

FROM THE LOVER TO THE BELOVED: CELEBRATION OF LOVE, SENSUALITY AND DEVOTION IN DADU DAYAL'S COMPOSITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Dadu Dayal (1544-1603) was an influential nirgun bhakti-poet of North-western India. He ranks second only to Kabir in terms of his influence and literary output. The structure, diction, imagery, and philosophy of his poetry bear a - striking resemblance with those of Kabir. In many of his compositions, (like Kabir and several other Sufi and Bhakti poets) Dadu also imagines himself as the "lover" of the Brahm (the ultimate Godhead) whom he calls his "beloved". Dadu Anubhav Vani, the sacred scripture of Dadupanthis (followers of Dadu Panth), is the compilation of Dadu's entire compositions. It contains two thousand five hundred "saakhies"/couplets under thirty-seven "angs"/parts/chapters and four hundred forty-four "padas"/hymns/psalms/songs under twenty-eight "ragas"/musical moods and notes. By translating selected saakhies and padas from the scripture into English, the paper seeks to highlight and examine the concept of the love of Sufis as well as the elements of Bhakti which resonate in Dadu's poetry.

KEYWORDS: *Cross Culture Poetry, Identity, Medieval Nirgun Bhakti Poetry of North-Western India, Multiculturalism, Sufism in the Indian Subcontinent, Translation, Transliteration*

INTRODUCTION

What is associated with Sufism and Bhakti, are essentially the traits of love and devotion. Karen Prentiss Pechelis in *The Embodiment of Bhakti* and Karel Werner in *Love Divine: Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*, define "bhakti" as a Sanskrit term derived from the root, "bhaj", which means to divide, share, partake, participate or to belong to (24). The Bhakti movement also refers to the ideas and engagement which emerged in the medieval era on love and devotion to religious concepts built around one or more gods and goddesses (3). It should not be understood as an uncritical emotion rather as a committed engagement (19-21).

In "Sufi Path", *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, William C. Chittick states that Sufism is equivalent to the "authentic religious experience" and the virtues such as sincerity, love, virtue, and perfection, which discuss the focus of *Ihsan* (doing the beautiful), are immediately recognisable as the heart of Islam (7). Chittick elaborates that Sufis opine that God's mercy and love give rise to the world... (13). Mercy flows in only one direction (from God to the world) but love moves in both directions because people can love God but cannot show mercy upon Him, but only upon other creatures (13). Sufis say that the corresponding human love for God closes the gap between Him and His creatures (14). Human love is manifested insincerity of devotion to the One God (14).

The greater one's love for God, the greater would be the degree of one's participation in His divine image... (14).

In "The Sufi Tradition", *Sufism: A Short Introduction*, Chittick mentions about the Sufis who spoke of the various "states" (*ahwal*) experienced by the *sulks* (travelers) on their path to God (32). *Sukr* (intoxication) is one of such instructive experiences associated with expansion, hope and intimacy with God, which follows upon being overcome by His presence of describing the joy of the seekers in finding the eternal source of all beauty and love within themselves, wherein they see God in all things losing their ability of discriminating between Him and his creation, and differentiating between correct and incorrect (32).

Similarly, in Medieval India, the rise of *nirgun* bhakti-poets along with the rise and spread of Islam and Sufism was a noteworthy phenomenon. The *nirgun* bhakti-poets also emphasized the fact that through personal devotion and love, and by rising above the caste, class, creed, religious and sectarian distinctions, one could achieve oneness with the *Brahm*. They preached the masses through self-composed poetry and songs.

In the same way, several Sufis also found poetry to be the ideal medium for expressing the truths of the most intimate and mysterious relationship which human beings can achieve with God (by loving Him and being loved by Him) (41). Once they love God, they shall be loved back by Him (46). God's love may then intoxicate them, and annihilate all their failings and limitations (46-47). From example, in "In Search of Equivalence: Interaction between Sufism and Hinduism", *The Foundations of Composite Culture in India*, Malik Mohamed writes of Mansur al-Hallaj (c.858-922) who had conceived of the revelation of God with man as the infusion of the divine into the human soul; in Hindu terms, the illumination where "I become that which I love, and that which I love becomes mine" (92).

