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## The Mystical Career and Poetry of Nuru' d-Din Rishi Kashmiri

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## **The Mystical Career and Poetry of Nuru'd-Din Rishi Kashmiri: Socio-historical Dimensions\***

Ever since the dawn of human civilization, the valley of Kashmir is said to have been an abode of Rishis,<sup>1</sup> and, for this reason, it has also been known as *Rishivatika* or *Reshwaer*. A strong folk tradition still persists, particularly in a number of villages of Kashmir, about the existence of Rishis in very ancient times and the fact that some forests in the Valley are even named after them gives a certain degree of credence to the oral sources of the Rishi tradition. But it needs to be pointed out that before the advent of Islam in Kashmir the Rishis were not socially active since they either led a secluded life in forests or on the tops of mountains. It was not until the emergence of the Rishi order of Muslim mystics, founded by Nuru'd-Din (1378-1439 A.D.), that the social authenticity of the Rishi tradition came to be established for the first time in Kashmir history. Undoubtedly, under his influence the Rishis emerged as a social force so much so that they were found worthy of description by such keen observers as Abul Fazl and Jahangir. A number of Kashmiri folk songs, Persian hagiographical works and chronicles which abound in praise of the Rishis also testify to their social role.<sup>2</sup> This essay assesses the significance of the mystical career and poetry of Nuru'd-Din from the view point of history.

### SOCIAL MILIEU

Shaikh Nuru'd-Din was born on the threshold of a significant period in Kashmir history. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, three developments in the socio-political life of Kashmir had made a profound impression upon the sensitive minds of Kashmiris which led to a process of disintegration of the existing social order. These were the decline of the 'Hindu Rule' and the founding of the Sultanate in 1320 by Rinchana, a Buddhist prince from Ladakh who had embraced Islam at the hands of a Sufi of the Suhrawardi order; the missionary activities of the Sufis from Central Asia and Persia;<sup>3</sup> and, above all, the spirit of revolt demonstrated by Lal Ded, a Hindu woman mystic of Shavite sect, against the manifold abuses of the caste-oriented social order.<sup>4</sup>

It is sometimes tempting to draw a comparison between Lal Ded and several Bhakti saints of the Indian plains on the ground that both played a useful role in fostering common values among Hindus and Muslims in some appreciable degree. For both true devotion implied seeking God within oneself and in the routine of daily life. Their approach to religion, based as it was on the mystical concept of the identity of souls, was fundamentally humanistic and individualistic. However, it would be a grave error to overemphasize the points of similarity between the two in view of their varying influence on contemporary Hindu society. Unlike the teachings of the Bhakti reformers, Lal Ded's satirical verses did not give birth to a reform movement among the Hindus of Kashmir. Nor did her mystical poetry, though devotional to a very limited extent, like the *sakhi* and *sabad* of Kabir and Nanak and *caupai* and *doha* of Tulsi, achieve the place of honour which normally would be accorded to such scriptures as the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. Of course, like the Bhakti literature, her poetry also expresses dissent and protest against Brahmanic social norms and institutions, but what is of significance to note here is that while such a trend revitalized Hindu religion in other regions of India,<sup>5</sup> in Kashmir, however, it marked the beginning of Islamic acculturative process under Shaikh Nuru'd-Din Rishi's mystical movement which, undoubtedly was an off-shoot of the teachings of Lal Ded and Islam. Lal Ded's verses against the Brahmanic social order, composed under conditions ripe for resistance as well as for emulative movement, seem to have been taken as her conversion to Islam by the Hindu masses who were undergoing a process of acculturation, a fact supported by strong documentary

evidence. So deep-rooted was the halo of Lal Ded's conversion in the flock consciousness that even Nuru'd-Din's verses affirming his faith in Islam were attributed to her. Such a development may be viewed as a conscious attempt on the part of subordinate Hindu groups to attain a personal & social reintegration through selective rejection, modification and synthesis of both traditional (Hindu & Buddhist) and alien (dominant) Islamic cultural components.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suggest that Lal Ded's denunciation of idol-worship, caste system and the exploitative nature of the Brahmanic creed stirred the minds of the people, and set in motion such forces in Kashmiri society as led to the gradual adoption of Islamic practices and values by the mass of Hindus in the Valley. There is strong reason to believe that the Brahmans must have regarded her as a renegade. Perhaps this is the reason that they maintained intriguing silence about her till the advent of the Sikh rule in Kashmir (1819-46) when a Brahman chronicler mentioned her for the first time. On the contrary, Lal Ded found a prominent place in the Muslim hagiological literature and chronicles much earlier, so much so that she has been reverentially described as "Rabi'a Thani"<sup>6</sup>. "Lal-i-'Arifa"<sup>7</sup> and "Maryam Makani"<sup>8</sup>

### LAL DED'S INFLUENCE ON NURU'D-DIN

According to a tradition quoted in several hagiological works, for three days after his birth in 779/1378 A.D. Nuru'd-Din did not take milk from his mother.<sup>9</sup> But, then, Lal Ded visited the house of Salar Ganai,<sup>10</sup> the father of the newly-born, and addressed the latter :

Thou wast not ashamed of being born; why then art thou  
ashamed of sucking (at the mother's breast).<sup>11</sup>

Subsequently the baby started talking milk and thereafter Lal Ded's visits to the parental house of Nuru'd-Din continued.<sup>12</sup> It was Lal Ded, indeed, who was the earliest source of inspiration for Nuru'd-Din. Thus, in one of his verses, the Shaikh acknowledges his debt to Lal Ded :

That Lalla of Padmanpore<sup>13</sup>  
Who had drunk the fill of nectar;  
She was an avatar of ours,  
O God grant me the same spiritual power.<sup>14</sup>

Nuru'd-Din has left a unique record of his own mystical experience, a Pilgrim's Progress in verse, narrated in a style which is not unlike that of Bunyan's \_\_ symbolical, exquisite, and markedly subtle. Like Lal Ded, he talks from the level of one who has attained the state of permanent oneness with God. As a matter of fact, Nuru'd-Din was an heir to Lalla's mystical poetry. In fact some of Nuru'd-Din's verses suggest that he had accepted her as his spiritual preceptor and drew inspiration from Lal Ded's poems. Consequently Lal Ded and Nuru'd-Din's poetry became the only vehicle for influencing the illiterate masses, particularly in rural society, who have had and still have an incredible memory for verse. In any case such an interpolation also indicates that both Lal Ded and Nuru'd-Din gave a meaning to the life of Kashmiri people and provided the framework for the formation of a culture which drew its vitality from a conflict, a division, a torment and a struggle created in the individual psyche by the challenges posed to the caste-ridden social order by these two mystics.

### HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF NURU'D-DIN'S POETRY

Nuru'd-Din's poetry is germane to the concerns of history considering the fact that his life and the indigenous mystic order of the Rishis founded by him illustrate something of the nature of the

crisis through which he was passing and its impact on the social norms and meanings of Islam in the regional context. Indeed, Nuru'd-Din's mystical verses purport to convey not only certain basic facts about his life, but also certain ideas and concepts which have remained the *Weltanschauung* (world-view) of Kashmiris, even generations after his death. So central is the new sense of crises and self-awareness evident in his verses that his poetry assumes the pervasiveness of a vital tradition.

But for understanding the basic components of Kashmiri tradition, it is important to remember that its flowering in the real sense took place in the midst of the traditions set in vogue by the legendary rishis mentioned by Nuru'd-Din in his verses, and mystics like Lal Ded, Saiyid Husain Simnani,<sup>15</sup> Saiyid 'Ali Hamadani,<sup>16</sup> and Saiyid Muhammad Hamadani.<sup>17</sup> It was also in the midst of these traditions that the formation of the religious thought of Nuru'd-Din took place. It is also important to remember that for Nuru'd-Din religion was a matter of experience; it was the 'real' rather than mere 'notional'. In Kantian terms his knowledge began with experience that arose out of experience. An understanding of the Shaikh's thought, therefore, requires a prior understanding of his religious career.

It may be pointed out at the outset that there is no valid point in rejecting stories about the early life of Nuru'd-Din on the flimsy ground that they "were weaved to serve as a background-setting for some of his verses."<sup>18</sup> One of the major drawbacks of historical works has been their authors' conventional readiness to accept the antinomy between history and poetry and also between folklore and history. What is of relevance to note here is also the historian's utter disregard of legends. True, one cannot rely on legend as a source of history, but the somewhat ingrained habit of rejecting legendary evidence without critical examination will render historical narrative subjective considering the sway of legends over folk consciousness. In the present essay, therefore, an attempt will also be made to bring crude historical realism and 'legends' into an effective relationship claiming them both as indistinguishable aspects of one whole of experience. Our view should not be misconstrued for enacting an extra-historical condition through myths and legends alone. We only advocate the idea of looking at history from a fresh point of view. We can hardly make a sense of life and also that of history by an outright rejection of legends and folklore, which are the lungs of rural culture. History cannot be objective if we do not examine the evidence which historians have generally treated with levity. In fact, history can also be rendered meaningful through a judicious use of 'legendary' and 'mythical' events.

### THREE PHASES OF NURU'D-DIN'S LIFE

Nuru'd-Din's religious career falls into three main stages: the first is that of an orphan struggling to eke out his mundane existence; the second is that of an ascetic who withdraws himself from worldly affairs in order to know the religious truth; and in the third and final stage he gives up the life of a recluse to advocate the ethics of a dynamic and positive nature. This division has in it the inevitable limitation of generalisation but, simultaneously, it helps us to perceive in a clearer light the shifts and changes which are natural to the evolution of a mystical career, such as that of Nuru'd-Din.

The first phase in the formation of Nuru'd-Din's religious thought was ushered in with his abhorrence for leading the life of a thief. It is said that Nuru'd-Din was forced to adopt the life of his two brothers, Shesh and Kundar, who had taken to theft and robbery after their father's death. But he did not come up to their expectations since he did not like that way of life. When he entered a village house in order to commit theft, he "came out empty handed"; instead he ran away after throwing his own blanket over the poverty-stricken inmates of the house. On another occasion he was asked by his brothers to take care of a cow they had stolen. While driving the cow he heard a dog bark *wow, wow*. Suddenly Nuru'd-Din was overcome with the sense of guilt.

Wow means sow in Kashmiri; thinking that the dog was reminding him of what he sowed in this world would be reaped by him in the Hereafter, he let loose the cow.<sup>19</sup>

The dog is calling from the courtyard,  
My brothers pay heed to (what he says).  
He who sows here shall reap there.  
The dog is urging sow, oh, sow<sup>20</sup>

Emphasizing the same point, the Shaikh remarks in the poem:

When an assessment is made of your good deeds and sins;  
Brothers, the thought of the Day of Judgement  
Should be uppermost in you minds.  
See, whether your nobler actions can outweigh your sins;  
The dog is urging, sow, oh, sow,<sup>21</sup>

Another interesting anecdote regarding the Shaikh's early life is narrated by him in a verse. He was sent to learn the craft of weaving by his mother,<sup>22</sup> but he could not become an apprentice since the tools of the weaver inspired his muse:

One instrument holds my rapt attention,  
The other teaches me renounce the world.  
The paddle points down to the grave;  
This is the craft to which my parents have apprenticed me.<sup>23</sup>

A conversation between the Shaikh and the weaver recorded in the hagiological literature is worthy of notice. The Shaikh is reported to have been dissatisfied with the commonplace answer of the weaver when asked to explain the movement of the shuttle 'through the tangle of threads'. As against the weaver's explanation that the cloth was woven because of the to and fro movement of the thread through the shuttle, the Shaikh found an inner meaning in the process. His explanation was that the movement of shuttle was symbolic of two doors of the world; the one through which we enter the world (birth) and the other through which we leave (death). The shuttle thus resembles man who, carrying the thread of his destiny, tosses to and fro in this world, and departs from the world when the thread is exhausted.<sup>24</sup>

The other-worldliness of the Shaikh did not permit him to learn the weaver's craft. This is why he deprecated the importance of living in the world.

"Why did I not listen to Death, the friend,  
Who can propitiate him, the great Destroyer ?  
Few are my pieties but piled up the sins;  
Little have I gained by my birth in the world".<sup>25</sup>

Asceticism : The other-worldliness of the Shaikh forced him to retire to a cave at Kaimuh,<sup>26</sup> the place of his birth. He gave various excuses to his mother when she insisted on his return home. He talks about the insolent riches of the world, human desires, anger and ego, which preoccupy the human mind. He draws lurid pictures of the Day of Judgement and the hell to impress upon his mother the futility of paddling one's own canoe in the material world.<sup>27</sup>

This life is a hollow bubble;  
We are just a drop in its vast ocean.  
An ass like me is unable to bear its brunt,  
Having deserted home, why should I care to live?<sup>28</sup>

Nuru'd-Din's decision to lead an ascetic life, which marks the beginning of the second stage in his religious career, seems to have been voluntary. It was influenced by his cravings for seeking the truth.<sup>29</sup> The path of renunciation followed by the rishis preceding him and their extreme ascetic habits must have also played an important part in shaping his outlook on worldly life.<sup>30</sup> It is unlikely that the penance in the cave was undertaken at the command of any saint.

The company of saints I did not keep,  
Till right moment and youth slipped by;  
Wrongly did I attach (myself) to the world;  
Have thy play and let's go home.<sup>31</sup>

It is certain that the Shaikh chose the 'legendary' rishis as the earliest models of holiness. This is borne out by the unqualified praise which his poetry expresses for them.

Zulka Rishi of Dandakvan<sup>32</sup>  
Who subsisted on (wild) fruit of shrubs,  
Was a true lover to attain salvation.  
May God grant me the same spiritual power.<sup>33</sup>

What inspires the Shaikh about the lives of the rishis is not only their penance, meditation, abstemious habits, but above all, their devotion to God and burning love for the Creator.

