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Mystic Poetic Tradition of Kashmir: A Study

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Mystic Poetic Tradition of Kashmir: A Study

Sabreen Javid

Abstract- **Kashmir is immensely bestowed with exotic beauty and grandeur. It has lush green forests, mesmeric rivulets, mountains and attractive flower laden gardens that truly depict a heavenly ambience. Moreover, this region has been blessed with the mystic and spiritual personalities who represent the literary and cultural ethos of Kashmir that has been acknowledged in academic and literary world. There are many saints, sages and seers who visited Kashmir from Central Asia and few were the natives of Kashmir as well who spent their lives in disseminating their message of spirituality and their love for the Absolute Being. The paper highlights the poetic and mystical backdrop of various poets till Shaikh-ul Aalam. The study is important as it will pave way to demonstrate the Kashmiri poetic tradition to the international audience.**

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I. Introduction

The language spoken by Kashmiri people is called *Kashur* by its speakers and major dialects are *Marazi, Pogli, Kishtwari* and *Kamrazi*. Every country has its own culture, literature, language but what keeps the language alive is through the acceptance of words from other languages and Kashmir is one such place which has been highly influenced by the languages of other places especially from Sanskrit and Persian.[1] Further it is important to mention that the Kashmiri language had no script of its own, rather it happened to be Sharada, a branch of Brahmin script used for Sanskrit from Kashmir to Kabul upto mid 14th century. Sharada was replaced by Devanagari for Sanskrit, but in Kashmiri Sanskrit itself got replaced by Persian as an official language in 15th century and Muslim poets used the new script.[2] In the light of the above it can be concluded that Kashmiri language has gradually emerged and had the deep-rooted affiliations with other languages which is itself felt in the later Sufi poets of Kashmir. Before we have a peep into the poetic tradition of Kashmir it is important to have the glimpse of the past Sanskrit tradition that formed the main basis of our literary past and thereby making Kashmir a place for highest seat of learning. P. N. Pushp while highlighting the contribution of Kashmir in poetics says:

> More than ninety percent of what we know today in Indian poetics has been the valuable contribution of Kashmir. For about six centuries (vii-xii) it had remained the homeland of almost all the bold speculations and cool-headed theorizing about the form and content, spirit and significance as well as the appeal and aesthetic judgment of poetry. Infact out of the dozen most outstanding names in history of this branch of Indian learning no less than fifteen positively hail from Kashmir.[3]

It can be said that major works on the poetics has been done from the Kashmir itself and Kashmir has always remained in forefront in its contribution to Indian aesthetics. There were several schools of thought that emerged in Kashmir and in this context Toshkhani says:

> One cannot but be overwhelmed by the fact that almost all the major schools of Indian aesthetics were founded by Kashmiri theoriticians -the Alankara School by Bhamaha, Riti School by Vamana, Vakrokti School by Kuntaka, Dhvani School by Anandavardhana and Auchitya School by Kshemendra.[4]

Kalhana's Rajtarangini speaks of numerous poets who flourished long before and who thought and wrote with ability on different branches of literature. The poets that Kalhana mentions in his Rajtarangini are Anand Vardana, Bilhana, Bharatmetha, Bharatmuni, Kshemendra, Ratana Sankhadhimat and Sanukhasakhadarta. However, the greatest contribution to Indian aesthetics was given by Anandvardana, Abinavgupt and Mammata. These poets had a deep insight over the Indian poetics and gave theories about the poetical aesthetics. Anandvardana's Dhanyaloka (the theory of illumination) is based on Dhavani or suggested sense of poetry. About the theory of Dhanyaloka P. N. Pushp states that:

> The theory, no doubt, seeks a unity in diversity so that the emotions expressed are harmonized with the dominant emotions suggested; and, accordingly, all other equipment of literary excellence, idiom or diction is significant only in the context of collaborating with the power of suggestion in the aesthetic endeavour of awakening the dominant mood.[5]

Anandvardana's theory is based on the power of suggestion that argues that Dhavani alone is the soul of poetry. Then we have the famous poet-philosopher Abinavgupt who was the genius and above all well versed with *Natya Shastra* and the *Dhvanya loka.* He analysed in the *Lochana* that for *Anandvardana Dhavani* was an important aspect of the poetry and not only that

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[1] Sufi, G.M.D. *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir* Vol-1, Ali Mohammad and Sons: Budshah Hotel Lal Chowk Srinagar, 2008, p. 8.

[2] Raina, Trikolnath. *History of Kahmiri Literature*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2005, p. 385.

[3] Pushp, P. N. "Kashmir's contribution to Indian Poetics." *J&K University Review*: Nov 1958, p.1.

[4] Toshkhani, S.S. "Kashmir's contribution to Indian Aesthetics." *Kashmir Herald* Vol-3, August 2003. www.kashmirherald.com/featured article/aesthetics1.html.

[5] Pusph, P.N. "Kashmir's contribution to Indian Aesthetics." *J&K University Review*, Nov. 1958, p.7.

