

HAZRAT SULTAN BAHOO'S PUNJABI POETRY AND CONCEPTS FOR INNER PURIFICATION, GLOBAL PEACE AND HARMONY

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Abstract:- *This study of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Punjabi poetry and concepts of inner purification discusses about the Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Punjabi poetry and concepts for the inner purification of mankind. The concepts of peace and harmony from Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's poetry and teachings have also been described in this study. The study presented a view that modern world is facing different type of discriminations and societal imbalance including religious, sectarian, ethnic, territorial, linguistic and other differences in society. The globalization of the world and modernization of communication gadgets enhanced the impacts of discriminatory ideologies and there is need to discourage discriminatory approaches. The Sufi literature, especially Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Punjabi Abyats, provides the opportunities to train the mankind with Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's concepts of love, humanity, harmony, and relationship with divinity. The study is done by using the qualitative content analysis technique and concluded that Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Abyat has inculcated with beautiful balanced slant of spirituality and modernization which may be helpful to enhance harmony and peace in global world.*

Keywords: *Abyat, harmony, sectarian, ethnic, territorial, linguistic, relationship with divinity, spirituality,*

INTRODUCTION:

The study of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Punjabi Poetry and concepts of inner-purification, global peace and harmony explores the new consideration and concepts having deep effect on modern world society especially in the public having understanding of Punjabi. Harmonizing the society has become big issue of modern world and there is need of harmonized concepts which lead towards global peace. The renowned Sufi Hazrat Sultan Bahoo has presented the concept of inner-purification by using his *Abyat* written in Punjabi having mystical sound of *Hoo* with its every lyric. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's followers presented these lyrics as concepts to enhance the harmony in society peace in global world. This study is done by using the qualitative content analysis technique and explored that whether Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's *Abyat* are helpful for inner-purification of everyone and helpful for harmonizing the society as well as enhance the conditions of peace globally.

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo was Sufi mystic and scholar from the last days of greater Mughal period of Indian history. He was also known as *Sultan ul Faqar* (King of Contentment) as well as *Sultan ul Arifeen* (King of Gnostics) and began the mystic belief *Sarwari Qadri* order. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo was born on 1st *Jamadi us Sani* 1039 AH (17th January, 1630AD) during the rule of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the area of Punjab. He was named *Bahoo* by his mother, some studies showed that the name was Muhammad Bahoo and some showed as Sultan Bahoo, Sultan Muhammad Bahoo and *Faqeer* Bahoo were also seemed somewhere. It was also claimed that the word "*Bahoo*" was never used as the name of a person before that. He belongs to the "Awan" tribe, offspring of fourth Islamic caliph Hazrat Ali (R.A). His father name was Bazayed Mohammad and he was a professional soldier of Shah Jahan's army. His mother "Bibi Raasti" was a quintessence of religiosity and known in family for her virtuous character.

Bibi Rasti recognized the position of Sultan Bahoo in ecstatic phase and named him *Bahoo*; *Ba* means as with while *Hoo* for Almighty Allah. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo visited a number of spiritual



mentors and shrines but made pledge at the hands of Syed Abdul Rehman Dehlvi, renowned Qadri spiritual mentor of that time.¹ Hazrat Sultan Bahoo inscribed 140 books on mystical knowledge in Persian but he is known in subcontinent for his poetry “*Abyat-e-Bahoo*” in Punjabi language.

There is some frenzy of divine love, respect of humanity, joy of peaceful co-existence in his Punjabi poetry. His poetic rhymes are repeatedly sung by people vocally, and verbally - “*Hoo*” in unison with heart and soul continuously emerging every snuffle in meditation of Him. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo said that “the soul of mankind merges in Core of the Lord then one deserves the name “*Bahoo*”. Having the title “*Fanah-Fillah*” of Sufi order, he was bestowed with the power to embellish the souls from king to common man.² By reading Hazrat Sultan Bahoo’s books, everyone eventually get drawn into world of true knowledge; which nurtures inner-self like outer-self nurtured by intake of food.³

Sultan Muhammad Bahoo is one of conspicuous Sufi-mystic of subcontinent whose impacts could be sensed across world. Although Hazrat Sultan Bahoo has authored 140 manuscripts in Persian language but his popularity is due to his Punjabi poetical work. The *Abyats* has become so strong attractive for common man and globally known with the name of “*Kalam E Bahoo*”.⁴ Every verse of *Abyat* pronounces deep meanings and different philosophy about social issues which expose themselves upon readers and listeners. These *Abyat* engaged the listeners and readers and played vital role in the character building of the public and also Popular among the folks. These *Abyats* became the part of the life and deeply impacted cultural and traditional aspect of the society.⁵ Hazrat Sultan Bahoo has presented so solid concept in precise words with easy way. Even now the modern-day intellectuals stunned with the translations and meanings of the *Abyat* called them with fascinated names like “Death before Dying” and “Heart Deeper than Ocean”.⁶