Miran Rishi of Reshivan,<sup>34</sup>  
Who lived for a thousand lunar months,  
In a state of union with God did he leave for his heavenly abode,  
May God grant me the same spiritual power!<sup>35</sup>

Other rishis of yore to whom the Shaikh looks for inspiration are Rum Rishi<sup>36</sup> and Pilas Rishi.<sup>37</sup> Nuru'd-Din's exaltation of the 'legendary' rishis is neither a sentimental expression nor a romantic idealization, it is a genuine and healthy expression being a corrective to the absence of any contemporary documentary evidence on the rishis of olden days, and also to such purely rational perceptions as deny their existence. Such a phenomena also need to be studied as objective facts and behaviour patterns. What is worthy of being investigated is how a large number of Muslim rishis, modelled their lives upon the patterns of 'legendary' rishis. This development, it may be argued, occurred only in a social context as part of a culture, in a milieu. As a matter of fact, the impact of the historical role of the so-called 'legendary' rishis on the rural consciousness has yet to be assessed by historians. The Shaikh's longing for an ordered rhythm of the life of the rishis is the kind of longing which enables us to use the mystic matrix as a simulacrum of the social and moral attitudes of the rishis. This also explains the fact why some prominent disciples of the Shaikh, in spite of their masters' denunciation of the ascetic practices at a later stage of his life, chose tops of mountains in difficult locations, in awesome site of nature connected with the traditional science of sacred geography, as their abode of worship. Even the pagan belief in the sacredness of the springs continued to be emphasized by such a respectable figure as Baba Hardi Rishi.<sup>38</sup> What is of significance to remember is that even now springs continue to be objects of veneration because of their association with some 'legendary' rishis.<sup>39</sup>

Thus history cannot be objective or even complete if historians totally reject the evidence about what men believe to be true about their so-called 'legendary' figures. We have no strong reason to regard the Shaikh as a pedlar of myths; on the contrary, we find in his person a mystic with an unerring sense of history. His poetry is not a mere pastoral survival, but a correlate of contemporary experience and considerably motivated by the felt particularity of its own cultural

situation. It is also self validating. In fact, the Shaikh's verses not only embody and enact the age-old forms of rural culture, but they are a major source of discovery and creation. In a society where the learned Brahmans did not deem it necessary to record the activities of the ascetics and, for that matter, even such luminaries of the Valley as Abjinavagupta<sup>40</sup> and Lal Ded in their works, memory must have been the only vehicle of integrity and continuity.

Having secluded himself in the cave in the manner of the rishis, the Shaikh combined the daunting series of recitation of God's name with extremes of asceticism, self-mortification, long fasts and sexual abstinence. In order to discipline his soul, extreme ascetic practices were adopted to free himself from the sensual self. The Shaikh subsisted on wild vegetables and did not touch meat. He considered *vopalhak*<sup>41</sup> and chicory to be the favourite dish of the chosen of God.<sup>42</sup> He wore ragged garments but used *kangri*<sup>43</sup> to protect himself against the rigours of cold.<sup>44</sup>

The ethics of asceticism finds a systematic exposition in the conversations which the Shaikh had with his mother and wife in the cave. The doctrine of negation of the worldly life is emphasized when his mother urged him to return home:

Mother do not pester me;  
Nund<sup>44a</sup> has already buried himself.  
Mother the world is mortal;  
Therefore, I have retired to the cave.  
Mother I have received a call from the heaven,  
The divine call has enraptured me.  
Mother do not expect me to return home;  
I am absorbed in the search after Him.<sup>45</sup>

Reacting to his mother's insistence on eating sufficient food, the Shaikh remarked:

How can (good) food satiate (my spiritual thirst), mother?  
Give it to a dog or a Brahman.<sup>46</sup>  
Can't I crush my ego?  
Having renounced home, why should I care to live.<sup>47</sup>

And when Zai Ded implored her husband to give up the path of renunciation, the Shaikh said:

Zai, have love for the next world;  
Groping in the dark will lead you nowhere.<sup>48</sup>

## SHAVITE AND SUFISTIC INFLUENCES

It must also be explained that most of the verses composed by the Shaikh in the cave bear an indelible influence of Shavite philosophy. According to *Sivadaita* or the *Trika* philosophy of Kashmir, the *Atman*, meaning the true and innermost self, is present everywhere and is in every being. It "is a changeless reality of the nature of a purely experiencing principle, as distinguished from whatever may assume the form of either the experience or the means of experience."<sup>49</sup> There is no room for second reality in the philosophy of the Trinity (*Siva-Sakti-Anu*). As B.N. Parimoo observes: "The experiencing principle, the means of experience and the object of experience, are, in essence, modes of one and the same truth. The experiencer, the medium of experience and the object of experience are different aspects of the same all-pervading Siva, in so much as it is he who assumes the forms simultaneously of the Experiencer and Experienced."<sup>50</sup>

Thus, while withdrawing his mind from all objective activities, the Shaikh turned towards the subject, that is, the real self, and gradually got wholly absorbed into it.

Having forsaken all I sought you,  
While searching you the prime of my youth passed away,  
I remained in safety because of Your luminations.<sup>51</sup>

Ascetic training is thus the prerequisite for the achievement of any higher mystical state. The following verse is also typical of the Shavite way of renunciation:

He is near me I am near him,  
I found solace in his nearness.  
In vain did I seek him elsewhere,  
Lo! I found the beloved within my own consciousness.<sup>52</sup>

The unitive experience leading to the intuitive realization of the real self is called *Parama-Siva* or consciousness in Shaiva philosophy. The phenomenal universe which exists in *Parma-Siva* in the form of pure consciousness, “is nothing but an objective manifestation of his divine powers.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, the Shaikh, after establishing a personal relation between himself and personal and incarnate god, through ascetic training, remarks :

The universe is the objective manifestation of the essence of Shiva,  
If you realise it through annihilation of self, you will get merged into  
him.  
What will you find after death, if you do not recognise him in this  
world ?  
Search him in yourself (and) give me keen hearing.<sup>54</sup>

Although elements in the Shaikh’s verses are compatible with the Shavite aspiration after self-identification with God, the influence of ontological monism of Sufis on his inquisitive mind cannot be totally ruled out. The Shaikh does not draw formal and verbal parallels between Hindu & Muslim idea of unitive experience, but he fully elaborates the spirit that animates the mystical movements in Hinduism & Islam.

What qualities hast thou found in the world ?  
To allow thy body a free, loose rope ?  
The Musalman and Hindu sail in the same boat  
Have thy play and let’s us go home.<sup>55</sup>

And while transcending the barriers of theological ethnocentrism the Shaikh remarks :

Among the brothers of the same parents,  
Why did you create a barrier ?  
Muslims and Hindus are one  
When will God be kind to his servants ?<sup>56</sup>

Nuru’d-Din warns that the worldly pleasures should not detract our attention from God, “who is our home”. Life can become meaningful only when “we are able to ‘ascend back’ into his presence.”<sup>57</sup> He brings to light the piercing longing of his soul seeking direct intervention of divine action to sanctify the human creature through a love that transfigures, not only the soul, but also the body through constant prayer.

