

## MESSAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LALLA'S PHILOSOPHY

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After the Second World War and particularly during last two decades, due to globalization and quest for universalization ensued, for the people of the world, various types of tensions, frustrations, conflicts, restrictions, oppressions, violations, terrorism and wars. There is a cry both from collective conscience and consciousness of the world to bring peace to human civilization. Due to revolution brought by education, both technical and formal as well as non-formal, the changing values of various social systems, caused a crisis in the prevailing value structures. The values lost their relevance and significance and moral nature of almost every social system had to witness a change. Though the value structure did not reach total deconstruction, yet largely brought social crisis. There was religious resurgence but, religious education as well as behaviour has not been able to achieve desired results. In such a sensitive situation some believe that mysticism or Sufism could restore the moral genesis of a society. They believe that this cult of mystical forms and behaviour shall be able to achieve the object of spiritualization of the human civilization. It is this message of spiritualization of humans that is significant in the poetry of Lalla, the great hermitess of Kashmir.

According to J.S Mill, human nature being radically corrupt, there is no redemption for one until this human nature is killed within him. Lalla has the same message to humanity as to how this can be killed within ones own-self. However, she has her own method to destroy it within her self. She sang:

*All impurities within me I burnt away,  
And I did slay my heart,*

*I came to be known as the pious Lalla,  
 Only when I cleaved into him there,  
 Only when I sat, just there, waiting for his grace. (Trs Bazaz)*

She experienced a period of torture and sufferance in married life. Consequently, she abandoned her home and roamed about from place to place in rags, singing and dancing in half naked condition. During these wanderings, she came under the influence of a Saivite, Sidhu Bayu, who gave her lessons on the Trika Philosophy. She became conversant with the belief that peace of mind could be possible by detaching oneself from the world. She believed, after Saivite philosophy that man and his Universe is vital. She thought that the fundamental principle which keeps on restoring order and harmony in the Universe is usually disturbed and disrupted by constant change. To her freedom or Swatantra is the final goal of human life. Freedom both inner and outside relating to humans was important for her because it paved way to reach the Infinite. According to her self-denial, purity of life, renunciation and non-attachment to the world were the basic quality of human life. She had developed the notion that without mental discipline no spiritual progress could be possible, so she sang:

*Some have abandoned home,  
 Some the forest abode,  
 What use a hermitage, if thou Controllest, not thy mind.*  
 (Trs Bazaz)

Lalla had self-awareness and self-knowledge which she believed to be caused by universal consciousness. She desired her ascent to the Absolute Reality or to the universal consciousness and merge into it. She thought that without absorbing her in the infinite, she will not be able to attain Nirvana, eternal bliss and spiritual

ecstasy. She composed:

*The Holy books, disappearing, the mystic formula remains,  
The mystic formula vanishing, mind alone is left,  
The void (the apparent) merges into the void (the transcendent)*  
(Trs Bazaz)

To the practice of Saivite principles and philosophy, she abandoned dogmas, rituals, narrow-mindedness hate jealousy, reactionary beliefs and caste system. She did not believe in narrow aspects of human nature and she did not accept negative aspects of thought. She explains:

*Useless are the mystical experience for the unwise,  
For a fool, sugar candy has no utility.  
Do not waste your energies in a desert,  
To fry bran bread, is impermanence.*

She accepted and acknowledged the oneness of man as the basic tenet of all creeds and religions. According to her human goal is the spiritualization of man whatever may be the name given to the Absolute Reality.

Lalla was born in a Hindu society featuring, hierarchy, endogamy, hyper gamy, occupational association, restriction on food, drink and smoking, distinction in custom, dress, speech pollution, rituals and other privileges and disabilities caste organization and caste mobility. At the same time her life witnessed shattered human values and she revolted against these changes. She out bursts:

*Some are seen awake while in sleep,  
Some are awake, while they are dreaming,  
Some are impure, though they wash and clean,  
Some are occupied in the domestic avocation  
Still they are inactive, unconcerned and carefree.*

