



RESEARCH PAPER

Philosophy of Lalla and Its Ontological Impacts on Social Reforms and Cohesion in Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir is multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and diverse pluralist region in which the people from difference religions, cultures and ethnicity having their own faiths and interests but living together in cohesion and social harmony. The objectives are to explore the social transformational process in Kashmiri society by the most influential personalities. The foundation of this pluralist society is surrounded around few personalities like Lalla Arifa; a legendary lady saint who was founder of modern Kashmiriyat through her philosophical poetry. She contributed as a remarkable thinker, a mystic, a philosopher, social activist and reformer who challenged the conventional caste-based divisions and brought social unity. This study is based upon qualitative research methods focusing upon analytical and descriptive approaches to identify her messages which are currently known as “wakhs”. These “wakhs” are recognized as reformist intellectualism and sophistic methodology. Her literary contribution made social binding, mutual respect and harmony in Kashmir.

KEYWORDS Lalla Arifa, Wakhs, Cohesion, Pluralism, Unity, Kashmiri Society, Ontological Impact

Introduction

Epistemologically, human beings are interdependent to each other while the philosophy of a society is comprised upon few pillars; population, culture and material products. These pillars are based upon two elements: social organization and social institutions. The foundation of an ideal society remained basic and primary concern from the Stone Age to present for all human beings which described as unending rule, durability and everlasting glory and supremacy with unipolar status around the globe; is very determinant study still today.

Scientifically, a population is all the organisms of the same group or species, which live in a particular geographical location with capability of interbreeding. The population of human being is as can be divided in Kashmir as in general manner in shape of religions, sects, races, castes, colour, interests, languages, cultures, regions, status and preferences. While in Kashmir the Kashmiris are religiously divided into Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhist etc and lingually as Koushar, Pahari, Dogra, Gojar, Balti, Ladakhi, Gilgity, Pathan etc. Due to these religious and lingual division the cultural variation is quite different from each other which normally manifested in dress and food preferences. Another factor which caused major distinctions is significant geography and specific extreme weather conditions in most parts of the State.

Social organizations are formed upon the social events which mainly again derived from religion and culture which mostly varies region to region, community to community and class to class in accordance with religion, geography and culture. While social

institutions are like jirga and panchayat etc which usually present in village, town, union council and tehsil or district level, sometimes it extended to the entire State. These social organizations in Kashmir normally functions for social cohesion, interaction and coordination while social institutions work as alternate dispute resolution body. Besides of these scientific approaches and social philosophy, we have seen repeatedly some personalities are commonly and highly respected amongst all races, religions and classes of Kashmir as Bud Shah, Kanishka, Kalhana and Lalla. Lalla is one of the revolutionary characters in Kashmir which informally teach the whole nation of Kashmir into unity, strong interaction and social cohesion in sophisticated manner. Her poetic work is indeed a masterpiece and considered religious preaching. Her poetic work recognized as "vakhs" and mostly referred to words of Lalla which categorized in sophisticated and mystic class while Kashmiris respect it by following and binding these preaching. With passage of time these words were adopted by social organization and so followed by social institutions and spreader out into the whole State while some declare it as Shaivism which implicated upon Kashmiri Society in tight and binding culture based upon social cohesion and strong coordination. (Dhar, 2006)

Literature Review

The study of the society and social reforms mostly referred to a discussion about the human relationship with society and institutions having diverse aspects covering all types of social classes, vary from single to family and furthermore a community, races and beliefs. It also analyzes and elaborates the individual life which is extending to entire world. (Adornow, 2000) Although such type of study mostly conducted about landscape beauty and heaven on earth; the society of Kashmir, which is multilingual, multi-culture, multiethnic, multi religious and multidimensional in interests having the people with different interests and beliefs but living together in a family like society. How such type of binding and united society can be formulated, before exploring these facts, let's have a look upon the main components which determine the coordinative gaps and space in social cooperation. (Freeman, 2004) A society is formed by five main components: (a). Population, (b). Culture, (c). Social organization, and (d). Social institutions. (Weir, 2007) These all components are basically five pillars on which a society is formatted. These components are interdependent on each other to establish a happy and prosperous society to extend itself to national harmony and integrity.