Thou existed and Thou (alone) will exist,  
Continue to remember Thou, none, but Thou,  
Thou alone will assuage the anguish (of thy soul),  
O my soul, recognize thyself.<sup>58</sup>

In the following verses, in particular, the Shaikh exhibits a trenchant religious impulse, inspired by Hindu as well as Muslim source, and fervently prays for the vision of transcendent yet immanent God.

Nirguana <sup>59</sup> manifest thyself unto me,  
Thy name (alone) have I been chanting.  
Lord help me reach the acme of my spiritual desires.  
I do remember (with gratitude) how kind Thou art,  
Thou removed all veils between thyself and the Prophet  
And Thou revealed Qur'an unto him.  
Lord the one (Prophet) who remained steadfast in Thy way,  
I do remember with gratitude; how kind Thou art. <sup>60</sup>

It follows that, at the prime of his youth, the socio-cultural tradition represented by Nuru'd-Din, was purely mystical rather than this-worldly. His conception of universe and things around him was conducive to develop a relationship of differentiation with these phenomena. The self-image of man, according to such a view, was that of a quasi-divine being whose only aim was to attain mystical union with God. But how did the norms of this-worldliness which lead to the realization of a substantive mode of relationship between man and his environment and between man and man emerge in Nuru'd-Din's thought is an important question now worthy of examination.

In fact, the crystallization of such a process began when Nuru'd-Din came in contact with Saiyid Muhammad Hamadani, a prominent Sufi of the Kubrawiyya order, who is reputed to have played an important role in the spread of Islamic teachings in Kashmir along with a number of his disciples. That Saiyid Mir Muhammad Hamadani became the spiritual preceptor of the Shaikh when the latter was in his early thirties is attested to not only by documentary evidence, <sup>61</sup> but also by a new trend in his thought which undoubtedly bears the deep imprint of Islam. It must, however, be explained that in spite of the standards of the *Sunnah* moulding his behaviour, the Shaikh's understanding of Islam, ultimately, came to be modelled on *tasawwuf* & local traditions. This is reflected in the following verses in which the Shaikh seeks to legitimize the term rishi by emphasizing its Islamic origin :

The first Rishi was the Prophet Muhammad,  
The second in order was Hazrat Uways,  
The third Rishi was Zulka Rishi,  
The fourth in order was Hazrat Miran,  
The fifth Rishi was Rum Rishi,  
The sixth in order was Hazrat Pilas,  
The seventh (me) is miscalled a Rishi!  
Do I deserve to be called a Rishi? What is my name. <sup>62</sup>

While the Shaikh describes the Prophet as the first rishi and Uways-i-Qarani <sup>63</sup> as the second, significantly enough, the 'legendary' rishis of the Valley have been treated in the same category in order of merit. Not surprisingly, the disciples of the Shaikh who were spread in every nook & corner of the Valley also came to be known as Uwaysis. <sup>64</sup>

Although the iron grid of historical realism will not warrant any connecting link between the rishis of Kashmir and Uways and, for that matter, even with Prophet Muhammad, four main points emerge from the Shaikh's assertion of the unchanged significance and authority of the Rishi tradition:

First, in his re-creation of the role of Sufi Shaikh and the founder of a mystic order, Nuru'd-Din defended the social authenticity of the Rishi tradition and its continued capacity to make sense of the world in the face of the challenges posed to it by the great tradition of Islam as represented by

the ‘ulama. In order to save the Rishi tradition from going into oblivion, he sought to revivify it by giving it an Islamic content. As a result of it, the essential elements of ancient popular Kashmiri religious culture and ethos have continued to remain part and parcel of Islam in Kashmir till the present times.<sup>65</sup>

Second, in his poetry, the Shaikh seems to have given a positive response to the ossification of the ‘ulama on a spiritual, emotional, and social level who did not favour the accommodation of Islam to the warm, earthy, mystic religion of the Valley. He also seems to have seen in the dogmatic rigidity of the ‘ulama an inflexibility fatal to the cause of Islam which was in its infancy in the Valley even in his own days. By making Islam respond to the social mores of Kashmiri people the Shaikh enabled it to develop a resilient tradition of its own which, of course, one still finds deep-rooted in the impregnable cultural institutions of the rishis such as *khanqahs* and *ziyarat*s. So profound was the influence of Nuru’d-Din’s mystical verses on the common man, that the ‘ulama, in course of time, too, felt obliged to acquiesce in adapted forms of Kashmiri Muslim religious life and worship.<sup>66</sup> It is, therefore, in the context of the ‘ulama’s inability to intuitively grasp the popular religion of the masses that Shaikh Nuru’d-Din’s animadversions<sup>67</sup> against them needs to be studied afresh. Although the Shaikh lampoons the ‘ulama at a number of places, the following verses, in particular, are worthy of note:

Thy knowledge is great as thou art a *mullah*;  
Compelled thou feel to feed us here;  
A carpenter thou art without saw and adze;  
A warped log of arkhore wood,  
Shelter of God we did seek here,  
But found thee like a fruitless forest.  
God himself “II provide us with our fare:  
Do consider another wiser than thou.<sup>69</sup>

Thirdly, the Shaikh’s verses about the Rishis of yore seem to be definitely rooted in a homogenous body of folk consciousness. Such a common experience which cuts across academic compartments of knowledge has yet to be studied or explored by factful historians. As a matter of fact, the Shaikh’s verses and folk traditions about the rishis lend an added support to our earlier argument that the historical sense was superbly developed in him. Both as a mystic and a keen social observer, Nuru’d-Din stands creatively united by offering us useful insights not only about contemporary society, but his poetry enables us to understand the inexhaustible history of the rishi tradition which in spite of having travelled through vast tracts of time had still kept itself alive. True, it has developed certain dislocations during its long journey, but it again restored itself under Nuru’d-Din, though in a different form and its characteristics altering only very slowly.<sup>69</sup>

Fourthly, the Rishi movement also points to the upsurge of the formerly long-subordinated culture of the mass of rural population against the age-long domination of the Brahmans. As in European history such a development was closely associated with conditions of social conflict and protest, so was the Rishi movement grounded in some change in social life and expressed in opposition to decadent Brahmanic order, its agents, and its doctrines.<sup>70</sup> Thus while denouncing the caste-system, the Shaikh remarked:

Why are you harping on the caste (when) His is the only caste?  
His essence is beyond the bounds of knowledge.  
The doers of noble deeds have the same caste,  
And in the Hereafter, no one will bear any caste:  
If O brother you surrender to Him  
Then alone will you become pure.<sup>71</sup>

While criticising the hypocrisy of the Brahmans, the Shaikh addressed them in following terms:

O Pandits! O believers in *Triguna*  
Past and future are linked through present  
O pestering Pandits whom do you want to deify,  
Merge your mind in your vital breath.<sup>72</sup>

*Religion of Love:* Although the final stage of Nuru'd-Din's religious career is also marked by the absorption of his Kashmiri identity into Islam, he nowhere gives proof of anti-Hindu sentiment. Significantly, he addresses Kashmiri Pandits as brothers<sup>73</sup> and nowhere as infidels (*kafirs*) or heretics (*mushrikin*).