Shah Hamdan (RA) arrived in Kashmir in 1372 AC and later he

visited the valley twice. During the periods, he met Lalla, had prolonged discussions with her on philosophy religion and spiritualism. Lalla was a mystic poetess and Shah Hamdan both poet and author, left many principles in common. In his book *Zakhiratul-maluk*, the great Shah deals with ten basic percepts in ten chapters which include faith, duties of man, virtue, wives, husbands, children faith, duties of parents, spiritual kingdom execution of the lawful and abstinence from the unlawful, gratitude and contentment, patience, under visitations, condemnation of conceit and anger and the excellence of the humility and forgiveness. If we compare both the Persian poetry and prose of Shah Hamdan and the Vakhs of Lalla, we are amazed to find similarities in both the mystics. The difference in their philosophy is not substantial but notional. For one it is Saive that is all pervading and it is Allah for the other as cause of everything. Let us compare some Vakhs to understand their thought:

Shah Hamdan (RA) says that he has put his life's boat in such a vast ocean that harbours both the worlds. The boat does not lead him to the shore, nor does it tell him where the boat stands. But the water has absorbed the boat and the danger of flood is over. According to him there is no discrimination between the two because the reality of existence remains unaltered (Ghazal-36). Lalla in the same breath says that she has struggled to reach the reality but she is drawing the boat with a thin thread. However, her soul is in perpetual struggle to experience the Reality. Shah Hamdan tells us that our soul and body is a stumbling block in our way to Him and heresy and faith a veil. Surrender your everything and dissolve yourself into Him, he implores.

Lalla, in her mother tongue preached her doctrines that she adhered to as a Saivite and the Muslim Sufi doctrines that she adopted. According to a Sufi who as Muslim commits himself to the love of the spiritual self has, three aspects to conform. One is the sense of his own utter dependence on Him, raising oneself to the

extreme humility towards Him and designate to his will by which he looses egoism or egoistic attitudes. The second is the desire to please him. Thirdly, which is the highest aspiration of the spirit, is to achieve union with him. It means that a Sufi or Yogini has to become the mirror of His Light and abandon his own imperfection by becoming the reflection of His perfection under the Sufi influence. Lalla Sings:

*Searching and seeking Him, I, Lalla wearied self,  
And beyond my strength strove,  
Then looking for Him, I, found his doors closed and latched,  
And I would not move but stood where I was,  
Full of longing and love, I gazed on him.*

(Trs Bazaz)

Examine how Shah Hamdan in the same way explains his love for Allah:

*He who loves him alone, is bound to loose his self,  
If this love occupies somebody's heart,  
He is purged of all impurities  
And is devoted to Him body and soul,  
If you want to earn a good name,  
Then you will have to constantly revolve,  
round His door. He who associates himself,  
with the unreal, will earn notoriety.*

(Trs Dr. M.M. Masoodi)

In Sufism lovers of God consist of cultivating and developing love of God, in the way of Ishiq. It is the shortest, the sweetest, most interacting path. It leads to the best and the most valuable results. According to Sufis it is like burning the forest instead of uprooting every single tree to clean the land. Lovers make the best raw material for Sufism, whether society recognizes them or not. According to mystic thought bigger the storm of love in man's heart the greater his flight. In the same significance how the storm of love greets Lalla is

reflected in the following verse:

*Lo! I beheld the truth, the wise,  
Here is my own House to fill my gaze,  
There was the day of my lucky star,  
Breathless, I hold Him my Guide to be.*

(Trs Bazaz)

Both Lalla and Shah Hamdan, interacted and influenced each other. Shah-e-Hamdan (RA) was a Muslim in belief and behaviour and against the dogmas and ritualism. Both had a common denominator. It was love for the Absolute truth. Though Lalla believed Saive to be the air, earth and everything in between them and Shah recognized Allah to be the cause of everything, yet in their approach and behaviour both are lovers of the unknown. The similarity between Shah's Sufism and Lalla's Saivism is reflected in many similar ideas and concepts they have composed. For example both believe in the method of restraining their breath. Meditation is a common factor in between them. Submission to Pir or Guru, faith and penance, Zikr or recitation of sacred words, use of rosary, toleration, self-denial, purity of life, non-attachment to the worldly things, self-awareness, faith, execution of lawful and abstinence of unlawful, condemnation of conceit, excellence of humility and forgiveness are common denominations of their mystical life. Above all both believed in their union with the Supreme Being. It is this belief in the Supreme Being whatever is its nomenclature that is dearer to both Lalla and the Shah.