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo’s *Abyats* ends on the word “*Hoo*”. Meditational as well as communicational impact of *Abyat* has linked with the concept and sound of the “*Hoo*”. The Sufis has considered *Hoo* as excellence of status of Allah Almighty.⁷ The rhyme and rhythm of *Hoo* made these *Abyat* popular widely among masses, especially in the areas of subcontinent. The use of different musical instruments further enhances the impact, gratitude and recognition in masses. The interpretation of “Death before dying” designated the reality when Hazrat Sultan Bahoo acknowledged his mother for introducing in Punjabi *Abyat*. Mystical voice of *Ustad Pathany Khan* has enhanced the consideration of these lyrics of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo and made these *Abyats* part of modern Punjabi entertainment events.⁸ The musicians and singers presented it with the note having meaning as; “His poetry was so close to the hearts and minds of the Punjabi people that it only needed oral tradition to be divulged at first and favored being augmented over time by imitation. Sung at village gatherings and in town halls, it was embraced by the young and became especially dear to

¹ M. I. Garcia, “Channels of Knowledge Transfer of Sultan Bahoo’s Teachings in Modern Era,” *MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES Journal*, Vol. II, No.3 (2017): 69.

² Sultan Bahoo, *Nur-ul-Huda*, Translated by M.A. Khan, (Lahore: Arifeen Publications, 2019).

³ Tahir Sarwar, “*Teachings of Sultan Bahoo*,” (Mirat-ul-Arifeen, June 2016), 33

⁴ Sultan Bahoo, *Heart Deeper than Ocean*, translated by Z. A. Awan, (Lahore: Al-Arifeen Publications, 2017), 118.

⁵ Z. A. Awan, *Sultan Bahoo: A Living Legacy*, (Lahore: Al-Arifeen Publications, 2019).

⁶ J. J. Elias (ed.), *Death before Dying: The Sufi Poems of Sultan Bahoo*, (London: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷ J. Hammer, “The Soul of Islam: Writing and Publishing as engaged Sufi,” *Journal for Islamic Studies*, Vol.7, No.1 (2006): 37.

⁸ Elias, *Death before Dying: The Sufi Poems of Sultan Bahoo*, 97.

he villagers who could not read and write. Men would sit together for hours, joining in the refrain, and women would listen in from behind curtains and veils.”⁹

Self-purity and Morality

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo focused to purify the inner self and taught that every individual have to do so. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo taught that everyone has to purify his/her inner by reciting the name of Allah Almighty. He also used the word “*HOO*” for spiritual connection to divinity.

Sufi scholar Sultan Ahmed Ali stated, “Hazrat Sultan Bahoo’s poetry conveys the message of global peace and the eternal love for the supernatural force.”¹⁰ The international scholar Dr. Maldonado paid tribute to Hazrat Sultan Bahoo as, “Bahoo himself feels the effect of love and the ultimate purpose described by him is to submit to the love of Allah entirely”¹¹. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo urged to pursue the Truth and insisted that one must devote oneself to attain Truth.¹² Hazrat Sultan Bahoo had pronounced six qualities of morality (faith, truthfulness, self-belief, honesty, desire and love).¹³ He described that these six characteristics made oneself on right path in society. He also advised to keep away from greed and other bad individualities. Sufis assessed and gauged their followers in accordance to learning and achievements by observing their practical life. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo did not only emphasize to keep moral values just to educate others orally but these must be shown in practical activities of oneself.¹⁴

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo struggled against societal and ethical evils as well as social challenges of that time period by his writings. He wrote 140 books and all are on the social issues, humanity and human needs. The world has transformed into global village but similar issues have to face by humanity. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo had presented regulatory principles for society which are based on purification oneself, reformation of individuals and love to humanity that leads towards peaceful society. He clearly discouraged the discrimination with people and emphasized to love the humanity as well as solve societal problems.

Union with Almighty by adopting Sufism, with true spirit of Holy Quran and Sunnah, and negating the desires of base self is the foundation for purity of individuals. In modern times, human ferocity and savagery has extended to worrying level and intolerance, narrowness and chauvinism have dazed the foundations of societal and spiritual values. In these conditions, inner-purity, tolerance and harmony are basic cure for rejecting extremist inflexibility of ethnic sectarian, linguistic and such other divisions in society. Discriminatory concepts among human beings has become biggest and impediment for peaceful and harmonized society. The Sufis has presented the concepts of *Faqar* meaning with contentment (Sufi’s consider the *Faqar* as the spiritual excellence)¹⁵ with the belief of write doing by Allah Almighty. Sufis presented the concept that no one has the right to discriminate anyone accordance with universal law (law of Allah Almighty).

