

The Mad Lover

Author(s): Sisir Kumar Das

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The Mad Lover

Sisir Kumar Das

Others mocking said, 'These men are full of new wine.'
The Acts of the Apostles 2,13

The dominating note of Indian religious poetry in the medieval period is that of an ecstasy, a longing of the devotee for union with God and to merge his identity in the Godhead. In no other period of Indian history one finds so many saints and poets in different parts of the country, speaking different languages, practising divergent rituals, belonging to different religious orders, and yet behaving almost in an identical manner in their approach to God. There is no more the calm and restraint of the Upanishads, nor more the silence of mid-night stars and of the ageless mighty trees. Here is a piercing cry of the devotee, a storm lashing on the forests, waves surging on the beach. The image of the venerable sages sitting quietly like a still, unflickering flame is being replaced by a mad-lover, which is indeed the most conspicuous and the most recurrent imagery in the medieval religious poetry. It is indeed marked by a wild frenzy, an abundance, an excess, a 'madness.' The saints behaved so differently from the traditional social norms that the orthodox and the worldly-wise called them mad. But the common man was attracted towards them because of this madness, and it was this madness which the poets portrayed with great feeling and the saints themselves welcomed. It will be hardly an over-statement to describe the medieval Indian religious poetry as the poetry dominated by the spirit of this madness.

The words meaning 'mad' or 'crazy' in almost all the Indian languages in the medieval period attained a new connotation which is an evidence of the recognition of 'madness' as a significant element in spiritual life. A Baul poet of Bengal sings

The Islamic mysticism, or to use the popular term 'Sufism,' emerged almost at the same time in the Middle East though under different social conditions. The term *Sufi* derived from the Arabic word *suf* meaning 'wool' appears in the writings of Arab scholars as early as the eighth century, and by the tenth it acquired a religious connotation.³ Rabia, the mystic of Basara (d.801), who is generally considered to be the first important saint in the Sufi movement, was also one of the first to enunciate the doctrine of divine love which has a remarkable similarity with the nature of love as found in Indian Bhakti poetry.

It is generally believed that the great Sufi mystic Mansur al-Hallaj (b.858), who was also a great traveller, visited Sindh. It is not known, however, whether he could really create any impact on the people there and whether any contemporary Indian took serious interest in his teachings.⁴ From the eleventh century onwards Sufi saints started exerting their influence on the mass in India particularly in Sindh and the Punjab. Within next two centuries Sufis concentrated in different parts of Northern India.⁵ Sheikh Ismail of Bukhara (who settled in Lahore), Ali Hujwari, Sheikh Bhauddin Zakariya Multani, Khawajah Muinuddin Chisti of Ajmer, Khawajah Qutabuddin Bhaktiyar Kaki of Delhi, Nizamuddin Awliya — to name a few — all of them flourished between the thirteenth and fourteenth century which coincided with the formative stages of the Bhakti movement in north India and also in certain parts of the South.

Sufism started with a strong emphasis on ascetic tendencies, which was to a great extent anti-Islamic. This emphasis on asceticism was primarily due to the impious behaviour of the Omayyads and the military expansion of the Muslim empire along with the growing luxury and vanity of the ruling power. It also grew because of the spiritless legalism as the Quranic thought was in the process of a slow systematisation leading to rigidity of law and jurisprudence. Sufism, thus, grew as an attitude of protest against the ruling class and against the rigidity of law. It will be noticed that people from various levels of working class joined the Sufi movement, as it is evidenced from the names of many leading Sufis, for example, *saqati* (huckster), *hallaj* (cotton carder), *nassaf* (weaver), *warraq* (book-seller or copyist), *qawariri* (glass-maker), *haddad* (blacksmith), *banna* (mason). In the Bhakti movement, also, one finds that many of its leading figures come from the lower strata of life protesting against the rigidity of social and religious conventions. Kabir was a weaver, Namadeva a tailor, Ravidas a cobbler, Dadu and Rajjab, cotton-carders. Ramananda a Brahmin, broke away from his guru who wanted to maintain Brahmanic authority, and spoke against untouchability. Vallabhacharya,

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himself a Brahmin, established a sect which included disciples from various occupational groups including carpenters and blacksmiths. Chaitanya, a Brahmin scholar, repudiated caste system, and at least one of his disciples was a Muslim. Acharya Vyasa Tirtha's disciple Kanakadasa, the celebrated Baishnava poet of Karnataka, was born in a hunter's family. Basavanna, the founder of Virasaivism, discarded the Vedas, repudiated the superiority of the Brahmins, and his sect, included people from all sections. Both Tukaram and Choka, the Maharashtrian devotees, came of low caste. The list can be multiplied, but this similarity should not lead one to think that the Bhakti movement drew its inspiration from the Sufis.

The Bhakti movement had its independent growth. It is possible to trace the origin of various doctrines in different Bhakti cults of medieval India in Hinduism or Buddhism. The Bhakti movement accepted freely all that was in conformity with its conception of God and His relation to man. It accepted all that suited its emotional need. Only later did the theologians belonging to different sects formulate their own doctrinal approach and lay down the philosophical foundations of respective cults. The *Bhagavata*, the most important Sanskrit work that exercised great influence on the Bhakti movement, was composed after the advent of the Alvars who flourished between the sixth and the tenth century. Prof. K.A. Nilakantha Sastri has pointed out that, 'the *Bhagavata* combines a simple surging emotional Bhakti to Krishna with the Advaita philosophy of Sankara in a manner that has been considered possible only in the Tamil country.' The *Bhagavata* weaved its theory of Bhakti for Krishna which was already prevalent in Tamilnadu, long before the advent of Sufism not only in India but also in the Middle East. The Bhakti which first emerged in the epic *Silappadikaram* reached its zenith in the life and writings of the Alvars, the wandering devotees of Krishna. The speculative Bhakti of the *Gita* was overshadowed by this new Bhakti which brought along with it a new mythology of the cowherd Krishna, which had been a part of the Tamil folklore. Similarly, the *Saiva Siddhanta*, the doctrinal basis of Tamil Saivism, is more indebted to the passionate songs of the Saiva poets, than to any other text.⁶ The *Vachanas* of the Virasaivas contributed much more significantly to the emergence of the *Satasthala Siddhanta*, a system of religious activities which derived its tenets partly from the Sankhya and partly from the Vedanta tradition.⁷ The Gaudiya Vaishnavas formulated their doctrines on the basis of the life of Chaitanya and the emotional experience contained in the lyrics of Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandidasā, and then related them with the pan-Indian tradition of dualistic philosophy.⁸ All these show that the lives of the saints and

modes of worship practised by the common man helped the later scholars to formulate their doctrines. They also show that despite the emergence of the Bhakti movement as protest against established religious authorities, slowly did it achieve a synthesis between the greater and the little traditions, between the classical and the folk in varying degrees.

