides. You may go to your rightful husband.'

The poisoning of Heer and the Death of Ranjha

Thus God showed his mercy and the Raja caused the two lovers to meet again. And Ranjha called down blessings on the Raja saying, 'god be praised and may wealth come to your kingdom. May all troubles flee away and may you rule over horses, camels, elephants, batteries, Hindustan and Sind.' So Ranjha set off towards his home taking Heer with him.

Now the shepherds were grazing their buffaloes in the jungle and they espied Heer and Ranjha and when they drew close, they recognised them. They went and told the Sials, 'Behold the shepherd has brought the girl Heer back. He has shaved the beard of the Kheras without water.'

The Sials said, Do not let them go away.

Bring Heer to her aunts and tell Ranjha to bring a marriage procession in order to wed Heer.' And they brought Heer and Ranjha to the Sials.

The the brotherhood brought Heer and Ranjha to their home and laid a rich couch for them to sit on and all the family was happy. They took the Jogi's rings out of his ears. They shaved him and out a rich turban on his head, they gave him a silk shirt and sat him on the throne. They ensnared the heart of Ranjha with their cunning, for they were communing in their heart how they might kill Heer. Kaidu was forever plotting evil against them. Thus they became responsible for the murder and they themselves caused the blot on their own fame.

Meanwhile, Ranjha at the suggestion of the Sials had gone to his home, and he told his brethren to prepare a marriage procession so that he might go and marry Heer. Many baskets of fruit and sweets were put on the heads of the barbers. They prepared bands of minstrels and fireworks, and Ranjha's brothers' wives danced with happiness and sang songs.

Ah, put not your trust in life. Man is even as a goat in the hands of butchers.

Meanwhile, somebody whispered into Heer's ears that her parents were going to send her back to the Kheras and that they had already sent a message to have her fetched away. Nad Kaidu chided Heer saying, 'if the Kheras come there will be trouble, many quarrels and much disturbance. The witnesses of the marriage will come and they will confound your made-up tales.'

Kaidu and the Sials held counsel together, and Kaidu said, 'brethren of the Sials, such things have never before been said of our tribe as will be said now. For men will say, 'Go and look at the faithfulness of these Sials. They marry their daughters to one man and then contemplate giving her in marriage to another.'

And the brethren made the answer, 'Brother, you are right. Our honour and your honour are one. All over the world we are taunted with the story of Heer. We shall lose fame and gain great disgrace if we send the girl off with the shepherd. Let us poison Heer, even if we become sinful in the sight of god. Does not Heer always remain sickly and poor in health?'

So Kaidu in his evil cunning came and sat down beside Heer and said, 'My daughter, you must be brave and patient.' Heer replied, 'Uncle, what need have I of patience?' And Kaidu replied, 'Ranjha has been killed. Death with a glittering sword has overtaken him.'

And hearing Kaidu's words Heer sighed deeply and fainted away. And the Sials gave her sherbet and mixed poison with it and thus brought ruin and disgrace on their name. The parents of Heer killed her. This was the doing of god. When the fever of death was upon her, she cried out for Ranjha saying, 'Bring Ranjha here that I may see him once again.' And kaidu said, 'Ranjha has been killed, keep quiet or it will go ill with you.'

So Heer breathed her last crying words, 'Ranjha, Ranjha.'

They buried her and sent a message to Ranjha saying, 'The hour of destiny has arrived. We had hoped otherwise but no one can escape the destiny of death. Even as it is written in the Holy Quran, 'everything is mortal save only God.'

They sent a messenger with the letter and he left Jhang and arrived at Hazara, and he entered the house of Ranjha and wept as he handed the letter. Ranjha asked him, 'Why this dejected air? Why are you sobbing? Is my beloved ill? Is my property safe?'

The messenger sighed and said, 'That dacoit death from whom no one can escape has looted your property. Heer has been dead for the last eight watches. They bathed her body and buried her yesterday and as soon as they began the last funeral rites, they sent me to give you the news.'

On hearing these words Ranjha heaved a sigh and the breath of life forsook him.

Thus both lovers passed away from this mortal world and entered into the halls of eternity. Both remained firm in love and passed away steadfast in true love. Death comes to all.

The world is but a play and fields and forests all will melt away in the final day of dissolution. Only the poet's poetry remains in everlasting remembrance. For no one has written such a beautiful Heer.

Translated from Heer Waris Shah
Courtesy : <http://www.apnaorg.com>

A Thread of Faith

Sarita Chouhan

...Continued from previous issue

TOLERANCE

To be tolerant means to have a stable mind and have an acceptance towards any circumstances or conditions with courage. A tolerant person is calm, patient and fearless. He is not moved by pain or pleasures, renounces both praise and criticism and stays balanced in whatever may come. On the other hand, intolerant is one whose mind is captivated with desires and he is ruled by anger.

"Who so controls his rising anger as a running chariot, him I call the charioteer: the others only hold the reins." (Dhammapada, 222)

"From anger proceed the delusion; from delusion confused memory; from confused memory the destruction of Reason; from destruction of Reason he perishes." (Bhagavad Gita, 2:63)

"Don't speak empty words; burn away your anger with the Divine Name and gather the true wealth of Tolerance." (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.1013)

Refraining from anger, not fretting and staying calm one defeats evil. A tolerant approach and innate goodness helps in winning over enemies and making friends. In such a person God resides. Such a person has known the Self. Whatever comes his way he takes as Will of God. But to reach to this state, to know the Absolute Reality and to raise above all the worldly desires is not easy. Only the few understand this 'Prabhu ki Leela' or 'Will of God'.