Nuru'd-Din did not preach organised and institutionalised religion; he concentrated on the individual faith and practice. By affirming personal link founded on love that joins the worshipper to God, he seems to have absorbed the religion of the masses in the form of his mystic order. Thus he remarks:

In all directions, at all gatherings,  
Thou art worshipped by all,  
I, a seeker of Thine, beseech Thy help.  
I remember (with gratitude) how kind Thou art.<sup>74</sup>

*Social obligations:* After spending 12 years in the cave, the Shaikh also realised that physical seclusion associated with asceticism, however, useful it may be in the inculcation of self-discipline, does not make up its essence. That rather lies in following in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad:

There are jackals and monkeys in the forests,  
The caves are infested with rats,  
Those who offer prayers five times a day to wash off the dirt of their  
heart;  
Those who lead a family life, they are privileged.  
A dutiful householder will be crowned (with success on the Day of  
Judgement).  
The messenger of Allah (Muhammad) led a marital life and won the  
divine grace.<sup>75</sup>

Social obligations towards children, wife and other members of family thus occupy as much importance in the Shaikh's thought as the religious duties. His self-denunciation of wanderings in the jungles during his early days point to the cardinal feature of his philosophy that basic social obligations are not be neglected even after a complete self-surrender to the divine obligations. While addressing his disciple, Nasr Baba, the Shaikh recollects an earlier time of spiritual ebb and flow, when his love was not perfect, and how he sought to assuage his anguish by retiring to the cave:

Nasr Baba, it did not behove me to retire to the Jungle,  
I thought it was a supreme act of worship:  
Lo! it was an ignominy.  
But the truth was revealed only after introspection.<sup>76</sup>

The realization of the futility of renouncing the world thus marks the beginning of a final stage in Nuru'd-Din's religious career. Following the Prophetic tradition, the Shaikh returned to the world from the cave with renewed vigour and faith:

O Supreme God, Thou art to be held in highest esteem  
Since it was in seeking Thou that I was freed from the delusions of  
self  
Be kind enough to make me a powerful instrument of Thy innate  
devotion;  
I do remember (with gratitude) how kind Thou art.<sup>77</sup>

There is an element of a dynamic inner worldly asceticism seeking to achieve mastery not only over his individual self but also over the world around him:

Thou hast caused me to move in the right direction,  
In the jungle did I seek Thy shelter,  
(Now) I shall bow before Thee five times a day;<sup>78</sup>  
I do remember (with gratitude) how kind Thou art.

Nuru'd-Din undertook a series of long apostolic journeys throughout the length and breadth of the Valley.<sup>79</sup> There are a number of villages in Kashmir which still preserve the memory of his visit. During his peripatetic visits the Shaikh attracted the humble and those who were ignored or held in contempt in the caste-ridden society.

Adam came as the first ancestor of man,  
Mother Eve followed suit.  
Wherefrom were the low castes born then?  
How can members of the same family jeer at one another?<sup>80</sup>

Although the Shaikh's appeal was meant for those whom he felt were untouched or unaccommodated by the existing institutions, yet he drew even die-hard Brahmans to his fold. Of the four illustrious *khalifas* of Nuru'd-Din, the first, namely, Bamu'd-Din was a respectable Brahman saint before his conversion to Islam. He is said to have embraced Islam only after a good deal of discussion with the Shaikh.<sup>81</sup>

In his verses the Shaikh linked external actions with the spiritual well-being of the individual. Study, submission, dependence on God, obedience, contemplation and repentance must go hand in hand with endeavour and dedication, altruism and fulfilment of the duties of fellowship. And these can only be shown forth and have a meaning in the context of the individual's behaviour to, and relations with, others. What one does, as well as what one is, therefore, is of significance. What is apparent in one's actions is intimately related to the profoundest inner reality of one's essence, a premise upon which ultimately the practice of the confession is based.<sup>82</sup>

Action was thus a *leit-motif* in the teaching of the Shaikh. It is in this that the value of work resides; in its employment as a means to help others and to sustain a style of life that furnishes one with the essentials of existence, no more and no less.<sup>83</sup> For ultimately work is devoted to God and founded on love, and without that devotion and that foundation it has no meaning. The concept of world thus finally appears as an integral part of the Divine synthesis in Nuru'd-Din's thought. Its true significance resides only in so far as it relates to the next. This world is only a preparation ground for what is to come. It is neither evil intrinsically nor an abode of darkness. Its main function is to serve as a prologomenon to the world to come. The cleansing of the heart of vices and passions is not enough, but what is required is cleansing it of excessive love of the world which clogs the mind.

O my soul when the fire of the Hell will be ignited,

The depraved will be condemned to dwell there.  
So will we be doomed for our own sins;  
Won't thou lament there over the otiosity of thy birth? <sup>84</sup>

Nuru'd-Din was not opposed to the world and its social system but rather moved within social order, so qualitatively informing his personal relations with men as to enter into the contentment of God. True, he was nonchalant towards political institutions, but such an outlook seems to have been generated by the fact that these institutions had no relevance for his individual faith. He did not totally cut himself off from the world, but his evaluative analysis of it, and of his own experience was drawn from spiritual criteria.

Like most of the Sufis, the Shaikh lived in entire abnegation of all worldly enjoyments. He did not like the life of pomp and show and wanted his followers also to follow the path of Prophets.

Poverty is a shield against the Hell,  
Poverty is the virtue of Prophets,  
Poverty is the wealth of this and the next world.  
Poverty is sweet & fragrant,  
One who is steadfast in the path of poverty,  
So will be honoured here and in the Hereafter. <sup>85</sup>

Nuru'd-Din's life had taught him that chosen poverty (*faqr*) was health, signifying endurance in the world of want and distress. In his *tariqa*, *jihad* against the baser self became internalized, a function of a very supreme effort, having apparently no relation to this world, but intrinsically to the world to come.