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he laid emphasis on the new theory called as *Rasa.* Again in this context Pushp states:

> Anand vardana theory of '*Rasa'* is revealed by a special power assumed by words in poetry and drama, power of revelation to be distinguished from the power of denotation, consisting of and animated by the action of generalizing the determinants etc. This power has the faculty of suppressing the stick peel of mental stupor which cloaks one's own consciousness… *Rasa* revealed by this power is then enjoyed with a kind of enjoyment different from direct experience, memory etc.. This enjoyment is of same order as the tasting of supreme *Brama*..[6]

Thus *Rasa* became a powerful element along with the *Dhavani* in framing a new picture of poetics. Later on another poet Mammata though did not directly mentioned *Rasa* and *Dhavani* theories but rather defended them in his book *Kayvaprakasha* a unique book on Indian poetics in every aspect, this book gave a sort of pattern to the poetry and has attracted almost seventy commentators all over the country, the book on whole will help us to know the influence it had laid on the later poetry. Prof. Majruh Rashid in his article on *Kavya Prakash*: *Akh Tabsure* writes:

> ممٹ سُند کاویہِ پرکاش چھُ ہندوستأنی شعریاتس اکھ اہم
> دیُت تہٕ یہ ہیٚکہ از تہِ اَسہ خاص کٔرِتھ لل واکھ شیخہٕ شُرکی تہٕ
> وژن شأعری ہنٛز قدر شاہاسی کرنس منٛز مددگار یاءٕت سپدِتھ
> ہرگاہ کأ شرٛن نقادن اور کُن کَل گَنہِ ۔

> *…..Mammat sund Kavyaprakash chchu Hindustani shairiyatas akh aham duet te ye heaki az te ase khaas karith Lale Vaakh, Shaikhe Shruke te vatchun shairi hinz qader shinasi karnas manz madadgaar saebit sabdith har gah Kaeshrean naqaadan our kun kal ganne….*[7]

> (Mammatas Kavya Prakasha is an important contribution to the Indian poetics, infact it is a useful book that will help us to know and understand the poetry of Lal and Shaikh in the proper context).

By the above statement it can be said that the influence of the Sanskrit poetics was creative and critical on the Kashmiri poetics. Also one of the famous Sanskrit scholar Prof. S. S. Toshkhani in his article titled as "Beginnings of Kashmiri language and literature'' writes about the major influence on the poetic tradition:

> "It needs to be noted that pre- modern Kashmir was centuries a part of the Sanskrit metropolis", to use the words of Sheldon Pollock, and the space occupied by it was so significant that it was able to determine the intellectual and the cultural climate in the whole country by contributing in fields as varied as literary expressions, theory of language, philosophy, aesthetics, grammar, logic, historiography, theology and so on.[8]

From the above statement it is educed that Sanskrit tradition had a long lasting effect not only on the poetics but also on overall cultural climate of Kashmir. Now coming to the beginnings of the Kashmiri poetic tradition, a brief account of the folk tradition is as under:

> A Kashmiri muses when his herd winds over the verdurous lea. He sings to dance when he takes his sheep to the pastures. He describes the boat he piles in the water of Vitasta or Jhelum, which he calls river of love. He entertains himself with the 'song of love'. He entertains himself with opera songs. He is enchanted by the natural beauty of environments and grows romantic to sing to his love. He sings even when carrying the load. The maid sings even when she washes clothes or cleanses utensils and grinds corn. As a matter of fact, Kashmiri women unlettered mostly, have 'relieved the tedium of their life. 'By finding in these songs 'a sincere echo of emotion.' The Kashmiri sings in chorus on matrimonial occasions. His lull by notes lulls the child in cradle. He elegizes, at their death those near and dear to him. He is, besides mystical.[9]

From the above lines it is evident that Kashmir has had a rich folk tradition which included all the songs pertaining to the day to day activities of the common people. The roots of Kashmiri language and literature begun from:

II. Chumma Sampradya

Within the heyday of Sanskrit tradition Kashmiri language was gradually gaining grounds, though very less information is available to us in the form of written records but one comes across the works such as "*Chumma Samprâdaya*" or "*Shangra Shelok*", an earliest specimen of the Kashmiri language. Although this work is not poetic but it amply explains esoteric Tantric sects of those times. These verses were highly sanskritised and were accepted by the Hindu, Tantric and Buddhist priests and those who were the priests of Shaivism and only their disciples understood the language of chummpads. In this context, S. S. Toshkhani writes:

> The '*Chumma Sampradâya*' is an unpublished text though an exercise for publishing it was started by the Research and Publication Department of Jammu & Kashmir in the sixties of the last century and was aborted later for reasons not known. It seeks to expound the tenets of an esoteric Tantric sect aligned to the Karma school and can be assigned to the 11th century. It is a text not entirely written in Kashmiri but has only thirty odd verses in that language, which complements the seventy-four verses written in Sanskrit. But though mediated by Sanskrit and not exactly literary in content, these verses announce the inauguration

[6] Ibid, pp. 8-9.