Sufism, though rooted in the *Quran*, derived much of its inspiration from various sources, some of which were anti-Quranic, including the folk traditions of Arab and Persia. Sufism, distinguished by features such as the conception of God as love, its approach to God through love, its dependence of God's mercy, and its idea of *tawhid* and *dhikr*, often appeared anti-Quranic in certain aspects. Rumi declared, 'Love (*mohabbat*) and ardent love (*ishq*) also, are attributes of God.' Nicholson points out that there is a Quranic authority for *mohabbat* but none for *ishq*, the key word in Sufi symbolism.⁹ Some of the Sufi ideas such as the *tawhid* (the divine unity) was not probably derived from Indian sources. Nicholson thinks that the 'Sufis learned the use of rosaries from Buddhist monks' and the method of Sufism, so far as it is one of the 'ethical self culture' and 'ascetic meditation' and 'intellectual abstraction,' owes a great deal to Buddhism.¹⁰ The idea of *fana* (annihilation) has been considered by Nicholson as basically Indian. This view has been supported by several other scholars, and disputed by many others. Arberry, for example, thinks that *fana* can be explained with reference to the *Quran*. Zachner suggests a possible influence of Sankara on Abu Yazid al-Bestami, the Persian Sufi of the late ninth century.¹¹ In one of his sayings one finds a striking parallel with the Upanisadic doctrine of *tat tvam asi*.¹² Arberry, too, has quoted several verses of Abu Yazid about the state of union of God¹³ which provide a very close approximation to Vedantic doctrines. Abu Yazid's utterance *subhani ma a'zma sha'ni* (glory be to me, how great is my majesty) was considered as blasphemy, for which he was banished from his native place. Mansur al-Hallaj was executed for similar offence, that of declaring *anal haq*, which looks like almost a verbatim translation of the Sanskrit *so'ham*.

Scholars may differ, in their opinion and conjectures about the possible influence of Buddhism or Hinduism or New-Platonism or even of Christianity on the growth of Sufism, and endless debate may continue on the subject, but one thing is absolutely clear, when Sufism came to India with its features of *fana* and *dhikr* and *sama* (singing and dancing), the doctrines of *tawakkul ala Allah* (total dependence on God's mercy), its emphasis on the role of *murshid* (guide) and its *mashuq-ashiq* (beloved-lover) framework, the common Indian did not find them exotic at all, but similar, if not almost

identical, with his own. The question of either accepting them or rejecting them, therefore, was irrelevant to him. The Sufi thought permeated naturally into the Indian national psyche. This was the period when most of the Indian vernaculars were in the formative stages of their growth. Sufi thoughts were so easily absorbed in their literary tradition that now it is indeed difficult to differentiate them from the indigenous sources. In certain areas, the Punjab and Sindh in particular, there was a direct and pervasive influence of the Sufis.¹⁴ Individual poets and saints in the other parts of the country also responded fondly to several doctrines of Sufism.¹⁵ In Bengal, too, where existed many Sufi orders, Sufi ideas were assimilated by the Sahajuyas and the Bauls.¹⁶ But by and large, Sufism never became a pan-Indian force of the magnitude of Saivism or Vaishnavism regulating the Bhakti movement. This is not to deny its importance or even the possibility of its influence in different parts of the country. But I have suggested that the similarities between Sufism and several sects within the pale of Hinduism, can be easily explained as internal and independent development rather than through interactions between the two, some cases of glaring exceptions notwithstanding. Sufism, when viewed in the wider perspective of Indian tradition, should be considered rather as yet another tradition than what came from Persia, contributing a new dimension to the many splendoured structure of the Bhakti movement. To a student of literature, thus, it is more fruitful to study how Sufi poetic tradition was weaved into the rich fabric of Indian religious poetry, than to trace the history of its possible influence on the Bhakti movement. The imagery of the mad lover, to which I have already referred, is one such instance, where the two traditions, independent of each other, came close and intermingled resulting in the creation of a new symbol in Indian poetry and in Indian religious life.

II

Manikka Vachakar, the greatest of the Tamil Saiva poets, who flourished in the tenth century says in one of his verses:¹⁷

I had no virtue, penance, knowledge, self control,
A doll to turn,
At other's will I danced, whirled, fell. But me
He filled in every limb
With love's mad longing, and that I might climb
there whence is no return
He shewed His beauty, made me His, Ah, me
when shall I go to Him?

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Someone not familiar with the historical facts relating to the emergence of Nayanmars of Tamilnadu would be tempted to see a direct influence of the Sufis on this verse, which no doubt provides remarkable similarity with the expressions common in Sufi poetry. The reference to dance in particular reminds one of the Mevlevi ritual of the 'whirling dance'.¹⁸ And the reference to 'love's mad longing,' or to the absence of 'knowledge,' 'self-control' can be easily related to the Sufi tradition both poetic and mystical. Jalaluddin Rumi, the greatest of the Muslim mystic poets, writes:

How should poesy and rhyme come to me after the
foundations of sanity are destroyed?
Tis not (merely) one madness I have midst the sorrows
of love; nay but madness on madness on madness.¹⁹

and again,

I have never desired reasons since thou mad'st me
mad;
I have never envied beauty since thou adorn me
Is my madness for love of thee approved? Say 'yes'
and God will reward thee.²⁰

This madness is an emotional stage of mind and need not to be traced to any theological source, even though it was later given theological explanations. Although we do not find any parallel to this state of mind in the ancient Indian religious literature, it was not altogether unknown in Greece. The finest example comes from Euripides' *The Bacchae*. In it we find the Theban women leaving their spinning and their weaving 'stung with the maddening trance of Dionysus.' Later Plato in his *Phaedrus* declares that 'the greatest blessings come to us through madness.'²¹ He is one of the first to make a distinction between the ordinary madness caused by human illness and the other that 'comes by a divine release from the ordinary rules of life.'²² Among the medieval saints Guru Nanak makes a similar distinction in the following verse:²³

Koi akhe bhutana ko kahe betala
Koi akhe admi Nanak vecara
Bhaya diwana saha ka Nanak baurana
Hau har(I) bin (a) avar(u) na jana

Some call me wild, while others that I am out of step
(with the world)
Some call me a mere man, forsaken and woe-begone
But I'm mad after my king, my God
And I know not of any but my Lord.²⁴

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Guru Nanak uses the words 'betala', 'diwana' and 'baurana' all ordinary words used to designate madness. But these very words assume a special meaning when this madness is related to the state of mind which longs for God. Plato described different kinds of madness and assigned them to the powers of different deity: 'to Apollo we ascribed prophetic inspiration; to Dionysus, mystic madness; to the Muses, the poetic, and to Aphrodite and Eros, the fourth, the madness of the lover, and this we declared was the best.' The madness to which the Indian mystic refers is greatly different from 'the mystic madness' ascribed to Dionysus, the god of wine. The madness of the lover, though not uncommon in Sanskrit literature, is not considered 'the best' by the Indian mystic unless it is eventually directed to God. The madness of the saints is expressed, however, in a language which is similar, if not identical, with the language of love poetry or of Bacchic experience. That is why the Persian Sufi poets express their frenzy through the imagery of wine, and Indian poets through those of various intoxicants. A fine example come from Guru Nanak:

They fear, O Lord is my hemp;
 my mind the purse which holds it, yea.
 And I have been intoxicated thus with thy love
 detached and alone.²⁵

It is not surprising at all that the Guru is using the imagery of *bhang* and *khalori* to express his state of being a *diwana* (mad). Expressions like 'drunk', 'intoxicated', 'addicted' are as frequent in Indian Bhakti poetry as the symptoms of frenzy and excitement. Manikka Vachakar writes:²⁶

Thrills and trembles my frame
 Hands are lifted on high;
 Here at thy fragrant feet,
 Sobbing and weeping I cry;
 Falsehood forsaking, I shout
 'Victory, victory, praise!'
 Lord of my life, these clasped hands
 Worship shall bring Thee always.

It is so similar to the ecstatic expressions of Rumi though the imagery is slightly different

The truth we have not found
 So dancing, we beat the ground;
 Is dancing reprov'd in one
 Who wonder distraught for Thee?