Malik Mohamed writes that the growth of Sufism in the early Islam was inspired by both external influences and internal urges (102). The earliest Sufis emphasized the mystic elements in Prophet Muhammad's life and teachings, preferred *Quran's* alleged mystic or esoteric interpretation to the literal one, and traced their spiritual descent back to Ali (601-61), Prophet's son-in-law and cousin (102). Hasan-al-Basri (b.642), Rabia al-Adawiyah of Basra (714/17/18-780) and Ibrahim bin Adham (718-82) belonged to that Sufi school which attached importance to the love of Almighty, resignation, piety, and asceticism (102). So their teachings overflow with the love of the "Eternal Truth", the "Eternal Beauty" and the "Eternal Goodness", and with the belief that no submission to His Will is abject humiliation (102-3). The later Sufism was affected by the mystical and philosophical ideas of other religions and cultures containing an endless range of emotional manifestations and imaginative attitudes (103).

It is this latter category of Sufism, through the influence of Kabir, which seems to have deeply affected the compositions, devotional practices, and teachings of Dadu Dayal. The hagiographical accounts on Dadu establish his identity as that of a *nirgun* bhakti-poet in the line of tradition of Kabir, Nanak, Namdev, etc. by claiming that as an infant, he was found to be floating in the Sabarmati River (Ahmedabad) by a childless Brahmin named Lodhi Ram Nagar, who was a cotton merchant by profession, and his wife, Vasibai, who raised him as their own son. But it is a highly contested fact since various scholars, such as Daniel God, are of the view that Dadu Dayal was a Sufi mystic and that his shrine at Naraina (Jaipur District, Rajasthan) was initially treated as a Sufi shrine. Several scholars, such as Parshuram Chaturvedi, also mention the name of his spiritual teacher, Baba Buddha or Burhanuddin, and that of his wife, Hawwa. They also prove the fact that he was a householder and not a celibate ascetic. Another scholar, Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, opines that it was due to the rise of Vaishnavism, and the policies of disciplining and reforming of numerous

sant-based sects/*paths* by several states such as the Jaipur state and the Jodhpur Kingdom of Rajputana, and the Marathas, which began to control them and led to the assimilation of many of such *paths* under the fold of the pan-Indian Hinduism.

In "Sufism in Indo-Pakistan", *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel writes that the traditions of devotional practices and modest living of Sufis attracted the masses, and their teachings of humanity, love for God, and Prophet were surrounded by mystical tales and folk songs (240).

In "The Indian Tomb", *Muslim Saints of South Asia the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*, Anna Suworova writes that saint figures and mythical stories (propagated by Sufism) provided solace and inspiration to the Hindu communities, often in rural areas of the subcontinent, and the Sufi teachings of divine spirituality, cosmic harmony, love, and humanity resonated with the common people(4).

In *The Islamic Path: Sufism, Politics, and Society in India*, Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri clarifies that Sufis were firm in abstaining from religious and communal conflicts, and strived to exist as peaceful elements of a civil society (xi).

For example, in "Spread of Sufi *Silsilas* in India", *Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparative Study*, Mirza Wahiduddin Begg sums up the Chishti *tariqa*'s philosophy as follows:-

- Gnosis and apprehension of the Divine reality through spiritual and subjective means, suppression of the activities of the *nafs* (lower soul) and consciousness about otherworldliness (qtd. in Sirajul Islam 39).
- The idea of *pir-o-muridi*; absolute devotion to the *pir* as a pre-condition of true salvation (qtd. in Sirajul Islam 39).
- Belief in *Kashf-o-Karamat* (miraculous powers of the Sufis); the eternal living of the saints and veneration of their shrines (qtd. in Sirajul Islam 39).
- Belief in Divine Love (qtd. in Sirajul Islam 39).

Many such ideas, values, and philosophies were mutually shared by both the Sufis and the bhakti-poets of Medieval India. For example, the Tamil Siddhars also rejected the theory of transmigration and the authority of the *Shastras* believing that God and love are ones which desires mankind to live in peace recognizing love as God (Mohamed 155).