P. N. K. Bamzai admired Lalla as "Her sayings echo and re-echo to this day". She was Sufi poetess and her verses deeply linked with mysticism and social and religious reforms in Kashmir. She believes in realistic manners during religious performance with rational and reasoning instead of conventional approaches. Lalla is also known as "Lal, Lalleshwari, Lalla Yogashwari, Lal Ded, Ded, Mother Lalla, Lalla, Lalla Arifa, Arifa, and Lalishri", a multidimensional mystical personality, regarded among all religions and sects in Kashmir and founder of "Kashmir Shavism School of Philosophy" in Indo-Pak Subcontinent. (Chitkara, 2002) Lalla was born in "Pandrethan" a small town, about 7 kms away from Srinagar in its southeast, amongst the Kashmiri Pandits. Some historian argues that it was rule of Sultan Alluddin, a time when "liberal education was imparted" to women. (Bamzai, 2001) Naji, declares she was born between 1335-51, (Naji, 1978) Foaq argues 1351 and Dr. Syed Yousaf Bukhari has distinguish opinion about her birth era was 1317-1325. (Bukhari, 1991) After receiving preliminary education during that time which mostly preferred in religious context, she married at the age of 12 by following local customs and traditions during that era. Unhappiness worries and depravedness until tortured badly by his husband and mother-in-law during her stay in the bridegroom house. She never complained on her misery and always showed patience, tolerance, endurance against every humiliation from her groom family. (Toshkhani, 2002) Her vakhs telling is thought to be the outcome of the early education she received from her father's home when, between the ages of 23 and 26, she made "renunciation (Sannyasa)" and embraced the disciple of Shaivite guru "Siddha Srikantha," who she eventually outperformed in terms of spiritual attainments.

Material and Methods

Being a part of qualitative research techniques, this study is based on descriptive historical and analytical approaches to overview the impacts of Lalla's wakhs on Kashmiri society and its consequences. For that particular purpose, the population of this study is limited on those specific wakhs which are relevant to the social cohesion and unity, love and acceptance of each other in a diverse society and demolishing social discriminations.

Philosophy of Lalla and its Impacts on Social Reforms:

This diversity is on one side but commonly the population looks like a unit which somehow refer to culture or social preaching and reforms. The culture is based upon three main components in the State of Jammu and Kashmir; Religion, Language, and Geographical location. The culture of hilly areas is quite different from plains, valleys varies from plateaus and it can also compare from the religious and lingual variations as well. The Koushar, Hanji, Gojar, Pahari, Sikh, Hindus apparently opposite to each other. These cultural variations preserved by every community inside their axis but on the broader and collectiveness these variations are sudden disappeared where any State Identity is discussed, mentioned and described.

A single statement regarding her life in the groom's house is shown in her wakh.

بونڈ ماری تن ماری تن کٹھہ

(Bukhari, 1991) لل نله وٹھڑلہ تہ ژاہ

Whether they served a goat, Lalla always had a stone for dinner, according to her mother-in-law, who would place a flat stone on her plate and cover it with rice to make it appear as though there was more food there. Sooner she abandoned her married life and wandered in the search of inner satisfaction which is a difficult task to a lady abandoning her family after a long trial of self-sacrificing and followed a way of "metaphysics with poetic experience". Wandering in streets in torn clothing exploring the truth of universe singing in painful voice, later recognized as her wakhs. Furthermore, she claims that her wakhs were nothing more than mantras or chants meant to glorify the Lord: Whatever task I did became devotion of the Lord. However, she can be seen as a poetess by modern readers and/or analysts from backgrounds other than Kashmir. (Kuszevska, 2015) She remained restless and during her early life, the painful era started from early age and all her life spent into a legend and her wakhs were a part of folk songs, folk narration and local story and oral performance in unique Kashmiri tradition, heritage shift among Kashmiri generations. (Zutshi, 2014) Moreover, she is known as classical and mystic poetess and recognized as "Vatsun or Vakhs", literally "Speech or Voices" and around the globe recited as "Lal Vakhs". She is amongst the pioneers and classical who describes the bitter realities of life into mystic poetry and wakhs are earlier well-known composition in the Koushar language and referred as significant part of the history of literature in ancient Kashmir. Regarding her literary work, there are some strong evidences which shows that she had great interaction and influence with many Sufis inside the Srinagar and Kashmir and her verses often reflects the inspirational work of other Muslim Sufi saints literary work which can be argued as Hafiz Sherazi says.

اسپ تازی شده مجروح بہ زبر پالان

(Bukhari, 1991) طوق زریں شہ در گردن خرمنے بینم

This verse of Sherazi is translated by Lalla in these words with same mind and meanings.

لز کامنی شبت لواری

ترن زل كرى آهار

يه كمى و پديش كرى بٹا

اڙ يتن وٹس شريتن كٽھ ديون آبار (Bukhari, 1991)

A domestic sheep covers his body by its wool and keep itself safe from cold. It will eat grass and drink water which has no price to pay for these. Of course, O, Brahmana, to slaughter a useful animal in the name of stony nonliving idol, from where you find this principle and faith.