[7] Rashid, Majruh. "Kavyaprakash Akh Tabsure" Tankeed Nazar Te Nazarye. *Anhaar.* Kashmiri Department Jild 33, Vol-1 2009, p.139.

[8] Toshkhani, S.S. "Beginnings of Kashmir language and literature." *Dialogue July-Sep*, 2008, Vol-10. file:///D:/Beginnings%20of.html

[9] Sufi, G.M.D. *Kashir: Being a history of Kashmir, Vol-1*, Ali Mohammad and Sons, Budshah Hotel Lal Chowk Srinagar, 2008, pp. 402-403.

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of a departure that was to be of great significance in the literary history of the Kashmiri language.[10]

Some of the verses are:

Bhâva svabhavç saba avinashî
Svapna sabhavana vi upanna /
Te aj niravidhi agama prakâshî
Idassa dishti kâla vipachhanna //[11]
Vigalani shunñya âshunñya svarûpç
Vividha padârthu sâthu kavalçt /
Âshayu chitti sadâ nîrûpâ
Vicchî vijjû virtha praghatçt //[12]

The specimen of the *Chummpad* in Devanagari are as:

6. परतरमनिकेतं तत्त्वमार्गस्थितं ते
निरुपमपदचुम्मासंप्रदायं समन्तात् ।
स्वरसवशतयाहं त्वत्कृपाघ्रातचित्तः
प्रकटतरवचोभिर्दर्शयाम्याशु नूनम् ॥

C.S.(MS)., folio. 1.

Cf. चुम्बकाः संप्रवक्ष्यामि कुलाम्नाये यथास्थिताः ।
अतीतं प्रथमस्यापि द्वितीयस्य तु कुण्डली ॥
भ्रूमध्ये वै तृतीयस्य संघट्टश्च चतुर्थके ।
नाभिस्तु पञ्चमस्यैव जन्माधारस्तु षष्ठके ॥

Quoted from the *Kula-Kridavatara*, *T.A.V.*, XI, pp. 228-29.

III. Mahanaya Prakasha

Shiti Kantha's *Mahanaya Prakasha* is the earliest recorded form of Kashmiri language. Shiti Kantha belonged to Pampur district and lived and wrote in 13th C, there are no evidences about the birth and death of Shiti Kantha. The book is preserved in Bandarkar Institute Pune and its manuscript has not been modified and changed. This book was published by Mukund Ram Shastri for J&K Research Library. Due to very little information about the book there was confusion about the authorship of 'Baalbodni Nayasuk', which Grierson has claimed to be written by Shiti Kantha. Grierson while mentioning about the language of Mahanaya Prakasha writes:

The work consists about 94 verses in old Kashmiri, not easy to understand. The language is old, belonging to the period when Prakrit, in the Apabharmsa stage, had just merged into the language that finally became Kashmiri of the present day. On enquiry, I have obtained the following information from Nityanand Shastri. Shitikantha was the author of Bala-Bodhni-nyasa, a vyakhya on the Bala-Bodhini of his ancestor Kavindra Jagaddhara. In the introduction of this vyakhya, Shitikantha states that he wrote it during the reign of Hassan Shah, the son of Haider Shah'. This opinion has had to be revised in the view of the fact that Shitikantha, the author of Bala-Bohdhini, has been found not to be the Shitikantha who wrote Mahanaya Prakasha. The manuscript, Shitikantha Vamshavali, gives the genealogy of the author of Bal-badhini as prepared by himself; and gives the name of another Shitikantha, an ancestor, four generations earlier. He does not, however, mention ancestor wrote Mahanaya Prakasha, probably because he gives names of Sanskrit works, not Kashmiri. Moreover, the internal evidence of it

[10] Toshkhani, S.S. "Beginnings of Kashmir Language and Literature." *Dialogue, July-Sep* 2008, Vol-10. file:///D:/Beginnings%20of.html
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

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has persuaded the Kashmiri scholars to place Mahanaya Prakasha as an earlier work.[13]

From the above quote we can infer that Grierson has placed him in 15th C, but Shiti kant's guru lived during 12th C and it was also found that Shitikantha was born 150 years before grammarian of same name. Also the text and context does not belong to the 15th C as Kashmiri language had fully emerged at that time. So it was concluded that Shiti kant belonged to 13th C. Further, the importance of Mahanaya Prakasha lies in the fact that it is the oldest evidence of the Kashmiri written in 13th C. The book was based on, '*sarvogenic desha basha*'. About the internal content of the Mahanaya Prakasha, S. S. Toshkhani writes:

> Mahanaya Prakasha (illumination of great system or system of great meaning) is a work of karma (gradation) school which is akin to kula (familial) school and is based on shaktopaya or the energic way. It deals with goddess, the wheel of energies and ritual sex and emphasis that great meaning or the absolute sense expresses itself through four forms of speech; para (transcendent and undifferentiated), pashyanti (visioning), mardhyama (interjacent) aikhari (displayed) word. Obviously all this terminology and esoteric practices of jnaansiddhi, mantrasiddhi and melapsiddhi associated with the propitiation of deities like vameshi, khecharri, bhuchari, sambaebhakshini and rudreshwari cannot by any stretch of imagination be taken to be poetry.[14]

So this book is prosaic in nature than being poetic in content and further the text is written in very tough language.