"By strenuous effort, by self-control, by temperance, let the wise man make for himself an island which the flood cannot overwhelm." (Dhammapada, 25)

"Good it is to tame the mind, so difficult to control, fickle and capricious. Blessed is the tamed mind." (Dhammapada, 35)

"Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till Allah
Doth decide: for He
Is the best to decide." (Quran, 10:109)

The capacity of Goodness is unlimited. Tolerance clears the vision and it becomes greater. A person thinks with a broader perspective. He will think of every soul, as he knows that God has created not just him and people of his community but entire mankind. His outlook changes towards people who do evil.

"Whom shall we call good, whom bad,
When we see the Lord (within all):
Through the Guru is this Truth Revealed." (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.353)

Vinoba Bhave in 'Gita Pravachan' says, "One should learn to see God in wicked people also. We understand Ram but we should also understand Ravana, we like Prahlad, but we should also like Hirnakashyap. Because God pervades in all." He further gives an example, "You have learnt easy words, but now learn difficult words also because without learning difficult words you cannot progress in reading. Difficult words will come again and again in your reading."

Similarly, all kind of people one meets in life. The clay is same; the body is made out of the same five elements, only the proportion may slightly vary in all his Creations.

He is the creator of light and dark. To distinguish lightness from darkness, we need to know what darkness is. To understand Goodness and Truthfulness, we need to understand evil and falsehood as well. When we know them both (good and evil) we will know this life is a play and He is the Playwright. He is Eternal and Ultimate Truth.

"The breath mingles with the air;
The Light (of the Soul) Merges in the Oversoul.
The dust returns to the dust,
So what is it the man grieves for?
Who is dead, pray, who is dead,
O wise ones, reflect on this and see: this is but the Play of God."
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 885)

"But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?" (Bible, Romans 3:7)

Bible says,

"There is no one who is righteous, not even one." (Bible, Romans 3:10)

We all do mistakes and learn from them. The Creator alone is Perfect and we human beings strive for perfection in life. We look forward to life without any conflicts or tensions. Only if we can live in tune with the universe, only if we can eradicate all our intolerance, dispute or antagonisms with the external world of plurality, we can live a peaceful life.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

"Some go to the (Hindu) holy places, others go to perform Hajj,
Some offer Thee oblations, while others bow down before Thee.
Some read the Vedas, others the semitic Texts,
Some are robed in white, others in blue.
Some are called Turks, others are termed hindus,
Some seek the (Hindu) Heaven, others the (Muslim) Paradise.
Says Nanak: 'He, who Realises the Will of the Lord,
He (alone) knows the Mystery of the One, All-powerful God.' (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.885)

When people of all faiths and different religions pray, it is important that they are tolerant towards each other's religion. Even if one has differences with certain practices in other person's religion, one shouldn't hurt the other person's feelings.

"Remember that you are like other men. As you fear and suffer, so do they. Therefore, do not do those things, which will cause them trouble. As you would not harm yourself, do not harm others." (Dhammapada 129-130)

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." (Bible, Matthew, 7:12)

All the religious scriptures of the world are masterpieces in terms of literature. They are the treasures of historical and cultural documentation as they give a detailed account of people, their origin and their living traditions. Their beliefs have been built out of their needs and experiences, their sufferings and successes, their defeats and victories. What we forget is that they were written hundreds and thousands of years back with their prophecies being like reforms against oppression, cruelty and injustice. They wanted to bring humanity out of suffering, superstitions and falsehoods – in that sense they were so much advanced and could see so much in future. Today we refuse to see them in that light.

If we do not limit them with our rigid perspectives and selfish interests, we will find all of them spoke of tolerance, brotherhood and love. All the religions have criticized hypocrisy or ill feelings towards others.

"Those who were not my people
I call 'my people;
And her who was not beloved I
Will call 'beloved'"
"And in the very place where it
was said to them, 'You are
not my people,'
there they shall be called
children of the living God." (Bible, Romans, 9:25,26)

"He who is blinded through the Lord's Will, is not blind,
But, Blind is he, who knows the Lord's Will." (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.955)

"They have made their oaths
A screen (for their misdeeds):
Thus they obstruct (men)
From the Path of allah:
Truly evil are their deeds." (Quran, 63:2)

"And whenever you pray, do not be like hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray at the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father, who sees in secret will reward you." (Bible, Matthew 6: 5,6)

"Call on your Lord
With humility and in private:
For allah loveth not
Those who trespass beyond bounds." (Quran, 7: 55)

"Ill is easy to do; it is easy to do harm: hard indeed it is to do helpful and good deeds.
(Dhammapada, 163)

"Hypocrisy, arrogance and conceit, wrath and also harshness and unwisdom are his who is born, O Partha, with demoniacal properties." (Bhagavad Gita, 16:4)

"On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name?"

Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'
(Bible, Matthew, 7:22,23)

The beauty of different religions is, that culturally they are so diverse, their practices are different, their languages are different, but they are so much alike. Their concerns, their beliefs, their teachings are so much similar. It is wrong to feel that my religion only speaks truth or whatever it says is only right or the feeling that my religion is the most tolerant religion. It is like saying 'I am the best'.

In the third discourse of Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says,

"All actions are wrought by the qualities of nature only. The self, deluded by egoism thinketh: 'I am the doer.' (Bhagavad Gita, 3:27)

The truth is we all have flaws. The truth is we all have incomplete knowledge. Then, why not learn to coexist in love and peace.

Gautam Buddha has said,
"Let your love flow outward
through the universe, To its
height, its depth, its broad
extent, A limitless love
Without hatred or enmity.
Then as you stand or walk,
Sit or lie down,
As long as you are awake,
Strive for this with a
one-pointed mind;
Your life will bring
heaven to earth.

To be continued...

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