In Thy valley we go round
And therefore we beat the gound.²⁷

The physical state described in the verse of Manikka Vachakar so appears in hundreds of verses composed by and about the saints in ecstasy. Similarly the ritual of dancing, which is the subject of Rumi's verse, recurs in hundreds of Sufi compositions. Dancing became a regular feature of the behaviour of the Saiva saints of Tamilnadu, and in fact of many later saints, such as Chaitanya and Mira; and many poets, Narsi Mehta is one of them, described with great joy the *rasalila* (the dancing of Krishna and the Gopis) successfully creating an atmosphere of rapture and delight. Dancing never became a ritual among the Indian saints in the sense it was among the Dervishes. Nevertheless, the frenzy aroused by the chanting of the names of God, singing songs about divine love, and by dancing, made the Sufi and the Indian saint equally conspicuous in the eyes of the people. Dancing, the language of the body, appealed so readily to the saints and it became a language of their turbulent soul. Mira exclaims

bhai sanvare rang raci
Saj singar banndh pag ghunghar, lokalaj taj naci.

Charmed by the beauty of Krishna, the dark-blue god, Mira is in an ecstasy. She puts her anklets on and dances in joy forsaking all fear, defying all inhibitions. She touches the height of divine frenzy through dancing.

It is possible that Guru Nanak derived some inspiration in his spiritual life from Sufi thought. But it will be extravagant to say that Manikka Vachakar who lived in Tamilnadu in the tenth century was influenced by Jalaluddin Rumi (b. 1207), a native of Balkh. Not only they were separated by time and distance, they drew their inspiration from entirely different religious traditions. But what is more remarkable is that they achieved the same kind of mystic experiences and expressed them in almost similar manner. We are told that Rabia was so possessed of God that no place remained for her loving anyone save Him. Within the Hindu Bhakti tradition one finds several women poet-saints expressing such unrestrained love for God. Andal, the foster-daughter of Periyalvar of the eighth century, a contemporary of Rabia, refused to marry any mortal and imagined herself Krishna's bride, and so the story goes, she was united with her divine lover. About Andal's *Nacchiar Tirumoli* (The Story of the Heroine), a work based on her own experience, is one of the most significant works

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in the tradition of divine ecstasy. A scholar writes that in this poem, 'she (Andal) visualises her marriage with Krishna, and as far as she is concerned, it is not a mere dream, but a real happening, that is a part of her spiritual experience.'²⁸ The mad longing of Andal for Krishna, is 'not only a desire to possess Him, but a longing for being possessed.' One finds a similar case in Mahadeviyakka, a younger contemporary of Basavanna in the twelfth century, who too rejected love of any mortal man and chose Siva—she referred to him as *cennamallikarjuna* (the lord white as jasmine)—as her husband.²⁹ Unlike Andal, she was forced to marry a prince, but their marriage brought only unhappiness. Her poems describe the conflict between her love for God and the social conventions imposed on her. The story goes that Mahadevi left her home and husband and took to the road. She even threw away all her clothes thus outrageously challenging even the social codes of modesty. Her poetry is a record of her 'madness' for Siva, of her search for God and of the joys and sufferings of a god-intoxicated soul. She too, according to a legend, died into 'oneness with Siva'. Two hundred years later flourished Lalleswari, the Kashmiri poetess. Though the concept of the bride of the Lord is absent in her poems, the features of 'madness' and a frenzied devotion are present there in abundance. In one verse she writes:

The guru gave me only one word
Enter into thyself from the outer world
The Guru's precept came to me as God's world
That's why I started dancing nude.³⁰

Whether Lalla actually wandered about nude—as suggested by Grierson and corroborated by various anecdotes about her—or not, this verse describes a state of frenzy of the devotee sustained only by divine love. And two hundred years later flourished another remarkable woman of the Bhakti movement—Mirabai. She removed her title of princess, and the comforts of home and declared herself the bride of Krishna against the opposition of her in laws. She sang and dance in praise of her lord in total defiance of the world.

The epithet 'mad' is not necessarily a pejorative one in Hindu religious context. Tagore wrote in an essay "Pagal" (The Madcap), 'the word pagal (mad) is not a term of contempt to us. We admire mad Nimai (i.e. Chaitanyadev) because of his madness. Our Siva, the great god, is also a mad god.' One can go even one step farther: Siva is also the source of 'madness', the *mania*, as the Greeks would have said, of the devotee. Sambandhar, the Saiva poet of the seventh century, endearingly addresses Siva as 'Lord, our naked beggar,'³¹ and Manikka Vachakar asks:

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My father and my master, He of all men
Lord supreme, is clad
With but a hanging loin-cloth stitched pray
Tell me, friend, is He not mad?³²

And because the lord of the devotee is 'mad', the devotee proudly welcomes this madness in his life as well. Kulasekhar Alvar describes the devotee, as 'the mad man who with tearful eyes and thrilled body pines for Him, and sings and dances and worships Vishnu.'³³ In the sixteenth century we find this madness personified in Chaitanya. The biographers of Chaitanya have recorded with great fidelity the thrilling moments of his life, his ecstasies and trances. Vrindavan Das describes him like a *madamatta hati* (a mad elephant) and Krishnadas Kaviraj writes *unmatter pray prabhu kare gannrtya* (the master sings and dances like a mad man).³⁴ His contemporary Malayalam poet Ezhuttachchan was often called *Kallukudiyān* (a drunken man) both by his admirers and slanderers, and the Sindhi poet Sachal (b. 1739) was surnamed *Sarmast* (the intoxicated one).³⁵ Even Kabir, the most restrained of all the poets and saints of the Bhakti period, and a worshipper of the *nirguna* God, could not escape the frenzy of divine love. He sings—this verse is included in the *Granth Sahib*:

I am not skilled in book knowledge
Nor do I understand controversy
I have grown mad reciting and hearing God's praises.
O father, I am mad, the whole world is sane
I am mad
I have not grown mad of mine own will
God hath made me mad.³⁶

When Chaitanya was censored and rebuked by an ascetic for his indulgence in song and dance he replied exactly in the same language:

Premar svabhava bhakta hase kande gay
Unmotta hoiya nace iti uti dhay³⁷

Because of the nature of love the devotee
laughs and cries and sings and dances in mad rapture.

The devotee is possessed by the love of God: *gai naci nahi ami apan icchay* (I do not sing or dance on my own will). Purandara Das, the father of Carnatic music (who lived in the early sixteenth century), declared with great joy: *huccu hidiyitu enage, huccu hidiyitu* (I have become mad, I have become mad). These are the instances to show

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that it is not just the people called these saints mad or wild, *bhutana* or *betala*, they themselves called them *diwana* or *pagal*. As Plato categorized different kinds of madness, the medieval Indian poet-saint also created his own paradigm. Thus says Nanak:

*Tau dewana janie an bhe dewana hoi
Eki sahib bahara duja avar na jane koi
Tau dewana janie jan eka kar kamai
Hukum pachane khasam ka duji avar sianap kai
Tau dewana janie jan sahib dhare piar
Manda jane ap kau nanak avar bhala sansar*
(*Maru, Mehala, 1*)

He is known as mad who is mad of His awe
He who knows only one lord, and does not know
anyone else...
He is truly mad who is possessed of the love of
the Master.