However, nobody can ignore the influence of Sufism on her which is reflected in her poetic genius. She says:

*"He who has love and confidence on the word of the Guru, .  
he who controls the horse of mind by the bridle of  
knowledge, he who enjoys peace having subdued his  
senses, then who will die and who will they kill".*

- Kashtawara by Lavanyas and enthroned in 1312 AD.  
Kalhana, Rajatarangini, BK VII, VIII, eng. tr M.A Stein Vol II, 1961  
Moti Lal Banarsidas, New Delhi.
23. Khakas, Known to Kashmiris as Khuykh are identified with Khasa, inhabiting the sides valleys of Pirpantalsal range. In the Bk VII, Sh 979 1271, 1276, and Bk VIII, Sh, 887, 1466, 1868, 1865, Khasas are associated with Rajauri whose ruler is addressed as the lord of Khasas. Simharaja, the father of queen Dida is designated as Khasa. Stein in I, 317, comments: "Khasas already in earlier times deserved the character of expert plunderers" Rajat Vol. I (Stein) p.48.
  24. Jonaraja, Rajatarangni, eng tr AC Datta (ed Gulshan Majeed, History of Medieval Kashmir, JK pub 2007p 17,18,19,21,22.
  25. Kalhana, Rajatarangini, BK I, Sh. 70, 71 eng. tr M.A Stein Vol. II, 1961 Moti Lal Banarsidas. New Delhi
  26. Jonaraja, Rajatarangni, eng tr AC Datta (ed Gulshan Majeed, History of Medieval Kashmir, JK pub 2007p 10,19,20,25.
  27. Kalhana, Rajatarangini, BK VII; Jonaraja, Rajatarangni, eng tr AC Datta (ed Gulshan Majeed, History of Medieval Kashmir, JK pub 2007p 9.
  28. Kalhana, Rajatarangini, BK I, Passim, eng. tr M.A Stein Vol. II, 1961 Moti Lal Banarsidas, New Delhi
  29. Kalhana, Rajatarangini, BK VII, VIII, Passim, eng. tr M.A Stein 1961 Moti Lal Banarsidas, New Delhi
  30. Jonaraja, Rajatarangni, eng tr AC Datta (ed Gulshan Majeed, History of Medieval Kashmir, JK pub 2007p 64, 108.

In the end it may be recalled that Lalla is the leader of the dynamic philosophy that she preached. She, alongwith Sheikh Nooruddin Wali (RA) were bound to open an era of human brotherhood in Kashmir and beyond in which the differences of caste, creed, birth, race and position would be meaningless. That is why she held the view:

*The time is coming when some generations will sink to hell,  
when ultimately showers of rain and dust will fall,  
when plates of flesh and wine cups,  
Brahmins and sweepers will take together.*

(Trs Bazaz)

Unfortunately, the ultimate showers of rain and dust did not fall as predicted by Lalla. The plates of flesh and wine cups could not be enjoyed by the Brahmans and sweepers together nor between different communities till date. Humanism lost its ground in Kashmir and there is total drift from that philosophy in the valley today. At the same time, there is contradiction in Lalla's religious humanism. Her philosophy merges the individual with the Infinite. She, in her contradiction asks man at the same time to have faith in himself and seek no assistance from outside. However, such contradiction is inherent usually in idealist philosophies. Today, Sufism or mystical philosophies are treated spurious and false religion. The culture of the valley during last many centuries has stagnated and disturbed. Humanism taught by Lalla as well as Sheikh Nooruddin Wali (RA) is neither followed nor even understood. Our history is fragmented, then misinterpreted and misapplied to suit the interests of the historian or their ideologies and the rulers or one Muslim sect against the other. The basic truths that we had imbibed through our cultural and religious ethos have been shattered and disregarded. We are incapable of rediscovering and reclaiming from the mass superstitions, myths and miracles that are woven for us by the unseen and seen hands. Our social and governing tricksters continue to elude



us by attributing prophecies to great saints of present time and ask for donations for the only son of a father. They also broadcast that the earthquake is likely to recur at 12:30pm on a particular day. Humanism, however, internationally today stands on a firm foundation of reason and it no longer needs the support of religion or an unseen power. Man is master of the universe and he has the power to make him complete provided that the basic truths enunciated by Lalla are put in practice. As the first step, there is a need to regenerate intellectual and spiritual ideals of Lalla and to achieve the freedom that she aspired for. Consequently, Lalla is both Lalla Arifa and Lalla Yogeshwari, subsuming both the philosophy of Saivism and Sufism.

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