Just as several Sufis and bhakti-poets, Dadu also rejected the *jati* hierarchy and all the social conventions based on it by championing new social values which promised equality to everyone. In "Poems and Couplets: Dadu Dayal", *Medieval Indian Literature an Anthology*², J. P. Srivastava writes that Dadu combined the nonviolence of the Vaishnavas, the self-control of yogis and the love of Sufis (530). He laid stress on the oneness of God and Preceptor, the importance of the name of Raam and self-dedication, the falsity of the world and the illusion of the worldly-belongings, the love for the nonmanifest, the intense feeling of lovesickness, the unity of the body and the universe, and the realisation of the internal truth (530-31). These facts echo very well in Dadu's poetic compositions too in the forms of saakhies and padas. Such ideals also attracted a large number of people toward him during his lifetime.

DADU'S SAAKHIES AND PADAS/SHABDS

In "Important Elements of Sufism and Bhakti and their Social Relevances", *Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparative Study*, Dr Abdul Haq Ansari states that the Sufi love for God is a passionate love which seeks to dissolve oneself and merge in God, and unless that happens, the Sufi cries, weeps and sighs, and indulges in what induces self-abandonment... (qtd. in Sirajul Islam 40). For example, the following saakhies and padas of Dadu can be quoted, in which Dadu imagines himself as the female "lover" of the *Brahm* whom he addresses as his "beloved", in order to understand Ansari's theory:-

Saakhi 2 "Viraha ka Ang" (Part of Separation):-

Rativantee aarati karay, Raam sanehee aav,

Dadu avasar ab milay, yahu virahanhee ka bhaav.

Lascivious-woman performs aarti, come beloved Raam!

Now, Dadu finds a chance, it's the state of the "forsaken maid". (My Translation)

Saakhi 3 "Viraha ka Ang":-

Peev pukaaray virahanee, nish din rahay udaas,

Raam Raam Dadu kahay, taala-belee pyaas.

The "forsaken maid" calls the "beloved", remains miserable each day,

'Raam, Raam!' Dadu utters; the "lock-creeper's" thirst. (My Translation)

(Note – Here, the term, "lock", has been used metaphorically to refer to some kind of obstruction which does not let anything enter into one's conscience and is comparable to the lock at the door of one's heart. Similarly, the term, "creeper", has been used by Dadu for himself since he is also dependent on God like a climbing plant for acquiring his support from Him. The lock at the door of someone's heart can be unlocked with the "key" of spiritual knowledge and the "creeper" can also grow if nurtured with the nectar of spiritual knowledge. Both are "thirsty" for spiritual knowledge and enlightenment.)

Saakhi 301 "Parichay ka Ang" (Part of Introduction):-

Praanh hamaara peev sou(n), yo(n) laaga sahiye,

Puhup vaas, ghrit doodh mei(n), ab kaasou(n) kahiye.

Enduring our life so involved with the "beloved",

Flower fragrance, ghee in milk; now, whom to tell? (My Translation)

Saakhi 304 "Parichay ka Ang":-

Dadu jab dil milee dayalu sou(n), tab antar kuchh naa(n)hi,

Jyo(n) paala paanhee milya, tyo(n) harijan Hari maa(n)hi.

Dadu: When the heart tuned with the "compassionate", then no difference remained,

Like ice fusions into water;alike, Harijaninto Hari. (My Translation)

Saakhi 21 “*Nishkaami Pativrata ka Ang*” (Part of the Virtuous, Immaculate Wife):-

Dadu meray hriday Hari basay, dooja naa(n)hee(n) aur,

Kaho kaha(n) dhou(n) raakhiye, nahee(n) aan ko thaur.

Dadu: Hari resides in my heart, besides, no one else,

Tell, where toretain “dualism”? No place for the “other”. (My Translation)

Saakhi 9 “*Shooratan ka Ang*” (Part of Bravery):-

Dadu satee to sirjanhaar sou(n), jalay virah kee jhaal,

Naa vah maray, na jal bujhay, aisay sang dayal.