Avtar Krishan Rahber while analyzing the Grierson's comments on Mahanaya Prakasha states:

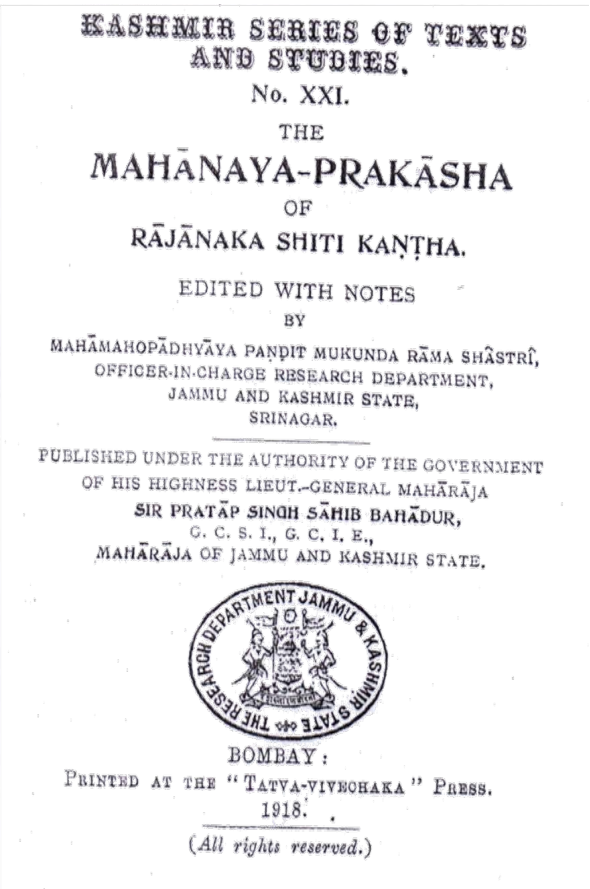
1. It was time when Kashmiri language was at the stage when *Upranaya* was gaining status.
2. He acclaims him a great scholar.
3. He was well versed with Shiviate Philosophy.
4. He did not think in Kashmiri but thought in Sanskrit.
5. The book consists of 2 types of vocabulary one of Upranyana era and second of Sanskrit era.[15]

The text of the Mahanaya Prakasha consists of 4 lines quatrain which are:

Yasu yasu jantus samvid yasu yasu
Nîla pîta sukha dukha sarûp /
Udayisdatta samâñî samarasa
Kamakampan tas tas anurûp /[16]
Devat akka kishî paru râji
Jaga ghasmaru bhairu bhakshçt /
Nant shatta gâska nçrâji
Shamavâñî âshaya takshet [17]
Itay ovapleen parampara deepmala
Zan anhaar
Danit daam udayet niranlar dishi
Shapaya vatu avikaar. [18]

While analyzing the vaakh of Shitikantha Prof. Jaylal Kaul remarks about the above verse:

> Most words are Sanskritic but we find here a Persian word also used, the word o: valli: n, which is as same as Awliya (saints).[19]



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THE

MAHĀNAYA-PRAKĀSHA

OF

RĀJĀNAKA SHITI KAṆṬHA.

EDITED WITH NOTES

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[13] Kaul, Jaylal. *Lal Ded*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 59-60.

[14] Toshkhani, S.S. "Beginnings of Kashmir Language and Literature." *Dialogue, July-Sep* 2008, Vol-10. file:///D:/Beginnings%20of.htm

[15] Rehber, Avtar Kishan. *Kashiri Adbuch Tawareekh, published by the author, 1965, p.139.*

[16] Toshkhani, S.S. "Beginnings of Kashmir Language and Literature." *Dialogue, July-Sep* 2008, Vol-10. file:///D:/Beginnings%20of.html

[17] Ibid.

[18] Kaul, Jaylal. *Kashmiri Literature (three special lectures*), Prasaranga University of Mysore, 1970, p.8.

[19] Ibid.