In today’s world when different types of discriminations are harming the societal order and global peace, there is need to adopt the concepts which enhance the harmony among people. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo presented this concept as that there is need to follow divine values for the

⁹ Sultan Bahoo, *Heart Deeper than Ocean*, translated by Z. A. Awan, (Lahore: Al-Arifeen Publications, 2017), 95.

¹⁰ Sultan Ahmed Ali, *Bahu’s poetry for Peace and Love*, Express Tribune (Lahore), March 22, 2013.

¹¹ Dr. Maldonado, *Address in International Hazrat Sultan Bahu Conference*, organized by Muslim Institute, March 21, 2013.

¹² Tauqir Amir, Views of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo on Moral development in Social Perspectives,” *Mirat-ul-Arifeen*, May 2011.

¹³ Sultan Bahoo, *Kaleed-Al- Tauheed*, 891.

¹⁴ Tauqir Amir, Views of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo on Moral development in Social Perspectives,” *Mirat-ul-Arifeen*, May 2011.

¹⁵ Sultan Ahmed Ali, “Sufi Literature as an Effective Tool for Harmonization in the World: A Case Study of Sultan-ul-Arifeen Sultan Bahoo,” 25th *ISTANBUL Int’l Conference on Literature, Languages, Humanities & Social Sciences*, December 5-6, 2019.

betterment of the human society otherwise mankind will lose not only this world but the next world too. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's teachings presented the concept that tolerance, basic human rights, justice for everyone, and equality is the base of human society and cleared that these rights have been outlined in Islam by Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo also discouraged the monasticism and emphasized upon practical life. He cleared that monastic approach lead the society towards total failure and decline. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo cleared that there is no place for religious, sectarian, ethnic, territorial discriminations and differences in the Muslim human society and populace of this society has to avoid any type of discrimination. All human beings have to be taken equally in the world as well as society. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo clarified that "Muslims have been instructed to act justly for every creature of the world what to speak of humanity alone". He clearly taught for morality and ethical activities for the peaceful and harmonized society and mentioned that societal rules set in Muslim society are equally for every member so that the peace and justice may prevail in society and no one has the right to violate these rules and create danger for societal peace.¹⁶

Harmonized Society:

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo taught for the harmonized society and focused to live together without any religious as well as societal discrimination. No doubt all the Sufi literature presented the concepts of harmonization but Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's poetry is focused with it and prevent to maltreatment with any human being. His teachings were not only for his own time period but for all times and the rest of world. His teachings are recognized and people emphasized to adopt his message for harmonizing the society. His concept of harmonized society was presented as "Hazrat Sultan Bahoo messaged the all mankind and his teachings conveyed ethereal love for all and Pakistan's image may be improved by using the Ideas of Him"¹⁷ by former Deputy Speaker of National Assembly in a conference held in this regard.

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's concept of harmonizing the society is much clear in his teachings. His poetry communicated about the concepts of peaceful co-existence. He messaged for no discrimination on the bases of religion, cast and societal as well as administrative positions. It was explained by Sufi scholars as, "Sufi Literature promotes peace and harmony in the world as Baba Bulleh Shah pointed out in his poetry that it is much greater sin to break the heart of any person than to tear down the temple or mosque, the same message is given by Hazrat Sultan Bahoo."¹⁸ The concepts that harmonized literature was produced by Muslim Sufis including Hazrat Sultan Bahoo has recognized by international community. It was explained as, "Sufi psychology promoted growth, balance and harmony and has greater flexibility to fit into various cultures and societies in varied forms"¹⁹. It was elaborated further as, "Molana Rumi and Allama Iqbal's poetry which attracted global recognition for the noble causes of self-actualization, liberty, socio-political transformation and harmony, are noteworthy. Same concepts have also been presented by Hazrat Sultan Bahoo in his Punjabi poetry"²⁰.

The *Abyat* of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo has been studied individually as well as part of the Sufi literature too. The people connected the ethical aspects of the societal values with the concepts of divinity.

¹⁶ M. D. Awan, "Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Proposed Human Society," *MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES Journal*, Vol.I, No.2 (2016): 67.

¹⁷ Faisal Kareem Kundi (Deputy Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan), *Address in International Hazrat Sultan Bahu Conference*, organized by Muslim Institute, March 21, 2013.

¹⁸ Sultan Ahmed Ali, "Sufi Literature as an Effective Tool for Harmonization in the World: A Case Study of Sultan-ul-Arifeen Sultan Bahoo," 25th *ISTANBUL Int'l Conference on Literature, Languages, Humanities & Social Sciences*, December 5-6, 2019.

¹⁹ Robert Frager, *Heart, Self, and Soul: The Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance, and Harmony*, (Wheaton: Quest Books, 2013).