Bhakti poetry as well as Sufi poetry sings of this love—love of the master. A single thread runs through all of them. Thus the hymns of Krishna, in the *Silappadikaram* written in the third century;

Vain are the ears that are not filled
With the exploits of the great god
Vain are the eyes that do not see the god²⁸
The dark god, the mysterious god.

reappear in *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (II, 2), though Krishnadas Kaviraj had no knowledge of the Tamil poem, and even more beautifully in the following *salok* of Baba Farid, which happens to be one of the most memorable couplets written in any Indian language:

*Kaga karayg dhandolia sagala khaia mas
Eh doe naina mat chuyh pir dekhan ki as*

O ravens, you have searched my skeleton
And eaten all my flesh
But touch not these two eyes
I hope to behold my Beloved.³⁹

III

I have tried to demonstrate above how did a state of madness become an integral part of the lives of many saints in medieval India and

what striking resemblance it had with the general behaviour of the Sufi mystics. The texture and the character of the religious poetry in India was changed by this 'madness', which also produced some of the unforgettable characters of medieval Indian Literature—Radha, Heer, Sohni.

The mad lover who figures in Bhakti poetry is distantly related to the mad lover of secular poetry, whom Plato categorizes as the one under the spell of Aphrodite and Eros. The framework of mystic love both in India and Persian poetry—and rarely in Christian poetry—was provided by secular literature. Rama's longing for Sita in the *Ramayana* or Vikram's wild lamentation for Urvashi in Kalidasa's play *Vikramorvaseeyam* evokes a feeling of unity between man and nature. This feeling grew in intensity as well as in magnitude in religious poetry. In Oriental religious poetry the framework of secular love poetry plays an even more important role than that of the nature poetry. Since the poets were anxious to make a distinction between the secular love and divine love, they had to allegorise many existing love poems and legends into religious poems. Appar, the Tamil Saiva poet of the seventh century, was one of the first to exploit such possibilities at the initial stage of the Bhakti movement. To illustrate this point I quote one of his verses:

At first she only heard his name,
Then of his beauty
And then about Arur,
the place he lives in,
and then she became mad in love for him
she left her mother
she left her father
she left everything she had
that very day;
she gave up her world,
her *dharma*,
she forgot herself
she lost her identity
and she merged with her hero,
the Lord.⁴⁰

Unless the reader knows the context, he will be tempted to treat it as a love poem, describing the state of a young girl madly in love with a man. In fact the name of the deity, Siva, has not been used in the verse at all. The word *talaivam* used in the last line of the verse, means 'a hero.' It has been interpreted as the word designating the lord, Siva. The verse uses the word *picciyanal* (mad with love) which refers to an earthly madness, but only when the verse is

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contextualized with the tradition of Saivite poetry does it acquire a new meaning, that of the mad longing for the divine. In its outer structure it is a love poem, but its inner structure is religious. We will talk about this process of spiritualization or allegorisation later in some detail. It is sufficient for us at this point to remember that the devotional frenzy that dominated the Bhakti movement found its most congenial medium in the framework of love poetry. But this framework has its inherent dangers too, which often obliterate or tend to obliterate the distinction between the passion of human love and the raptures of divine love. The following verse of Sappho, to give an illustration, can easily be incorporated into the Bhakti poetry with one or two slight changes;

The moon and Pleiades
are set. Night is half gone
and time speeds by
I lie in bed, alone

If this verse—no one has so far claimed any religious significance for it—is compared with the following line of Mahadeviyakka one can hardly distinguish them from the expression of Sappho

Four parts of the day I feel restless for you
four parts of the night I feel restless for you, my lord,
day and night, night and day, this body of mine
Craves for you
O Lord, white as jasmine, your love has pierced
Through my heart
and has made me forget of hunger, thirst, sleep.⁴¹

One hears the same voice of passionate longing, feels the same agony. But one word, *cennamallikarjuna* (the lord as white as jasmine) transforms the whole poem and transports it to an altogether different level. This question of transformation of the secular to the sacred howsoever important to the modern reader, was and is totally irrelevant to the saint. For him, in this case, for Mahadeviyakka, it is a sacred experience.

This longing for the beloved as expressed in the vacana of Mahadevi became the central theme in Vaishnava poetry in Bengali and Hindi particularly in Maithili, and reached its dizzy height in the character of Radha. The Radha legend, in all probability, first originated in folk literature and slowly it was taken up in the fold of sophisticated literature. It reached its final stage of allegorization in the lyrics of Vidyapati and Chandidas, but even in the *Gita Govinda*, its erotic framework notwithstanding, emerged a heroine, Radha,

whose behaviour was identical with that of the god-intoxicated saints of medieval India. Radha as presented in this line:

*Vilapati hasati visidati roditi cancati muncati tapam*⁴²
Now she laments, now she laughs, now she feels sad,
now she weeps, now she grieves and now again she
is composed

became a reality in the lives of Indian saints.

But what is more important about this character is that now religious lyrics took a new turn. In the songs of the Alvars or of the Virasaivas, of Mira and Kabir there is a personal and direct dialogue between God and devotee. Their poems are poems of personal experience and emotion. In Radha legend, the expression assumed a new form: now there emerged a new lyrical form where the participants are Radha and Krishna, and the poet is a narrator of their experience. Since the lyricism appeared within a narrative-dramatic framework, the secular element was more pronounced in Radha poems than in the lyrics of the saints addressed to God. Even when Radha assumed a spiritual dimension, the lyrics depicting her various moods retained the flavour of secular love poem and familiar domestic situation. Again compare the following lines of Sappho with the verse of Chandidas and the affinities between them will be immediately revealed.

Mother darling, I cannot work the loom
For sweet Kypris has almost crushed me,
Broken me with love for a slender boy.⁴³
(Sappho)

My mind is not on house work
Now I weep, now I laugh at the world's
Censure.
He draws me—to become
An outcaste, a hermit-woman in the woods.
He has bereft me of parents, brothers, sisters
my good name. His flute
took my heart
his flute, a thin bamboo trap, enclosing me—
a cheap bamboo flute was Radha's ruin.⁴⁴
(Chandidas)

IV

The same process can be seen working in Sufi poetic traditions also.

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Sufi poetry attained a new dimension both in terms of poetic intensity and spiritual fervour when poets started exploiting secular legends involving characters deeply in love. The story of Mahmood, the king of Ghazni, and his slave Ayaz, though loathed by many obviously because of its homosexual undertones, became a model for religious love poems, eulogising the total surrender and dedication of the lover to the beloved. The story of Yusuf–Zulaikha attracted many poets, greatest of them all was Jomi who spiritualized it, and several other love legends including the tragic tale of Laila and Majnun. The Arab poet Qaya al-Amiri was known as *majnun* (the possessed) for his Diwan of love-poems.⁴⁵ Jalaluddin Rumi who exploited various secular tales and imagery from different sources, also made the tale of Laila and Majnun a part of Sufi poetry.

From a grief of a (long) separation (from Laila) there
Came suddenly a sickness into the body of Majnun
(Heated) by the flame of longing his blood boiled up,
So that (the symptoms of) quivering appeared in that
mad (lover.)⁴⁶

The emotional state (*hal*) of a Sufi in his religious quest thus finds a new symbolism in the ardent love of Majnun for Laila.