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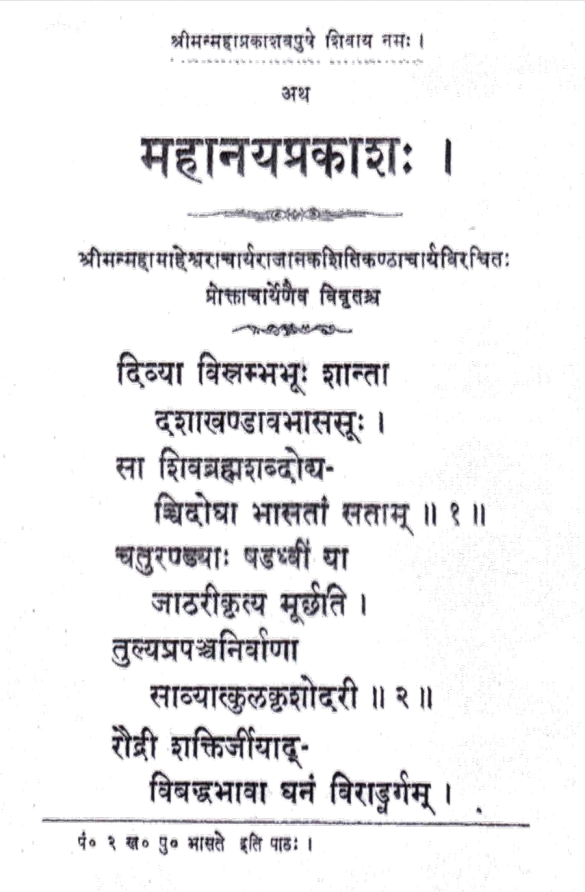

श्रीमन्महाप्रकाशवपुषे शिवाय नमः ।

अथ

महानयप्रकाशः ।

श्रीमन्महामाहेश्वराचार्यराजानकशिपिकण्ठाचार्यविरचितः
प्रोक्ताचार्येणैव विवृतश्च

दिव्या विस्रम्भभूः शान्ता
दशाखण्डावभासमूः ।
सा शिवब्रह्मशब्दोद्य-
च्छिदोघा भासतां सताम् ॥ १ ॥
चतुरण्ड्याः षडध्वीं या
जाठरीकृत्य मूर्छति ।
तुल्यप्रपञ्चनिर्वाणा
साव्याकुलकुशोदरी ॥ २ ॥
रौद्री शक्तिर्जीयाद्-
विबद्धभावा घनं विराड्वर्गम् ।

पं० २ ख० पु० भासते इति पाठः ।

IV. Lal Dyad

The dawn of Kashmiri poetry begins with the famous mystic poetess of Kashmir Lal Dyad. She was attributed with many names *Lal Arifah, Lal Muaj, Rabai Thani, Mariam-ul Makani, Lal Granny* and *Majnuni Aqila*. She is the first medieval mystic poetess who through her mystic verse gave a new life to the Kashmiri language. She is counted among the greatest poets that Kashmir has ever produced and has left an indelible impact on the poetic tradition. Earliest Sanskrit chronicles are silent about Lal Dyad, however, her earliest mention is given in hagiographic document by Baba Davud Mishkati in *Asrar-ul Abrar* (the secrets of pious) written in A.D. 1634.[20]

Abdul Wahab Shayak, who wrote chronicle of Kashmiri in Persian verse, gives 735 A.H./A.D. 1334-35 as the date of Lal Dyad's birth in a verse:

فـزون بـوُد بـر هـفـت صـد، سی وپنج
ز ویـــر انُـــے شُـــد بـــدیـــدار گـــنـــج

Fazun bud bar haft sanj siva panj.
Za wair une shud bedidar gahnaj[21]

Greirson calls her a 'wandering ascetic', since Lal Dyad was spiritual heir of Shaikh Nur ud Din Nurani who paid glowing tributes to her in the following verses:

That Lalla of Padmanpur - she drank
Her fill of divine nectar
She was indeed an *Avtar* of ours.
O God, grant me the same boon![22]

Nineteenth century Kashmiri poet Shams Faqir mentions about her:

Lalla merged her *Prana* in the transcendent;
For while she went ostensibly to bathe
At the sacred shrine of Shurayar ghat,
With a leap and bound she jumped across
To where there is none other than God.[23]

Lal Dyad's poetry shows distinct characteristic of modern Kashmir and one can identify the linguistic transition from pre-modern to modern Kashmiri, her verses have been translated by Baskher Razdan in 18th century. Moreover, she used aphorisms that testify her keen insight of wisdom and judgment she was gifted with. She rendered her verses in the form of *Vaakhs*. The Vaakh in the words of Jaylal Kaul can be defined as:

> The Vaakh is mostly four lines stanza, complete and independent in itself, sententious gnomic verse. The sense seldom, if ever runs on to another *Vaakh* as it does in one instance. There are, however, several *Vaakh* that have common refrain, and few are put in the form of question and answers all these have close connection with each other. Each line of *Vaakh* completes the sense, it does not overflow into the line that follows; and therefore it has both compactness and pointedness, giving it the edge of proverb.[24]

From the above statement it can be comprehended that *Vaakhs* were four lined stanzas and some of them were in question answer form and moreover, these *Vaakhs* had the compact and the terse texture. These *Vaakhs* resented the mystical and spiritual stature of the poetess and reflects the inner conflict in order to have union with the One Being. Some of the mystical gleanings of *Vaakh* are:

Asthen ay te gatchun gatche
Pakun gatshe den kiho rath.
Yorai ay ta turi gatshun gatshe;
Kenh na-ta kenh na-ta kenth na-ta kyah?
We have been coming into existence continuously,
and we cannot escape death;
It is inevitable to move on this path night and day.
We ought to go back to the place wherefrom we came.
There must be something in this;
otherwise what is (all-this)[25]

[20] Kual, J. L. *Lal Ded,* Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1975, p. 2.
[21] Ibid., p. 4.
[22] Ibid., p. 88.
[23] Ibid., p. 89.
[24] Ibid., p. 66.
[25] Parimoo, B. N. *Ascent of Self*, Motilal Banarsidas: Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi. 1987, p. 162.