²⁰ C. A. Kafka, "Poet from Persia with love" (Washington Post, January 17, 2017).



It was mentioned as that “the Sufi literature has the potential of imaginary which is in the form of *Ishq-i Haqiqi* (divine love). This imaginary has distinct ontology, epistemology and cosmology which need to be understood within its own discourse and praxis”²¹. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo cleared that imaginary concepts about the divine love are universal and it enhanced the societal values for maintaining the peace in the world. The modern moral values are established upon materialistic slant. The materialistic approach enhanced the ethnic, territorial, religious, sectarian linguistic and other type of discrimination in society and disturbs the harmonic standards in the world. He emphasized on individual training and enhances the capacities of everyone but at individual level which may joint at organizational, societal and global level according to the needs.²² This concept clarifies the importance of individuals in society as well as creating global world and maintaining universal peace.

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo’s *Abyat* provides concepts of universal society and instruct the people to understand their individual as well as societal situations in relation to God and practical aspect of life. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo strictly restricted for the monastic and discriminatory approaches. His approach not only mentioned towards human relation with divinity and position in global world in accordance with other people. W.C.Chittick explained as, “Sufi theory provides a map of the cosmos that allows people to understand their situation in relation to God. It explains both what human beings are, and what they should aspire to be. It sets down a practice that can lead people from their actual situation to the final goal of human life, or from imperfection to perfection”.²³

The modern world is facing different type of discriminatory concepts which harming the society in various ways. There is a need to discourage discriminatory behaviors and resort to spiritual teachings of Sufis especially in context to relationship with divinity and practical perspectives of life so that the discriminatory concepts may not prevail in society. The focus of Sufi’s literature in accordance to beliefs of truth, love, humanity and praising the natural beauty may be attributed society towards harmonistic approach instead of discriminatory and materialistic world. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo explained this concept as, “if someone comes out from self-appraising and materialistic slant he may plunge deep into his inner; this practice makes him capable to be connected with whole of life and all souls. The deep plunge into inner of own self resulted into beauty of soul, harmony, peace and loving the nature.”²⁴

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo explained this situation with these words;
“Heart is deeper than rivers and oceans who can fathom Heart-

Hoo,

Seamen, boats and oars all are inside ocean of Heart-

Hoo,

All the fourteen Realms (Spheres) are open in Heart like a tent-

Hoo,

Those who fathom Heart *Bahoo* are the ones who recognize Lord-
Hoo”.

He also emphasized on the study of one’s true-self in accordance to cherish love, peace and respect for mankind. He also urged that everyone should determine, ascertain their inner-self and purify it with the name of Almighty Allah. This practice may also strengthen and beautify its spirit besides beautifying and strengthening the physical body. He explained it with these words;

²¹ Usman Hasan, “*Workplace Spirituality and Training Method of Founding Father of Islahee Jamaat*,” (Lahore: Mirrat-ul-Arifeen, 2017), 87.

²² Salman Hasan Khan, “A Sufi View of Human Transformation and Its Organizational Implications,” In S. U. Khan (ed.), *Handbook of Personal and Organizational Transformation*, (Lahore: Khalid Publications, 2018), 833.

²³ W. C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, (London: One world Press, 2007), 41.

²⁴ M. Ayazi, “Islamic Sufism and Education for Peace,” Edward J. Brantmeiervd (ed.), *Spirituality, Religion and Peace Education*, (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2010), 19-35.



“Blackened face is better than darkened heart so that people recognize
Hoo,
When face blackened and heart is fine such heart beloved recognize
Hoo”

CONCLUSION:

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo lived simple life and tried to teach the masses, ethereal love, and affection for humanity, respect everyone, be harmonic, hate intolerant behaviors, avoid harsh attitudes, and promoted peaceful living standards.

He focused to purify and beautify the inner-self so that the harmonic and peaceful society may be developed. His teachings, especially Punjabi *Abyat*, messaged the mankind to unify the world with love and peace. It is most insightful thought that spiritualists including Hazrat Sultan Bahoo have promoted the message of love, humanity, harmony, peace and globalization in their literature and teachings. So there is a need to promote this ideology in contemporary world. Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's mystical teaching has great global attraction for addressing contemporary phenomenon of spirituality, materialism, social responsibility, diversity, religious and ethnic harmony, and universal peace. His *Abyat* has inculcated the beautiful balanced approach of spirituality modernization for better understanding of universal tendencies. The modern world has recognized the importance of Sufi literature for the peace building and utilizing it for the character building and leadership developing purposes. In modern global world, there is need that Sufi literature, especially Hazrat Sultan Bahoo's Punjabi *Abyats*, may not be limited to specified region or nation. The Hazrat sultan Bahoo's poetic philosophy must portray with inherent culture and society.