The vakhs of Lalla considered amongst significant mystical approaches and global studied which translated into many languages as in English by "Jaylal Kaul, Richard Temple, Jaishree Odin, Coleman Barks and Ranjit Hoskote". (Barks, 1992) Lalla revealed the hidden reality of human life that how social injustice can be seen in the society, that scholars and man of wisdom are dying due to hunger no one has any attention towards them while all the luxuries and facilitations belongs to illiterate persons. She also addresses social disorder and injustice in the society which is a unique and most prominent aspect in her vakhs. Her teaching and preaching made her very respectful and famous among all sect, groups and religions in Kashmir and the society of Kashmir became a pluralist society where the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-culture people following their own interest and preferences but living like a unit. In a vakh, she describes reality in these words. (Roy, 2015)

گاتلاه اكھ وچھم بوچھ ستي مران

پن زن بران پهنه واوے لہہ

نیش بود اكھ وچھم وازس ماران

بے نہ لل بو پراران ژھينم نا پراه (Bukhari, 1991)

"Yesterday I saw a wise man is dying with hunger and his body is getting weaker and weaker as leaves have fallen from tree in autumn. I have also seen a stupid man beating his cook very angrily that he why not cooked food delicious, so, I desperately waiting to render up this tiresome world." In above wakh, Lall manifests her frustration in the last verse that when I have seen this social injustice and feelingless social members, my heart turn down from such world which has no worth of any worthy and I have decided to release all the relations related with this world. She considered her vakhs as teachings of God which are described in these vakhs.

يه يه كرم كورم سه ارژن

يه رسنه ژورم تي منتھر

يو بے لوگمو ديس پرژن

سے يه پر مه شون نتتھر (Bukhari, 1991)

Whatever the work I performed is only the worship, every word which I uttered, it turned into prayer, every colour of my body which I experienced became the "sadhana Shaiva tantra which illumining my path to parmasiva". This is Hindu mythical based translation but the original soul of this vakhs is translated by the Muslims who analyzed it in Islamic culture and mystical thought with Sufi philosophy and the Reshi perspectives, it could be narrated as: Everything I've done and thought has been praise, both outwardly with my body and internally with my mind. (Barks, 1992) Another vakh which metaphorically deliberately stated the greed in the relations of human beings in philosophical mode as:

لز كلنى شبت لواری

ترن زل كرى اهار

به كمى و پدیش كرى بٹا

(Bukhari, 1991) اژبنن وٹس شربنن ديون آبار

You cover your body by wearing wool on a pet sheep which also saves you from cold while this sheep used water and grass for diet which has not cost for you. Alas! Oh Brahma! You slaughtered this to make happy your idol, what you attained from your faith?

This wakh is more satire and mocking on human being in this time who used all the references and relations for their own interests and profits and in last they slaughtered them on the name of idols which are made by stones could not give anything to mankind or other creation. Its ruthless killing of human cooperation, sympathy and kindness with each other when element of greed enters them.

آمه پنہ سو درس ناو چہس لمان

كتہ بوز دے ميون مے تہ ديہ تار

آمنن ٹاكنن پونى زن شمان

(Bukhari, 1991) زو چہم برمان گر گڑھ با

I am rowing the boat with yarn (spun thread) which is captured in the storm between the river. I am also a raw pitcher of whom the water is leachate everywhere and every time which make hurdle to reach on the destination. In these lines the words are metaphorical, and idiom use for the social relations and interaction in a society to strengthen the social cohesion and unity. The rowing of the boat is orthodox to those very weaker and weaker relationships which proposed as captured in the storm. The struggle to restore and strengthen these relations is unilateral which mostly goes in vain. Due to unilateral efforts for the recognition, restoration and strengthening the social relationship and interaction is as weaker is just like leachate of water from a pitcher. Her efforts also discussed in another verse with some other metaphorical statement.

بيچو بارنجہ پيژيو كان گوم

ابكھ چهان پيوم يتھ راز دانے

منز باگ بازرس قلفہ ردىس دان گوم

(Bukhari, 1991) تيرتھ روس پان گوم كس مالہ زانے

I have a bow of very durable wood, but the arrows are grass made, and I want to construct valuable and worthwhile palace, but the carpenters and constructors are stupid. I have no lock on my shop and no one is aware of this situation. These verses also metaphorically used by Lal to show his struggle for the unification of the society but she fails again and again and resembled her efforts as to fight with costly bow having poor and weak arrows or as construction of unique palace with assistance of nonsense and stupid constructors and carpenters or as a shop which has not any security and lock. The tale and narration of her efforts are indescribable.