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These verses show that Lalla was highly influenced by the sufistic trend where she expresses her wish for eternal being thereby showing the transitory nature of this life, even about the sufistic trend of Lal Dyad, R. C. Temple remarks:

> Lalla, in her verses, sometimes seems to have been under the influence of Sufi doctrine, for she uses words with a plane and an esoteric meaning throughout them, according to deliberate habit of Sufis[26]

Damah dam kormas damanhale
Prazalyom daph ta naneyem zath
Andarium prakash nebar tshotum
Gati rotum ta karmas thaph.

For a moment I suppressed bellows of my respiration,
Lo and behold! The lamp lit up brightly and realized myself!
The light within me sparkled out;
In the encompassing darkness,
I seized at it (the bright gem of
self) and gripped it tightly.[27]

Again we have the quatrain:

Dihchi lari dari-bar troprim,
Prana-tsur rotum ta dyutmas dam;
Hradayichi kuthari andar gandum.
Omaki cobuka tulimas bam.

Closing fast the windows and doors of the house of my body,
I caught hold of the thief, prana and barred him in;
Tying him hand and foot inside the closet of my heart
I lashed him hard with the whip of Om.[28]

Lal boh tsayas savaman bagabaras,
Vuchum Shivas shakt milth ta vah!
Tati lai karmas amritsaras
Zindai maras ta me kari kyah.

I, Lalla willingly entered through the garden gate,
There, O joy! I found Shiva united with shakhti;
there and then I got absorbed drinking at the lake of nectars
Immune to harm am I, dead as I am to the world, though[29]

From the above verses it can be inferred that Lal Dyad had a distinct style of writing poetry, and infact, it seems that these verses highlighted both the mystical doctrine as well as her great command over the poetical aesthetics which was the legacy of the past Sanskrit tradition. Also we find that these verses are heavily loaded with alliteration, metaphors, lyricism and above all they have defined poetic diction. About Lal Dyad's mystic power, Abdul Ahad Azad remarks:

کشمیری زبان نے لل عارفہ کے بعد آج تک کتنے سلیم الذہن ادیب پیدا کیے۔ وہ صاحبِ حال صوفی اور گیانی اور علم و فضل کے مالک تھے لیکن لل عارفہ کا لُطفِ سُخن اور قبولِ خاطر کسی کو نصیب نہ ہوا۔

Kashmiri zaban ne Lal Arifah ke baad aaj tak kitne saleem u zehan adeeb payda kiye. Woh sahibe haal sufi aur gyani aur ilm o fazl ke malik the lekin Lal Arifah ka lutfe sukhan aur qabul e khater kisi ko nasib na huwa.

Kashmir has produced lot of mystic poets and scholars, they were highly knowledgeable but none was able to produce a poetic and artistic quality like Lalla, furthur she carries distinct status in keeping the tradition of Kashmiri poetry alive that inspires the poets not only of his times but of the contemporary times as well.[30]

Thus the Lal Dyad's poetry was a significant landmark in the poetic tradition of Kashmir.

V. Shaikh-Ul Aalam

کلامی موزون بزبانِ کشمیر در بیانِ مواعظ و حکم و کشفِ حقائق نیکو دارد

Kaalami mozoon bazabani Kashmir darbayaan mawaiz wa hikum wa kashfe haqayik naiko darad.[31]

These lines were said by Allama Baba Davud Khakhi 400 years back which state that his poetry was the first written theology of Kashmiri language possessing great literary beauty and power of impact. The saint of extraordinary stature Shaikh Nur-ud Din is commonly known as *Nunde Resh*. He is the young contemporary of Lal Dyad and is one of the most outstanding mystic poets of Kashmir who not only kept the culture and literature alive by rendering his verses in his mother tongue but also kept the ethos and heritage of Kashmir alive. Although he kept the tradition alive by acting as a backbone to survival of the Kashmiri language but unfortunately very little is known about him to the outside audiences. Therefore his aesthetic appeal still needs to be internationally acclaimed. Professor Hamidi Kashmiri writes:

[26] Temple, R. C. *The Word of Lalla*, Gulshan Books: Residency Road Srinagar, 2005, p. 216.
[27] Parimoo, B. N. *Ascent of Self*, Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi, 1987, p. 162.
[28] Ibid., p. 74.
[29] Ibid., p. 103.
[30] Azad, Abdul Ahad. *Kashmiri Zaban aur Shayri Vol-2*, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 2005, p. 159.
[31] Bukhari, Farooq Muhammad Syed. *Kashmir main Islam Manzar aur Pas e Manzar*, Maktaba Adab, Red Cross Road, Srinagar, 1998, p. 170.