The Sufis in India also took up several legends and tales current among the people and transformed them into spiritual allegories. Maulana Daud, for example, wrote *Chandayan* in the fourteenth century in Awadhi speech using the romantic tale of Lor and Chanda. It soon became a part of the prestigious literature of the Indian Sufis. Many scholars lectured on this poem as intently as they did on Sufi works in Persian. Maulana Shaikh Taqiud-din, a noted preacher of this time used to quote from this poem during his preaching, and Shaikh Abdul Quddus, a fifteenth century Sufi in India delivered lectures on this work explaining the allegory it contained.⁴⁷ Not only Maulana Daud constructed the poem on the Sufi principles and used metaphors and images of the established Sufi tradition, but used similes and metaphors which became later familiar in Radha – Krishna Poems.⁴⁸

Similarly, Qutaban, a poet belonging to the Chisti order (according to some tradition to the Suhrawardiya order) wrote a poem called *Mrigavati* based on a popular tale which centered round the love of a prince for Mrigavati. The heroine Mrigavati in this poem is represented as a symbol of beauty and divine grace; and the poem itself has been constructed as an allegory of self-annihilation and of a journey towards God through love. Malik Muhammad Jaysi wrote *Padumavat* in the early sixteenth century in Awadhi, allegorising the

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legend of Padmini and the siege of Chitore by Allauddin Khilji. These themes were taken up by Sufi poets in other parts of the country too. For example, Daulat Kazi wrote *Lor Chandrani* in Bengali at the instance of his patron Asraf Khan who was a Sufi. Saiyed Alaol, a Bengali Sufi poet of the seventeenth century, translated *Padumavat* into Bengali. In fact by the end of the seventeenth century—the Bhakti movement was at its declining stage at that time—a considerable amount of Sufi literature grew in different languages of India. What is more significant is that not only the Sufis had taken upon themselves the task of allegorizing a number of secular legends, but the non-Sufi writer too responded eagerly to their creative activity.

The emergence of Urdu as a fine instrument of literary expression was to a great extent accelerated by the Sufi poets. Not only Gisudaraj, a Chisti saint of Golconda, used it for the first time as a literary medium when it was in its formative stage and known as *Dakhni*, but two masters of Urdu poetry, Wali and Mir Dard were Sufis, both belonging to the Naqshbandi order. It is quite natural, therefore, that Urdu of all the Indian languages is the richest mine of expressions of spiritual love in the Sufi tradition. The 'madness,' to which I have been referring throughout this essay, became as much a symbol of Urdu poetry in the hands of its greatest poets—Ghalib of the nineteenth century included—as were wine, rose and idolatry of beauty. Their experience of the contemporary society was often expressed through an allegorical language which went beyond the poetic conventions. About Mir, writes a scholar, 'the wisdom, the "good sense" of the worldly-wise is counter-poised sometimes to the heart, whose impulses teach a much truer wisdom than the hard heads of "practical" men, and sometimes to madness, portrayed with all its literal attributes but symbolizing the conduct of a man so possessed by love (in all its sense) that He follows its dictates implicitly, regardless of what the world may think.'⁴⁹

While the Urdu poets exploited the traditional imagery and symbols of Persian poetry and anecdotes from the lives of Sufi saints, and thus created a new framework for an intensely personal poetry, the Sufi poets in the Punjab and Sindh discovered the potentiality—both poetic and spiritual—of the legends current among the common people. While Mir projects his personal suffering through the symbolism of the execution of Masnur,

Have you not heard what happened to Mansur?
Here, if you speak the truth, they crucify you.⁵⁰

The poets of the Punjab and Sindh drew their symbolism from

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the legends and romances of Heer and Ranjha, Sassi and Punnu, and Sohni and Mahiwal. When Ranjha met Heer for the first time after he had left his home, Warris Shah describes their meeting—comparable to the first meeting of Radha and Krishna in Vaishnava poetry—in words which give—a new meaning to the secular legend. Heer reports to her father

One day I ran, urged by some secret power
And to the ferry came,
just as a boat came floating in
within her lay a youth
And from his face I lifted up the veil
But when he raised his eyes to look at mine
Straightaway, I swooning fell
The Khwaja Pir betrothed me to him
Angels whispering low
performed the ceremony of Mayan
to deck me out came jewels from heaven
pearls for my neck, and bracelets for my arms
and O, to Ranjha, father, was I wed.⁵¹

The Heers and the Sohni in Panjabi and Sindhi poetry can be said to be the manifestations of Radha in a Sufi dress. When Heer in a verse of Lal Husain says *Sajjan bin rati hoia baddia* (nights become longer without you, my friend) or Sohni laments *dard bichode da hal ni mai kainu akha* (how to describe my tale of suffering) one hears distinct echoes of the Radha-Krishna lyrics. In these legends one finds an authentic instance of interaction between the poetic tradition of the Sufis and that of the Bhakti movement. Bulleh Shah, often described as the Rumi of the Punjab, indeed like Rumi exploited diverse traditions of religions and poetry: his response to both Hindu and Islamic thought betrays his catholic temper, as does his response to the sophisticated as well as the folk poetry. In one of his famous *qafi*, Heer says: *dil loce mahi yar nu*, (my heart longs for my friend). The soul's longing for the Ultimate, the basic doctrine of Sufism, as well as of the Bhakti movement, finds a new form and a new image. The Sufi idea of God as love was easily incorporated into the fabric of Bhakti poetry only when the image of a possessed lover emerged in Indian Sufi poetry. Bulleh Shah created a new character of Heer whose longing for God, the beloved, merged in the chorus of the devotees of Siva or Krishna. Heer's piteous appeal '*mai tere qurban ve vehde avad mere*' (this life I dedicate to you, come to my courtyard once) could have been reciprocated by a Chaitana or a Mira.

This point can be further elaborated and illustrated from the writings of the Sindhi poet Shah Abdul Latif who flourished in the

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late seventeenth century and died in the mid-eighteenth, a contemporary of Bulleh Shah. He was a Sufi himself and well-versed in Sufi theological literature and Persian poetry. Like Bulleh Shah, he, too, exploited the tales current in Sindh and infused them with a spiritual intent. His poems with their animated images of sea and deserts and mountains brought a new amplitude and abundance into the medieval Indian poetry. Shah Abdul Latif re-told the story of Lilan and Chandsar, Momul and Ramo, Marui and Umar along with Sohni and Mehr and Sassi and Punnu, among which the last two attained the true spiritual height and great poetic excellence, wherein the character of the mad lover appears in full glory.⁵²

The tales of Sohni and Mehr, Sassi and Punnu as well as of Heer and Ranjha have a common core, and they share certain features with the Radha theme. All of them glorify a woman madly in love with a man against the stiff opposition of the society, and all of them sing of the tragic separation of the lovers. In the hands of the Vaishnava poets in Bengal, the Radha – Krishna story ends not in separation, but in final union, which is undoubtedly a theological imposition on the poetic framework. The Sufi poets of the Punjab and Sindh did not change the structure of the stories and retained their tragic ending, in consonance with Sufi thought.⁵³ Some of the poets have told the stories in narrative form, from the beginning to the end of the careers of the hero and the heroine, and some have taken greater interest in the dramatic moments in the chain of action. Shah Latif does not tell how Punnu came to Bhambor with a caravan and met Sassi there and how was he taken away by his father Ari Jam, the Chief of Kutch. In the morning Sassi discovered that her lover has departed. She sets out on foot to track the camels and is perished upon the way in her search for her lover. It is Sassi's bewildered wanderings over the desert and mountains and her tragic death that form the subject of Shah Abdul Latif's poems. Like the bewildered lovers of Sanskrit poetry Sassi too forgets all distinctions between the animate and the inanimate world. She complains to the mountains

O mountain, you brought me grief
I shall tell my friend when we meet.⁵⁴

In *Meghaduta* the love-lorn Yaksha addresses the cloud to carry his message to his beloved. Kalidasa comments that lovers are usually unmindful of the distinction between the living and the non-living. Such apostrophies became a part of the poetic convention in Indian poetry after the success of *Meghaduta*. Shah Abdul Latif rises above

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the convention by a delicate manipulation of this age old device as evidenced in the following lines:

They sit together they weep
Afflicted woman and mountain steep
To none telling aught of the flames
That within their hearts are aglow.⁵⁴

Equally beautiful is the legend of Sohni and Mehr. Izzat Beg, a rich merchant, becomes a herdsman, Mehr, in his love for the charming Sohni. Mehr grazes buffaloes on the other side of the Indus and Sohni swims across the river and meets him every night much against the wishes of her parents and in-laws. One night Sohni's sister-in-law replaces the baked earthenware, that she uses as a life-vest, with an unbaked one. But Sohni (like Radha when she hears the flute of Krishna), cannot restrain herself from meeting her beloved as she hears the tinkling bells of the cattle returning home. She tries to cross the river with the fragile vessel which collapses, and she dies. Shah Abdul Latif captures the most dramatic moment of the episode in the life of the possessed lover:

All round the herdsman's bells I hear
the tinkling cattle bells
When sleeping, echoes of their chime
from far did reach mine ear
How could I sleep when travelling near
this music rest my heart.