The most inspiring, relatively pioneer Kashmiri based Sufi and founder of Reshism in Kashmir, Hazrat Noor Uddin Wali also known as Noor-ud-Din Rishi, Nunda Reshi as well was impressively admired and influence by Lalla. The Koushar traditional story recounts that during infant age Nooruddin Reshi refused to feed himself and he was fed by Lalla. (Warikoo, 2009)

Lalla used her Mystical poetry which continuously mystical musing with higher inside implication upon the psychology of Kashmiri people and others from around the globe. Paul Murphy mentioned in his book "Traditional mysticism", "chief exponent of devotional or emotion oriented Tribadism". He further elaborates the important aspect of devotionality lasted five hundred years ago. The most amazing phenomenon in this prospect is nonsectarian and multi-religious aspect of Lalla's teachings and preaching. This nonsectarian aspects in Lalla's spiritual life, songs, poems and vakhs it looks that her life is used for multiple social, religious, cultural and political agendas. While an Indian author and poet Rajit Hoskote admires in such beautiful words. (Chitkara, 2002)

Lal Ded has been revered by both Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir for almost seven centuries, and she is undoubtedly Kashmir's most well-known spiritual and literary figure. She has successfully evaded the religious monopolists' claims of ownership for the majority of that time. However, since the 1980s, Kashmir's confluent culture has deteriorated under the weight of a protracted conflict that has been fueled by domestic militancy, international terrorism, and state brutality. Following a significant migration of the Hindu minority in the early 1990s and a slow-motion attempt to replace Kashmir's distinctive and syncretic nuanced Islamic culture with a more Areocentric global template, religious identities in the region have become tougher and more sharply defined. Lal Ded was, in fact, Lallesvari or Lalla Yogini to Hindus and Lalla Arifa to Muslims; sadly, these descriptions are now increasingly being promoted at the detriment of one another. Lal Ded was, however, both names for the same person. (Hoskote, 2011)

Lal Ded is the symbol of unification, unity and social cohesion, her verses (vakhs) are still having fame and ultimate popularity and great acceptance to all Kashmiris regardless of faith, religion and location. Her efforts to become the voice of the weak class is laid foundation of social revolution which latterly turned into social reforms, equality, discrimination free and strong brotherhood in entire valley. Now, the region of Kashmir although in a shape of dominant Muslim majority but still recognized world's most influential united and pluralist society in which the members of society having different religions, school of thoughts, sects, classes, races, lingual aspects and different interests but living together like a family. As Lalla Arifa argues on her excursion by imparting otherworldly practices and experiment in her vakhs which acknowledges relinquish of inner self to encounter the all-inclusive of Shaiva. As he describes in these words. (Temple, 2003)

"Debasements of the heart I consumed. Wants I murdered. Lalla, my name, shone as it were at the point when I gave up totally. Arousing in the early day break, I brought the anxious personality. Bearing the agony, I committed myself to god. Saying "I am Lalla, I am Lalla," I stirred my sweetheart. On getting one with him, I purged my brain and body".

Across the new research and study on the literature of Lalla in other languages and translations there are contemporary social reforms and modification for the equality, justice and harmony among the society. Its nonsectarian teachings and preaching are a tool of inspiration, unity, brotherhood, acceptance of each other, respects of emotions and feeling of every member of society. The teaching about the mortality of the universe and temporary life along with immortal power of Almighty and His worship and obedience is the fundamental key which distinguish her form other extremist Hindus and radical polarize and divisible superiority and inferior based social Hindu classes with inequality and injustice system. In addition, since 2004, actress Mita Vashisht has been touring India performing a solo production called Lalla in English, Hindi, and Kashmiri. (Bhumika, 2011)

A significant number of wakhs were expressed as lessons to her locale, routed to average folks in the field who most presumably would experience considerable difficulties understanding the profoundly elusive jargon of Kashmiri Shaivism. Hence, she utilized illustrations and comparisons from everyday life that were straightforwardly available to the ordinary citizens. In like manner, a portion of her stanzas talk about the requirement for commitment to Shiva and afterward there are others that portray Shiva as the supernatural

reality that penetrates the physical reality, but then others center around the need to do away completely with duality of various types so as to discover an absolutely new space for the realizing self. Lalla evaluates the prescriptive strict acts of all sort.

Conclusion

Lalla, became the symbol of dignity and prestigious personality for all the cultural, social, ethnic and religious communities in Kashmir. Her work and struggle to address the social norms and stereo types. She is respected amongst all communities of Kashmir including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs etc. due to the message of love and friendship. A denial of discrimination and love to all is the key determinant in his philosophy and ontological impacts of her poetry. The Hindutva class discrimination soon finished after the advent of Islam but acceptance to all other religions and communities mainly credited to Lalla as all the communities respected and regarded her as a significant saint of their religion. After her death Shamiri ruler followed by Chaks made Kashmir a paradise land not only in scenery and landscape beauty but developed a beautiful society. When Kashmir came under aliens: first to Mughals, then Afghan and Sikhs this unity never lost but after the advent of Dogra ruler some minor issues were emerged from Jammu side. After the partition of subcontinent, with the foundation of Pakistan and India, the land of Kashmir is now globally recognized as world's most dangerous conflicted zone but luckily this social binding, unity and harmony is still alive in Kashmir. This all is directly and indirectly linked with the teachings of Lalla Arifa which laid down ontological impact on Kashmiri society.

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