The self has afflicted me,  
My own self has snared me to face the devil;  
The self has destroyed the bridges of pious,  
My own self has disguised as the Hell. <sup>86</sup>

## CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

Although the ethic of universal love is ordained in the Qur'an, it never developed into the ethic of non-killing and non-injury to all living creatures. Unlike Hinduism, the ethical system of Islam remained oriented towards the non-cosmic love of nature and the anthropocentric ethics both at the political and the sociological levels as a result of theological emphasis on theocentric ethnocentrism. But in the mystical movement of Nuru'd-Din it was the cosmical love of nature which constituted the pivotal point and emphasized the ethics of universalism and mystical identity of all souls. The Shaikh, therefore, owes this idea more to his Buddhist and Hindu moorings than to the teachings of Islam. It is hard to find a valid defence in Islamic system for the Shaikh's assertion, in reply to the question as to why he did not eat meat, that his religion did not permit killing. <sup>87</sup> In fact, the attitude of the Shaikh towards living things is further reflected in his conversations with peasant girls during his sojourn at Hunchipora in the *pargana* of Beru. <sup>88</sup> The Shaikh taunted them for cutting the green grass meant as fodder for their cows.

"Life it has, so why should thou cut it?  
Never shouldst thou feed life on life.  
However, who can undo the writ of Fate?  
All that I wanted to find was thy pious motive. <sup>89</sup>

One of the girls was quick to reply that cow fulfilled the needs of human beings. She said:

May be milk and ghee will cool someone's fire, father;  
So did I come with a sickle in my waist.<sup>90</sup>

The Shaikh was so pleased with the girl's reply that he called her a hidden jewel (*ratna mani*).<sup>91</sup> He also admitted her among his disciples, at her own request.<sup>92</sup>

It is evident that for Nuru'd-Din love does not merely signify a mystical union with God, but an active and sympathetic attitude towards all living creatures. His faith in the acceptance of the equality of all creatures in the Kingdom of God is thus an attempt to reconcile the Islamic ethics with the concept of non-violence. Taking into consideration the Shaikh's emphasis on help to the poor and needy, mercy and kindness towards all<sup>94</sup> and the condemnation of lust and anger,<sup>95</sup> it can be safely said that the value system of non-violence as contained in his philosophy, illustrates not only his adherence to the Qur'anic emphasis on mercy, but it also shows the richness and positive commitment of the rishis to the traditions of non-violence.

Notwithstanding the dominant mystical tone in Nuru'd-Din's poetry, it also helps us to reconstruct the social history of the medieval Kashmir. In particular his description of the social inequalities existing in the contemporary society is important in this respect. While the picture of the hoarding of different varieties of grain in the rich families is graphically depicted, the plight of small children in a permanent state of hunger is also forcefully reflected in his verses.<sup>96</sup> It seems that he regarded hunger as the most degrading of adversities and, therefore, according to him, true blessedness consists in satisfying the subsistence needs of the poor.<sup>97</sup> The Shaikh also describes the exploitation and sufferings of the weak at the hands of the strong.<sup>98</sup> He refers to rich men who owned jewels, horses and elephants.<sup>99</sup> While they enjoyed themselves by arranging musical concerts in their residences the Shaikh is, however, pained to note, that some poor persons were condemned to be cruelly treated at their gates.<sup>100</sup>

It would thus be seen that Nuru'd-Din disliked tyranny, oppression and violence caused to fellow human beings for one's own gain. True, he regarded the gap between the rich and the poor as ordained in the existing social system.<sup>101</sup> But it will not be too bold a supposition to say that in the Shaikh's philosophy the concept of justice is treated as the *sine qua non* of a stable social order. For him kindness is a norm of non-violence at the personal level of which justice is the expression at the social level. Thus, in contrast to the ascetic value-orientation of the Hindu tradition,<sup>102</sup> the Shaikh gave a humanistic and life affirming content to the concept of non-violence.

The value system of humanism, as advocated by the Shaikh, implied this-worldliness,<sup>103</sup> co-existence with men of other religions<sup>104</sup> and a deep commitment to the beatitude of human life and its artistic manifestation on earth.<sup>106</sup> He also describes the ideal virtues that man should cultivate in his personality. According to him the hallmarks of a true Muslim are virtues such as forgiveness, kindness, tolerance, mercy, generosity, compassion, patience, humility and above all the earnest desire to earn honest living. He condemns the negative norms of behaviour such as anger, jealousy, intolerance and vindictiveness.<sup>106</sup>

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have seen that Shaikh Nuru'd-Din's religious thought was based on personal experience; it was a mental introspection, making use of a very rich vocabulary not only from the Qur'an, but significantly also from the traditional sources of the Hindus. But his was not an effort at syncretism; it was in the spirit of apologetics. He accepted & tried out all words in use; he used them in such a way as to recast their definitions, but for the purpose of anchoring the Kashmiri society in the wider system of Islam. However, it remains a fact that the variety of his songs drawing inspiration from the local milieu led to the growth of syncretic ideas in the Islam of

Kashmiri people. This also explains the fact that Nuru'd-Din wielded greater influence than the saint missionaries from Central Asia & Persia who were separated from the local people by the barriers of language. The reason why Kashmir has always had weak foundations in theology may be explained in terms of popularity of mystic poetry of Nuru'd-Din among the rural masses. As a matter of fact, his popular verses and the Rishi folk literature remained in many ways the most significant medium of instruction in the values of Kashmiri society; it had deeper impact than mosques, madrasas and maktabas, where formal teaching was carried on.<sup>107</sup>

Hardly a century after the death of the Shaikh, his burial place at Chrar in Kashmir had become a great centre of pilgrimage. Although Baba Nasib<sup>108</sup> was the first to put in black and white some verses of the Shaikh in the seventeenth century, it is not unlikely that they must have been committed to memory by thousands of his disciples and within this following, indeed, his numerous compositions were preserved. Even Saiyid 'Ali,<sup>109</sup> our earliest source on Nuru'd-Din remarks :

[(His shrine) is the centre of pilgrimage for all the creatures of God and his miracles are there for everyone to see. His absorbing verses have carved a place of their own in every heart].

The reverence shown to the Shaikh in the folk literature of Kashmir attests to the profound impact of his role on the rural consciousness. In the local belief, he was a light which was created from the light of the Prophet.

Shaikh Nuru'd-Din of Kaimuh,  
His inner-self was blessed by the light of the Prophet.  
And even the Prophet will condescend to come for his funeral  
prayers.  
Such news has reached as far as Makkah and Madina.<sup>110</sup>

In one of the folk songs, even the stars in the sky are said to have derived their light from Nuru'd-Din:

Shaikh Sahib was created by God  
To light the stars in the sky.<sup>111</sup>

It goes without saying that Shaikh Nuru'd-Din played a central role within the framework of a cognitive, moral and social order. He redefined and reordered the life-world of the followers of the Rishi order, requiring of them not only devotion to God but patterns of social behaviour. True, his poetry is mystic to the core, but it also has all such attractions as we generally associate with secular verse. Even in moments of mystic ecstasy the Shaikh affirms the brilliance and radiance of life, in physical, palpable detail. This unison of numinous and the secular, ineffable and the concrete, is the outcome of his humanist vision. Although he emphasizes the transcendence of life, he is, at the same time, passionately conscious of its actuality and splendour. In fact, love of life, love of God, and love of His creatures are deep rooted in most of his verses characterised by all-embracing perspective.