Stirred by the bells, how could I sleep
restfully and in peace?
When I a hundred times the day
far Sahar long and weep
In chains of love Sahar doth keep
my being till I die.

On this side of the stream, the strain
of echoes reaching me—
From loving Mehar's bells, old wounds
began to bleed again,
To go to him and soothe my pain
incumbent then became.....

A black foul night, and from above
sky, rain in torrents sends—
On one side fear of tracklessness
on the other, lion stands—
"If even life in efforts ends
I shall keep tryst of love....."

A black foul night, an unbaked jar
no handy float be here—
She plungeth into waves, without
a moments's thought of fear;
To her love, the river doth appear
a dry and open road....⁵⁵

V

Another feature that recurs frequently in the Bhakti poetry as well as in Sufi poetry is the longing of the devotee for a total identity with God. The concept of a complete union of God and the devotee, what Parinder calls the mysticism of identity, gave rise to an image of total union between the lover and the beloved. In Indian religious poetry this image found its most congenial environment in the structure of love poems and within the philosophical framework of *Visistadvaitavad*. The origin of the concept of *fana*, however, has been a subject of controversy. Nicholson very strongly suggests that the concept of *fana* is of Indian origin and in all probability derived from the concept of nirvana.⁵⁶ It has been criticised on the ground that the Buddhist concept of nirvana is associated with the Buddhist doctrine of karma. But there is no such corresponding Sufi doctrine. Moreover nirvana is a negative concept in the sense that it is a state of extinction of earthly passion and desire, a complete release from the cycle of existence, the *bhava-chakra*. The idea of *fana* on the other hand is accompanied by *baqa* (everlasting life in God). It must be said, however, that nirvana too, has a positive aspect, it being the attainment of bliss. In the Apabhramsa poetry and even in the *Carya* songs composed by the Sahajiya Buddhists one finds this positive aspect appearing in the images of lover. Not only the idea of nirvana has been described as *ananda* (bliss), but the state of being with *Sahaja*, the goal of the Sahajiyas, finds expression in the language of rapturous love, and the idea of *Sahaja* appearing as an image of a beautiful woman.

Without you,
I cannot exist even for a moment
With the kisses of your mouth
I drink the nectar of the Lotus.

Whatever be the source of the doctrine of *fana* it was the most important element in the Sufi mystic experience and consequently in Sufi poetry. The following two examples from Jalaluddin Rumi

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give a fair idea of the nature of symbolism used in Sufi poetry to describe the concept of complete union.

1. A certain man knocked at his friends door,
his friend asked, 'who is there?'
He answered, 'I'.
'Begone', said his friend, 'tis too soon, at my table
there is no place for the raw.'

'Who is there?', cried his friend.
He answered, 'Thou, O charmer of all hearts.'
'Now', said the friend, 'Since thou art I, come
in, there is no room for two in the house.'⁵⁸

2. To the form worshipper, they are two, when
you have
Escaped from consciousness of form, they are me.
How sweet is oneness of the friend with his friend,
Catch the spirit and clasp it to your bosom.⁵⁹

If one ignores the doctrinal niceties of the Sufi *fana*, technicalities involved in the expressions such as "the raw," "house" etc. the experience of union expressed in these verses is not very far from the experiences of Hindu poets and mystics. In one verse Lalla speaks about the state of oneness with God in a straightforward language devoid of literary flourish, in declarative sentences:

There is neither you nor I
Neither the object of meditation
Nor the process of meditation.⁶⁰

Similarly Kabir says the same thing though in a different tone and in a different language:

When I was proud, Thou wert not in me
now that Thou art in me I am not proud
Now Thou and I have become one
Seeing that we are both one, my mind is satisfied.⁶¹

Within the framework of Bhakti the theme of union appears in various forms and manners. While Lalla speaks about the experience of oneness in terms of negation following the manner of the Upanishads, *na iti, na iti* (not this, not this) Kabir speaks about the knowledge of the true nature of self which is a portion of the Lord. All the Bhaktas believe that individual self is a part of divinity, a limited manifestation of the unlimited. 'The soul's substantial existence', says

Radhakrishnan, 'springs from the Divine intellect and its expression in life is affected by virtue of its vision of the Divine who is its father and its ever present companion.'⁶² The realization of the divine nature of the individual soul is the basis of the experience of oneness with God. This experience becomes a part of poetry only when it is expressed in imagery of love and friendship. Vidyapati's Radha becomes one with Madhav by constantly thinking of him (*anukhan madhava sumarita sundari bheli madhai*) or Bulleh Shah's Heer feels a complete sense of identity with Ranjha.

Ranjha Ranjha Kardi ni mai ape Ranjha hoi
Sadho ni mainu dhids Ranjha Hir na akho koi

Repeating 'Ranjha, Ranjha', myself, I have become
Ranjha.
Call me Dhido Ranjha, none should call me Hir (any
more).

And at times one hears the voice of intense desire to break all barriers between God and man and to become one with Him, expressed in a language of savage power. Ramprasad, a Bengali poet of the eighteenth century, says to Kali, the dark goddess:

Mother, I shall devour you

And Basavanna, the founder of Virasaivism, writes

Feet will dance
Eyes will see
Tongue will sing
And not find content.
What else, what else
Shall I do?

I worship with my hands,
The heart is not content.
What else shall I do?

Listen my lord,
It isn't enough.
I have it in me
To cleave thy belly
And enter thee
O lord of the meeting rivers.⁶⁵

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VI

The idea of total identity or even complete merger with God is a common phenomenon in Hindu thought and in Indian religious poetry. But such idea has been considered heretic in the Islamic tradition. It has been debated whether the idea of *fana* has been derived from an Indian source or from the Quranic verse 'Everything upon the earth passes away, save His face.'⁶⁴ According to a strict interpretation of the Quran, total merger with God is anti-Islamic. The relation between God and man can be either of *Rabb* (Lord) and *Marbub* (slave), or *Ilah* (to be worshipped) and *Maluh* (worshipper), or *Malik* (master) and *Mamluk* (servant). The devotee can never claim a complete identity with Him though he tries to feel, and indeed feels a nearness to Him.⁶⁵ Syed Amir Ali writes, 'Even when the Sufi talks of *fana-fil-Allah* (annihilation in God) he does not mean to imply that human soul becomes merged in the universal soul.'⁶⁶ According to him, the notion of Al-Ghazali is that the individual soul (*ruh*) emanates at the bidding of the Almighty from the realm of *alam-ul-Malakut*, nearest to Divine Essence, and on its separation from the corporeal body, the soul pines for its return to its original home. And this is the meaning of the Quranic declaration "We come from God and to Him we return." Elucidating this point, the Islamic conception of the relation between man and God, Schuon writes, "the servant (*abd*) as such can never cease to be the servant, consequently he can never become the Lord (*Rabb*)."⁶⁷ But he points out that "there is something in the servant that cannot without the Lord's grace surpass the axis 'servant-lord' or 'subject-object' and realize the absolute self."⁶⁷ Or in other words, when man realizes his relation with the Creator and the essence of the Lord, he attains a sense of unity. "If we are able to attain the self outside the said polarity, it is solely by the will of the Lord and with his help; the self cannot be realized in defiance of the Lord or in defiance of the 'Lord-servant' relationship."⁶⁸