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شیخ العالم کے جمالیاتی شعور کی پختگی اور رچاوان کی حسیاتی پیکر تراشی کے خوبصورت نمونوں سے بھی مترشح ہوتا ہے۔ ان کے یہاں ایسے پیکر کثرت سے ملتے ہیں جو ان کی بصری، سمعی، شامی اور لمسی حسیات کی نزاکت کا احساس دلاتے اور قاری کی حسیات کو بھی متاثر کرتے ہیں۔

Shaikh-ul Aalam kay jamaleyati shaoor ki pukhtagi aur rachaven ki hasyati peker tarashi ke khubsurat namunu se bi mutarish hota hai. Un key yahaan aise peker kasrat se milte hain jo un ki basri, samaei, shami aur lamsi hisiyaat ki nazakat ka ehsaas dilate hai aur qari ki hisiyaat ko bi mut karte hain.[32]

In the poetry of Shaikh-ul Aalam one finds almost ev poetical quality which a poet should possess, One w reads his poetry is significantly influenced by the aesthi aspect of his poetry.

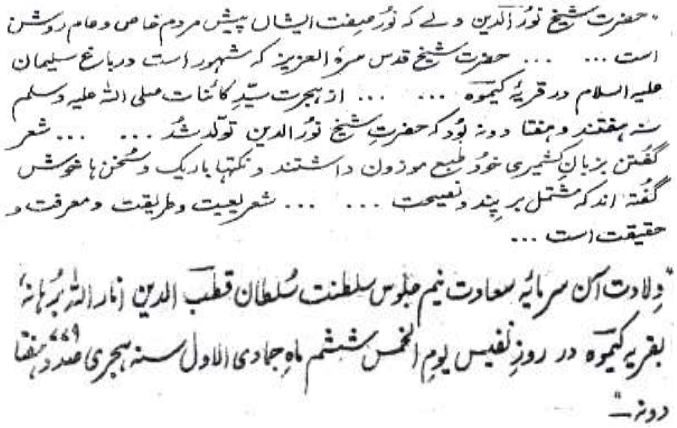
Shaikh Nur-ud Din was the founder saint Reshi order. Abul Fuqara Baba Nasib-ud Din G speaks about Rishis:

رو شنائی شمع دین از ریشان است
رہ نمائی رہ یقن از ریشاں است
دل نوازی مردم اھلِ نیاز
از صفائی باطنی دل از ریشاں است
خوش سرائی خلد ایں کشمیررا
خوش رواج از دولت ایں ریشان است
نور افشاں چون ارم از ہر طرف
گوشہ ہر آستان ریشاں است

Roshnai shamae Deen az Rishiyaan ast
Rahnumai rahe yakeen az Rishiyaan ast
Dil nawazi murdame ahle niyaz
Az safai batini dil az Rishiyaan ast
Khush sarayee khilde een Kashmir raa
Khush rawaaj az dawlate een Rishiyaan ast
Nuri afshaan chu iram az har taraf
Goshaye har astaan az Rishiyaan ast

The candle of religion is lit by Rishis
They are the pioneers of the path of belief
The heartwarming quality of the humble souls
Emanates from the inner purity of the hearts of Rishis
The vale of Kashmir that you call paradise:
Owes a lot of its charm to the traditions set in vogue by Rishis.[33]

Regarding his birth dates there is a sort of disagreement. Rehber in *Kashiri Adbech Tawareekh* mentions that Rajtarangini and Jaina Rajtarangini are silent about his existence.[34] But later Baba Naseeb ud Din Gazi and Baba Khalil[35] have respectively given Shaikh-ul Aalam's biographical details as:



Shaikh Nur ud Din's father was Salar Sanz and mother's name was Sadra Mouj. He gives his family background as:

Sanzay chum mol te sanzay mouje
Tavay rudus sanzay haav
Deka lekit phyroh pyom syoduy
Tatiy boh nund ta yeti draam naav
Sanz is my father and Sanz my mother too,
Very much of a Sanz am I, therefore:
The right way was it ordained for me:
Beautiful was I there, and here they named me so[36]

Being an exponent of Rishi cult, he lived a very ascetic life. Allama Khaki says about Rishis way of living as:

[32] Kashmiri, Hamidi. *Shaikh-ul Aalam ki Hayat aur Shairi*, Shaikh Mohammad Usman: Gaw Kadal Srinagar, 1997, p.108.

[33] Khan, Ishaq. *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, Gulshan Books, Residency Road Srinagar, 2005, p. 42.

[34] Rehber, Kishan Avtar. *Kaeshri Adbech Tawareekh*; published by Author, 1965, p. 166.