### ***Notes and References***

1. The term Rishi is undoubtedly of Sanskrit provenance meaning "a singer of hymns, an inspired poet or sage". According to orthodox Hindu belief, the rishis "are inspired personages to whom these hymns were revealed, and such an expression as 'the Rishi says' is equivalent to 'so it stands in the sacred text.' Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1899), pp.226-27. In common usage among the Hindus, however, the Rishi meant "a saint or sanctified sage...an ascetic, anchorite..." Ibid., p.227.

2. A detailed discussion on the social roles of the Rishis will form a major part of my future research work: *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis* which is in progress.

3. For greater details, see Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans* (Srinagar, 2nd edition, 1974), pp.30-41.

4. It is, however, necessary to note here that the 'proselytizing' role of the Sufis has been exaggerated. See Ishaq Khan, 'The Impact of Islam on Kashmir in the Sultanate period, 1320-1586', forthcoming in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*.

5. This is not to suggest that the Bhakti movement emerged as a challenge to Islam. What needs to be emphasized is its reformative character which, in a way, aborted the process of Islamic acculturation that had set in among the low-caste Hindus as early as the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The Bhakti movement which characterised the different regions of India from thirteenth to seventeenth centuries may be conceived as an attempt at raising the social status of low-caste Hindus. Such an attempt on the part of Bhakti reformers also included the inculcation of Hindu beliefs and practices among the lower sections of society. But, contrary to this, Lal Ded's influence on the lower strata of Kashmiri Hindu society was altogether different who, as we have noted above, regarded her as a rebel against the Brahmanic creed. It must, however, be pointed out that the influence of her basic Shavite teachings including God-realisation through self-realization remained confined to mystics alone.

6. Baba Ali Raina, *Tazkiratu'l-'Arifin*, R.P.D. No. 592, ff.37b; 41a.

7. Baba Ali Raina also calls her Lal Maji (Lal the mother), *Ibid*.

8. But in a good number of manuscripts she has generally been described as '*Arifa* (gnostic).

9. Bahauddin Mattu, *Rishinama*, edited by Muhammad Asadullah Wani and Mas'ud Samu, CAP, 1982, p.73.

10. *Ibid.*, p.70. He belonged to the tribe of watchmen.

11. *Ibid.*, p.73.

12. *Ibid*.

13. It is ancient name of Pampore. Situated on the right bank of the River Jhelum, about 12 kms south-east of Srinagar, the place is famous for saffron cultivation.

14. *Kuliyat-i-Shaikh-ul-'Alam*, I, C.A.P., 1979, p.10.

15. *Kuliyat*, I, p.10.

16. In one of his verses (*Ibid.*, p.22) Nuru'd-Din longs for entry into the paradise through the intercession of the great Kubrawiyya Sufi, Saiyid 'Ali Hamadani (d.A.D.1385), popularly known in Kashmir as Shah-i-Hamadani.

17. For the Shaikh's meeting with Saiyid Muhammad Hamadani, see Saiyid 'Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*. R.P.D. No. 739, ff. 33b-34a.

18. Such stories have been rejected by Rafiqi without putting forth any sound argument (*Sufism in Kashmir*, Delhi, n.d.p. 141Sqq.)

19. Mishkati, *Asraru'l-Abrar*, R.P.D.No. 40, ff.58b-59a; Baba Nasib, *Rishinama*, No.795, f.9b; Abdul Wahhab Nuri, *Fathat-i-Kubrawiyya*, No. 50, ff.85b-86a.

20. *Kuliyat*, II, 1981, p.61.

21. *Ibid.*, p.62.

22. Nasib, *op.cit*, ff.11a-12a; Wahhab, *op.cit.*, f.86a.

23. While studying Shaikh's verses, care has to be taken particularly in regard to translating some uncommon words which have crept in the manuscripts owing to the mistake of scribes. Thus, for example, Parimoo (*op.cit.*, p.34) translates *ota* as 'reed'. However, the original word seems to have been *ouk* (one) since it is a rhyme for *mouk* (other), but wrongly translated as shuttle. Thus in these verses the Shaikh refers to the one and other tools of the weaver.

24. Nasib, *op.cit*, f.11a; Wahhab, *op.cit.*, f.86b. See also Mattu, *op.cit*.p.82Sqq.

25. Parimoo, *op.cit.*, p.144.

26. It is situated at a distance of 48 kms to the south of Srinagar.

27. Translated from Parimoo's (*op.cit.*, pp.53-54) transliteration.

28. *Ibid.*, *Kuliyat*, II, pp.63-67.

29. See *Kuliyat*, II, pp/61-67.

30. *Ibid.*, pp.26-28; 32-33.

31. *Ibid.*, p.132; Parimoo, *op.cit.*, p.92.

32. According to Pir Hasan, Dandakvan was, in olden times, a forest in the Hamal Pargana of Kamraj district in the Valley. *Tazkira-i-Auliya-i-Kashmir*, Urdu tr. by Moulvi Muhammad Ibrahim ( Srinagar, 1960), p.105.

33. *Kuliyat*,II, p.26.

34. A mountain in the rear of Safapora (a village situated on the bank of the Mansbal lake) is still called Reshivan. See Pir Hasan, op.cit., p.108; *Bruj-i-Nur*, C.A.P. 1981, p.113.

35. *Kuliyat*.,II, pp. 26-33.

36. Ibid., pp.27, 31.

37. Ibid., p.32.

38. Baba Dawud Khaki has discussed at some length the life and thought of Hardi Rishi in his *Rishinama* which is the extended form of his *Qasida-i-Lamiya*, a pangyeric on the saint in verse.

39. This question will be fully discussed in *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, supra note 1a.

40. Abhinavagupta's (933-1015) commentary on *Paratrisika*, a *tantric* text, and his composition *Tantraloka* are works of great importance for understanding Kashmiri Shaivism. "This school of philosophy recognizes seven systems of *yogic* practice which are the means to shed off ignorance and to attain the final realization of self as Siva the absolute. *Trika* system has been assigned the highest position among all these seven systems..." See B.N.Pandit, *Aspects of Kashmir Shaivism*, Srinagar, 1977, pp.24-26.

41. Nuru'd-Din and a good number of his followers lived on the wild *vopalhak* (*Dispsacus inermis*) and other herbs of the forest.

42. *Kuliyat*, I, pp. 50, 65; II, p.153.

43. *Kangri* is a portable earthenware bowl, covered with a frame of wicker work. Kashmiris put hot embers into the bowl for keeping themselves warm during the winter and the cold season. Usually *kangri* is kept under a long loose-wrapper (*pheran*) or a blanket.

44. Ibid., I, p.26.

45. Nund was the family name of Nuru'd-Din. In most of the verses the Shaikh calls himself by this name.

46. The Shaikh's tolerant attitude towards the Hindus is well-known, but, like Lal Ded, he was severe in his criticism of the Brahmans. In this verse the Brahman is described as symbolising the insatiable hunger of the dog.

47. *Kuliyat*, II, p.63.

48. *Bruj-i-Nur*, p.65.