Because of severe criticism of the Sufi doctrine by many Quranic scholars, the poets and theoreticians of Sufism tried to give an explanation of the idea contained in the phrase *ana'l haq* (I am God) to dispel the misgiving it evoked. Rumi wrote in a verse:

People imagine that its is a presumptuous claim,
whereas it is really a presumptuous claim to say *Ana'l
abd* 'I am the slave of God', *Ana'l Haq* 'I am God'
is an expression of great humility. The man who says
Ana'l abd 'I am the slave of God' affirms two existences,
his own and God's, but he that says *Ana'l Haq*, has

made himself non-existent and has given himself up and says 'I am God' i.e. 'I am naught; He is all; there is no being but God's.' This is the extreme of humility and self-abusement.⁶⁹

Various criticism of Sufism notwithstanding, Sufi poetry drew its inspiration from the idea contained in '*Ana'l Haq*' and continued to receive support from the exponents of Sufi doctrines. Sarias-Saqati, a younger contemporary of Rabia, for example, defined the mystical love as "real mutual love between man and God" instead of interpreting love of God as obedience.⁷⁰ It must be remembered that Sufi doctrines as formulated by Al-Qushairi, the classical authority of Sufi doctrines, recognises the importance of *taqwa* (the awe of God), *khushu* (fearfulness) and *ubudiya* (servant-hood) in the life of a true Sufi. But in poetry it is the lover-beloved relation that obliterates the servant-lord axis. This is true equally of Sufi and the Bhakti poetry.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas created a doctrinal hierarchy where the servanthood of the devotee occupied a lower position. According to them the emotion known as *santa* (calm/tranquil) attains its maturity in the *dasya* (servanthood), the *dasya* in the *sakhya* (friendship), the *sakhya* into *vatsalya* (filial love) and all these are concentrated in the *madhura* (sweetness) which is manifested through lover — beloved relationship.⁷¹

The idea of separation of human soul from God, developed into a love symbolism where soul assumed the image of a mad lover. The union is the goal, and the joy of the union is ineffable. But poetry lies in the process of the union rather than in the union itself. Once the union is achieved, everything including poetry ceases to exist. Therefore, both in Sufi poetry as well as in the Bhakti poetry it is the theme of longing and waiting for God, the theme of one's journey towards the beloved, which dominates. Poetry is born out of the mad pursuits. Rumi has beautifully expressed this through the imagery of the reed-flute cut from the reed bed longing for his original home:

Harken to this Reed forlorn
Breathing ever since 'twas torn
From its rushy bed, a strain
Of impassioned love and pain.

The secret of my song, though near
None can see and none can hear.
Oh, for a friend to know the sign
And mingle all his soul with mine.

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'Tis the flame of love that fired me
'Tis the wine of love that inspired me
Wouldst thou learn how Lovers bleed
Harken, harken, to the Reed.⁷²

The intensity of lyricism in Indian religious poetry, too, comes from this sense of separation. Shah Latif says, 'The seas of separation roll/And draw each single separate soul' and Radha of Vaishnava poetry asks, 'when our soul is one, why has God made our bodies separate?' And this is why Radha goes out in *abhisar* in dark rainy nights. Sassi is perished in the trackless deserts and Sohni plunges herself into the rushing tide to meet death. And this is why, Lalla danced nude, Mira left her home, Chaitanya wept, trembled and rolled on the ground of Vrindavan in ecstasy and al-Hallaj danced in his fetters to the place of execution and Rumi celebrated the incident in haunting rhythm:

Sound drum and fellow flute, resounding Allah Hu
Dance, ruddy dawn in gladness bounding Allah Hu
Sound exalted in the centre, O thou streaming light
Soul of all wheeling planets rounding Allah Hu.⁷³

In knowing Him the slave attains a new majesty, and the mad lover as he approaches his beloved, fills with a joy the like of which he has never experienced. He waits and longs for the final moment which forms the subject of one of the finest decade of mystic union.⁷⁴

In love He came, and rapture gave in olden days,
to me
His slave?
And then He left me on this wide vast earth to wander
'wildered
with floods of gushing tears, and frame with transport
thrilled in joy and love
when shall I stand, in mystic union joined with Him,
my flawless gem?
In bliss dissolved, soul melted utterly with every
gesture meet
Laughter and tears, homage of hand and lip, with
every
majestic dance
To see with joyous thrill, that sacred Form like ruddy,
evening sky.
When shall I pass, in mystic union joined with Him,
my flawless gem?

NOTES

1. The word 'Baul' can be derived either from the Sanskrit 'vatula' (affected by wind, mad) or 'vyakula' (eager, impatient). This song is quoted in K.M.Sen, *Hinduism*, Harmondsworth, 1961, p.30
2. S.K. Chatterjee, 'Islamic Mysticism, Iran and India' *Indo-Iranica*, October 1946, p. 29
3. A.J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London, 1963, p.35
4. Al-Hallaj travelled widely in Tostar, Bagdad, Khorasan, Sistan and Turkistan. He was arrested in Bagdad for preaching of the union of man with God, and was executed in 913. See Farid al-Din Attar, *Tadhkirat al-Auliya* (Memorial of the Saints), tr. A.J. Arberry, Muslim Saints and Mystics, Persian Heritage Series, No.1., London, 1973, pp.267-71.
5. S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1978, Chaps.I-IV; also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, North Carolina, 1975, Chap. VIII.
6. R.C.Zeahner, *Hinduism*, Oxford, 1966. P. 130
7. Shree Kumaraswamiji, 'Virasaivism,' *The Cultural Heritage of India*, IV., ed. H. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1956, pp.98-170; also A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva*, Harmondsworth, 1973, Appendix I.
8. R.G.Nath, 'A Survery of the Caitanya Movement,' *The Cultural Heritage of India*, *op.cit.*, pp.186-200.
9. R.A.Nicholson, *Rumi*, London, 1950, p. 102
10. R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, London, 1914, p.17
11. Abu Yazid al-Bestam (born in Bestan in north-east Persia and died around 874) is the founder of the ecstatic (drunken) school of Sufism. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystic*, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-23.
12. R.C.Zeahner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York, 1969, pp.93-134, 198-218.
13. A.J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason ins Islam*, London, 1957, pp.90-103
14. See S.R. Sarada, *Sufi Thought: Its Development in the Panjab and its Impact on Panjabi Literature*, Delhi 1974; H.T.Sorely, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, Karachi, 1940, pp. 2356-45, 275-88; Rizvi, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Chap. VI; Lajwanti Ramakrishna, *Panjabi Sufi Poets*, New Delhi, 1973; Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqu, *Sufism in Kashmir*, Varanasi, undated, Chap. VIII; Muhammad Hedayetullah, *Kabir*, Delhi, 1977
15. Ramkumar Varma, *Kabir Ka Rahasyavad*, Allahabad, 195, pp.20f. Sarala Sukla, *Jaysi ke Puravarti Hindi Sufi Kavi aur Kavya*, Lucknow, 2013 Samvat; Hazariprasad Dwivedi, *Madhyakalin Dharma Sadhana*, Allahabad, 1970, pp. 253-58; Parasuram Chaturvedi, *Madhyakalin Prem Sadhana*, Allahabad, 1962, Chap. VII.
16. Enamul Haq, *Bange Sufi Prabhab*, Karachi, 1957; also S.B. Das-gupta, *Obscure Religious Cults of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1946, pp. 167f.; Upendranath Bhattacharya, *Banglar Baul*, Calcutta, 1956; Jayanti Chattopadhyay, 'Sufism in Bengali Poetry', *Panjab University Journal of Medieval Indian Literature*, Vol. VI, 1982.
17. F. Kingsbury and G.E. Philip, *Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 127.
18. Arberry, *Sufism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89f.
19. *Mathnawi*, Vol. IV, 5th Book, tr. R. Nicholson (1934, reprinted 1977), pp. 113-14.