[35] Ibid, p. 166.

[36] Parimoo, B. N. *Nund Reshi Unity in Diversity*, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 2007, p. 7.

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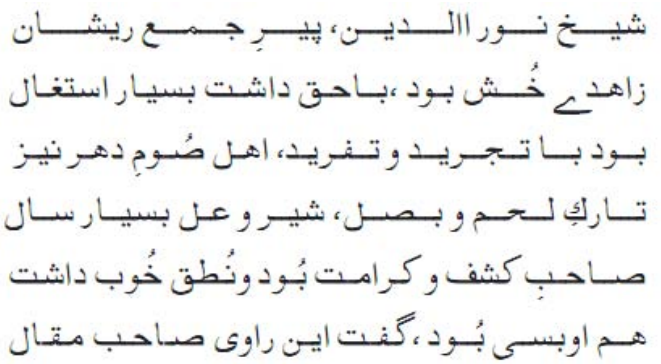
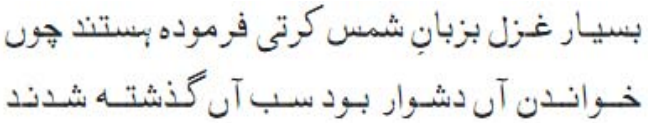

شیخ نور االدین، پیرِ جمع ریشان
زاهدے خُش بود ،باحق داشت بسیار استغال
بود با تجرید و تفرید، اهل صُومِ دهر نیز
تارکِ لحم و بصل، شیر و عل بسیار سال
صاحبِ کشف و کرامت بُود ونُطق خُوب داشت
هم اوبسی بُود ،گفت این راوی صاحب مقال

Shaikh Nur-ud Din, the preceptor of all Rishis, was a great devotee and had a deep communion with God.

In addition to leading a retired and solitary life, he was also one of those who continually fast. He had given up eating flesh, milk, onions and honey for many years.

He was a man with intuition, had spiritual powers and had fine mode of speech, he was like Uwais (in that he had no known, spiritual guide), as an eloquent narrator he stated.[37]

Being a religious preacher, his poetry was didactic and exhortative in tone. But in spite of that one finds number of *Shruks* where the aesthetical sense has been fully exploited thereby dipecting the poetic charm which his *Shruks* were loaded with and also the influence of past aesthetics tradition of Sanskrit. Moreover, he rendered his verses in the form of *Shruk.* Some of the *shruks* are four - lined while some are long poems which can be fitted in the genre of Vatchun. Rehber and Azad give the evidence of the work of Shaikh in Sanskrit proving it deep -rooted tradition of past and his Sanskrit words in the *Shruk*. Azad gives the account of Reshnama as:[38]


بسیار غزل بزبانِ شمس کرتی فرموده ہستند چوں
خواندن آں دشوار بود سب آں گذشته شدند

Some of the poetic verses of Shaikh are:

Araraish diticen yath sifatas
Zatas labni marun te zuen
Sharaf bakhshun haz insaanas
Trukh hai chuk te panai tsen

If thou realize the one, thy identity will come undone:
Behold, how the one shines out gloriously bright!
Thou canst not understand that with intellect or mind.
Whoever has drunk that fathomless Deep?[39]

Kal hai karak kal hai vizi
Pulai lagi allah hu
Che yur gazakh su tor ruzi
Dil hai vizi Allah hu.

Probe the heart of things, flooded you will be with impulse divine.

And the spring of divinity in the full swing will be.
Was his path and half way he will meet you,
And the holy music will gush out from your soul.[40]

Bul bul poshi –vari garan
Mogul garan huni vaas
Sah shal shuni –lay garan
Khar tsharan guhiled ta saas?

In search of flower-gardens roams the song-thrush,
And the owl seeks the ruined corner;
The lion and the jackal wander in the wilderness,
And the wood –louse looks for dung and dirt,[41]

Thus, from the above verses it can be comprehended that Shaikh-ul Aalam's poetry had a great aesthetic appeal and has used excellent poetical language and diction. Both Lal Dyad and Shaikh were the upholders, rather beginners of the poetic tradition of Kashmir, who, through the *Vaakhs* and *Shruks* conveyed both the mystical message as well and became the role models for the post-modern poets of Kashmir.

[37] Sufi, G.M.D. *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir, Vol-2*, Ali Mohammad and Sons, Budshah Hotel, Srinagar, 2008, p. 100.
[38] Azad, Abdul Ahad, *Kashmiri Zuban aur Shairi, Vol-2*, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and languages, Srinagar, 2005, p. 223.
[39] Parimoo, B. N. *Nund Reshi*: Unity in *Diversity*, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 2007, p. 103.
[40] Amin, Mohammad. *Gleanings of Shaikh-ul Aalam*, Markaz-i Nur: Shaikh-ul Aalam Chair, University of Kashmir, 2008. p. 5.
[41] Parimoo, B. N. *Nund Reshi: Unity in Diversity*, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, p. 137-138.

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