49. J.C.Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivism*,C.A.P.

50. B.N.Parimoo, *The Ascent of the Self*, Delhi, 1978, p.XIX.

51. *Shams-ul-'Arifin*, C.A.P. 1978,p.52.

52. *Kuliyat*, I, p.74.

53. B.N.Pandit, *Aspects of Kashmir Shaivism*, Srinagar,1977,p.36.

54. *Kuliyat*, I, p.28.

55. B.N.Parimoo, *Nund Rishi*, p.90.

56. *Kuliyat*, II, pp.33-34.

57. Parimoo, op.cit., p.89.

58. *Kuliyat*,II, p.79.

59. According to Savite philosophy of Kashmir, God is formless (*Nirguna*) as well as qualified Being (*Saguna*).

60. *Shams-ul-'Arifin*, pp. 67-68.

61. Saiyid 'Ali, op.cit., p.34ab.

62. *Kuliyat*,I,p.19.

63. Farid al-Din 'Attar was the first Sufi to make mention of Uwaysi Sufis. He writes: "Know that there is a group of people who are called "Uwaysi". They stand in no need of *pir* (spiritual guide) for they are looked after in the bosom of the Prophethood (*nubuuwat*), i.e., they obtain spiritual knowledge directly from the Prophet without any intermediary, in the same way as Uways had done. Although he had not seen the Master of the Prophets, he was taught by him, and the Prophethood looked after him, and in fact he was his companion. This is the most exalted status one could hope to acquire". *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya*, Tehran, A.H.S. 1336, p.27 (quoted in the *Muslim World*, Vol. LVII, April 67, No.2,p.109n.).

It is important to note here that Sufis like Abu Nasr Saraj (d.378/988), followers of Khawaja Bahau'd-Din Naqshband (d.791/1388) and some others used Uways' name in describing their own position and point of view. It is true that no critical study regarding the historicity of Uways has yet been made, but the very

existence of Sufis connecting their spiritual links with him in a plethora of mystic literature furnishes an additional significant data to scholars for understanding a much more, yet, profound Sufi dimension of Islam. A historical-critical study of Uways may doubt the historicity of his person, but in so doing it will merely limit our understanding of the deeper perceptions of such Sufis as considered themselves to be directly guided by the spirit of Prophet Muhammad.

64. Khaki, *Rishinama*, MS. in possession of Pir Ghulam Muhammad Khaki, Naibasti, Islamabad, Kashmir, ff.41b-42a.

65. See 'The Impact of Islam on Kashmir in the Sultanate period', op.cit.

66. Even Saiyid 'Ali Hamadani did not lose sight of Kashmiri peoples' penchant for chanting religious hymns in chorus. Thus he allowed the converts to recite *Awrad-i-Fathiyya*, an invocatory prayer in chorus - a tradition which still exists in the shrines and mosques of the Valley despite the criticism of the Ahl-i-*Hadis*.

67. *Kuliyat*, I, pp.117-20.

68. Parimoo, op.cit., p.240.

69. Whenever a traditional Kashmiri mother wants to bless her child she is often heard saying: "May you live long like Rum Rishi! And, indeed, there has always existed a strong belief in folk consciousness that Rum Rishi lived for 322 years. It is pointless to argue whether Rum Rishi had such a long span of life, for certainly he did not have it; but the folk belief in Rum Rishi's existence is important for a student of social history. At least, the potent belief in his one-time existence points to the permanence of the Rishi tradition; hence worthy of notice and examination.

70. 'The impact of Islam on Kashmir', op.cit.

71. *Kuliyat*, I, p.76.

72. *Ibid.*, p.116.

73. *Ibid.*, p.100.

74. *Ibid.*, 11, p.14.

75. Asad Ullah Afaqi, *Ain-i-Haqq*, Srinagar, p.167.

76. *Ibid.*, p.218.

77. *Kuliyat*, II, p.13. Parimoo's rendition of the second verse: "For Thy sake my pride I gave up" op.cit., p.118, besides being literally wrong, is also not in consonance with the main spirit as well as the structure of the stanza.

78. *Kuliyat*, II, p.11.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

80. Parimoo, op.cit., pp.154-55.

81. Saiyid 'Ali, op.cit., f.32ab; Nasib, op.cit., f.98 Sq; Mishkati, op.cit., f. 70ab; Abdul Wahhab, op.cit., ff.92b-94b; Muhammad Azam Diddamari, *Tarikh-i-Azmi*, No. 1843, RPD, ff. 24ab.

82. See *Kuliyat*, II, 82-85; 92-93; also II, pp.111,118,120.

83. *Ibid.*, II, p.93; also 82-85.

84. Translated from Parimoo's (op.cit., pp.101-02) transliteration.

85. *Kuliyat*, I, p.33.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

87. Mishkati, op.cit., f.236ab.

88. Biru is a village lying to the South-West of Srinagar.

89. Parimoo, op.cit., p.275.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 276.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-77.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-79.

93. *Kuliyat*, II, p.93.

94. Parimoo, op.cit., 271-72; 275.

95. *Ibid.*, pp.162-67; 227; also *Kuliyat*, II, p.83.

96. *Kuliyat*, II, p.96; Parimoo, op.cit., p.227.

97. Parimoo, op.cit., p.220, also p.178.

98. *Kuliyat*, II, p.95.

99. Parimoo, op.cit., p.147; also *Kuliyat*, II, p.100.

100. *Kuliyat*, II, pp.95-96.

101. See *Ibid.*, pp.94-103.

102. See, for example, the term Rishi as defined in Monier Williams, op.cit., pp. 226-27.

103. *Kuliyat*, I, pp. 16, 26, 33, 50, 54, 56, II, pp. 51-57.

104. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 14, 24, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35-40.

105. *Ibid.*, I, p. 78, 117-20, II, pp. 51-57; also Parimoo, *op.cit.*, pp. 169 Sqq.

106. *Kuliyat*, II, pp. 82-85.

107. During the Sultanate period in Kashmir (1320-1586) the educational system in Kashmir was geared to *madrasas* and *maktabs* attached to the mosques. The *khanqahs*, too, played a useful role in the dissemination of religious knowledge, though with an obvious thrust on intuitive learning. While in course of time the *khanqahs* turned into centres of charlatanism, *madrasas* and *maktabs*, too, ceased to play any useful role, probably owing to lack of patronage consequent to the misrule and oppression characterizing greater period of Kashmir history after the Mughal occupation of the Valley in 1586. The extent to which religious learning had declined in Kashmir may be gauged from the fact that in 1872 not even a single student was found studying Arabic in the leading *madrasas* of Srinagar. See Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar: A Study in Social-Cultural Change*, 1978, Srinagar; p.44.

108. See Baba Nasib, *op.cit.*

109. Saiyid 'Ali, *op.cit.*, f.33b.

110. Baba Nasib, *op.cit.*, f.5b.

111. *Rishiyat*, C.A.P. 1978; p.185.

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