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20. *Ibid*, p. 115.
21. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 22.
22. *Ibid.*, 265.
23. Rag Maru, Mahla 1; *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*, ed. Saheb Singh, Jalandhar, 1970, Vol. VII, p. 367
24. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, tr. Gopal Singh, Delhi, 1961, Vol. IV, p. 947.
25. Bhau tera bhang, khalari mera chit
Mai diwana bhaya atit
Rag. Tilang, Mahla, I, Sahib Singh, op. cit., Vol. V, p.307, tr. Gopal Singh, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 691.
26. Kingsbury and Philip, op. cit., Verse no. 80, p. 89.
27. Arberry, Sufism, op. cit., p. 62
28. R. Parthasarathy, *Vaisnavism in Tamil Literature* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Delhi University, 1979), p. 168.
29. A.K. Ramanujan, op. cit., pp. 111f.
30. B.N. Parimoo, *The Ascent of Self*, Delhi, 1978, p. 59.
31. Kingsbury and Philip, op. cit., p. 17
32. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
33. Quoted in C. Jesudasan and H. Jesudasan, *A History of Tamil Literature*, Calcutta, 1961, p. 99.
34. *Chaitanya Charitamrta*, III, 14.
See David, R. Kinsley, *The Divine Player: A Study of Krishna Lila*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 205f.
35. In one of his Persian poems he says:
Hasten to pass by the evils of wiseness
God can be found in but madness and rapture!
Quoted from C. Shackli, 'Sachal Sarmast and His Siraiki Poetry', *Panjab University Journal of Medieval Indian Literature*, Vol. II, 1978, pp. 87-100.
36. *Bilawalu*, 2; A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, London, 1909, Vol. VI, p. 229.
37. *Chaitanya Charitamrta*, 1, 7. Krishnadas Kaviraj quotes the following verse from the Bhagavat (2, 47, 38) in support of Chaitanya
*evamvatah soapriyanamakirttya
jatanurago drutacita uccaih.
Hasatyatho roditi rauti gaya-
Tyunmadavannrtyati lokavahyah.*
When the devotee chants the dear name of his Lord, anuraga (love) emerges in his heart and his heart gets melted. Then, he sometimes laughs loudly, sometimes he weeps, and sometimes he dances like a madman.
38. *Shilappadikaram*, tr. Alain Danielou, New York, 1965, p. 120
39. Baba Farid, 91, tr. Macauliffe, op. cit. , Vol. VI, p. 379.
40. munnam avan udaiya namam kettal
murthi avan irukkum vannam kettal
pinnai avan udaiya arur kettal
peyarttum avanukke piccianal
annaiyaiyum attanaiyum amre nittal
- akanral akalittattar acarattai
tannai marantal tannamam kettal
talaippattal nankai talaivam tala
I am thankful to Dr. K. Armugham and Dr. I. Parthasarathy who have kindly translated this verse for my use.

41. *Akkana Vacanagalu*, ed. L. Basavaraju, Mysore, 1972, Vacana 79, p.83. (Translated by my friend T.Satyanath.)
42. *Gita Govindam*, IV, 8.
43. Tr. Willis Barnstone, (*glukea mater, outoi dunamai etc.*)
44. *In Praise of Krishna*, tr. E.C.Dimock, Jr. and Denis Levertov, Newyork, 1967, p. 30.
45. Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. II, Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 406
46. *Mathnawi*, V, p. 120, For Rumi's debt to secular traditions of Persian poetry see Schimmel, *op.cit.*, pp. 317-20.
47. Rizvi, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-65.
48. S.M. Pandey, 'Social Relevance of Mystic Poetry-Contribution of Hindi Sufi Poet Maulana Daud,' *Panjab University Journal of Medieval Indian Literature*, V. I, 1977, pp. 34-35.
49. R. Russell, 'Themes of Eighteenth Century Urdu Lyric Poetry,' *Sasibhushan Dasgupta Commemoration Volume*, ed. R.K. Dasgupta and Sisirkumar Das, Delhi, 1968, p. 134. Also R. Russell and Khursid Lal Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*, London, 1967. Chaps IV-V.
50. *Kulliyat-I-Mir*, ed. Abdul Bari, Lucknow, 1940, p. 14, quoted by Rusell, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
51. Quoted from S.S. Narula, *Eros and Agape in Medieval Panjabi Sufi Literature* (unpublished) presented at the Seminar on 'Mysticism: Sacred and Profane,' Panjab University, 1981.
52. See H.T. Sorely, *op. Cit.*, also Motilal Jotwani, *Shah Abdul Latif, His Life and Work*, University of Delhi, 1975.
53. S.R. Sharda, *Sufi Thought*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 186-209.
54. H.T. Sorely, *op. Cit.*, p. 366.
55. *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif*, tr. Else Kazi, Hyderabad (Pakistan), 1965, pp. 194-97.
56. R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, London, 1966 pp. 17
57. *Curya*, IV
Joni toi binu khanahi na jivami
To muha cumvi kamalarasa pivami
 Kamala (Lotus) stands for the highest stage of attainment. The commentator explains *Kamalarasa* as 'Paramartha-bodhicittam.'
58. *Mathnawi*, I, 3056, also included in Nicholson's *Rumi*, London, 1950, p. 93
59. *Ibid*, I, 672, also Rumi, *ibid.*, p. 134.
60. Parimoo, *op. cit.* P. 109.
Tsa na boh' na dhey na dhyan
61. *Granth Saheb*, Gauri 72. Quoted in Mhuammad Hedayaetullah, *Kabir*, Delhi, 1977, p. 253.
62. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavatgita*, London, 1953, p. 45.
63. A.K. Ramanujan, *op. cit.*, p.82
64. Hedayaetullah, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36, also Mir Valiuddin,, *Quranic Sufism*, Delhi, 1969, pp. 83f.
65. Valiuddin, *ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
66. Syed Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, London, 1922 (reprinted 1964), pp. 473-75.

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67. Fritjof of Schuon, *Dimensions of Islam*, tr. P.N. Townsend, London, 1969, p. 46, Chap. III, The Servant and Union is particularly illuminating.
68. Schuon, *ibid.*, p. 48
69. Nicholson, *Rumi*, op. cit., CXV, p. 194
70. Schimmel, op. cit., p. 53
71. *Chaitanya Charitamrta*, II, viii.
72. Translated by R.A. Nicholson.
73. William Hastie, *The Festival of Spring*, Glasgow, 1903, No. 6. Quoted in Schimmel, op. Cit., p. 184.
74. Mannikka Vachakar, *The Tiruvacagam*, tr. C.U.Pope-Oxford, 1900, pp. 245-46

(Excerpted from *The Mad Lover*, Papyrus, Kolkata, 1984)