Dadu: The “Sati” scorches in pangs of separation from the “creator”,

Neither she dies, nor burns, extinguishes;for togetherness of the “compassionate”. (My Translation)

(Note – Here, Dadu metaphorically calls himself “sati” in order to express his own condition after separating from God.)

Saakhi 76 “*VinatikaAng*” (Part of Request):-

Sahib sou(n) mil kheltay, hota prem sanayh,

Dadu prem sanayh bin, kharee duhelee deh.

If met, played with the “Master”, love affection would develop,

Dadu without love, affection, surely,a saddened figure. (My Translation)

Saakhi 77 “*VinatikaAng*”:-

Sahib sou(n) mil kheltay, hota prem sanayh,

Parkat darshan dekhtay, Dadu sukhiya deh.

If met, played with the “Master”, love affection would develop,

Dadu, a happy figure, would see the manifested vision. (My Translation)

Saakhi 6 “*Saakshibhoot ka Ang*” (Part of the Witness):-

Dadu brahm jeev hari aatma, khelay(n) gopee Kaanh,

Sakal nirantar bhar rahya, saakshibhoot sujaan.

Dadu: *Brahm's* beingHari's soul, frolic (as) gopi Kanha,

All constantly keep filling theaccomplished witness. (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi 1, Tritaal (To be sung in the afternoon between three o'clock to six o' clock), Shabd 1,

Smaran Shooratan Naam Nishchay (Remembrance of Bravery with Name as the Resolution):-

Raam naam nahee(n) chhaadoo(n) bhai, praanh tajoo(n) nikat jiv jaaee,

Ratee ratee kar daaray mohi, saa(n)ee sang na chhaadoo(n) tohi.

Bhaavay lay shir karvat de, jeevan mooree na chhaadoo(n) tay.

Paavak mei(n) lay daaray mohi, jaray shareer na chhaadoo(n) tohi.

Ab Dadu aisee ban aae, miloo(n) Gopal nisaan bajaai.

Brother! Cannot abandon Raam's name; can forsake life, life may partimminently.

Chop me into tiny pieces; still, would not quit the Master's company.

If thou please, saw the head; life is deceased, but would not abandon.

Take, set me on fire; body may perish, still, would not abandon.

Now, Dadu has become such; would meet Gopal drumming avowedly. (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi 1, Ektaal, Shabd 4, *Viraha*(Separation):-

Kounh vidhi paaiyay ray, meet hamaara soi.

Paas peev pardesh hai ray, jab lag prakatay naa(n)hi(n),

Bin dekhay dukh paaiyay, yahu saalay man maa(n)hi(n).

Jab lag nayn na dekhiye, pargat milay na aai,

Ek sage sangahi rahay, yahu dukh sahya na jaai.

Tab lag nerhay dur hai ray, jab lag milay na mohi,

Nain nikat nahi(n) dekhiye, sang rahe kya hoi.

Kaha karoo(n) kayse milay re, talfay mera jeev,

Dadu aisay aatur virahane, kaaran apne peev.

O! Which method to find with, that friend of ours?

O! Until (He) manifests, the intimate "beloved" is abroad.

This year, endure sorrow in mind without seeing.

Until, the eyes envision not, (He) appears not to meet.

One bed, (He) stays together, this sorrow cannot be borne.

O! The "intimate" is distant until, (He) comes not to meet me.

What use of staying together, (if) not seen closely with eyes?

O! What to do? How to meet? My life goes wasted.

Dadu, such an eager, "forsaken maid", the reason – our "beloved". (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi 1, Shadtaal, Shabd 5, *Viraha Vilaap* (Moaning in Separation):-

Jiyara kyo(n) rahay ray, tumharay darshan bin behaal.

Parda antar kar rahay, hum jeevay (n) ki (n) hi aadhaar,

Sada sangaatee preetma, ab kay lehu ubaar.

Gopya Gusae(n) hvay rahay, ab kaahay na prakat hoi,

Raam sanehee sangiya, dooja naa(n)hee(n) koi.

Antaryaami chip rahay, hum kyo(n) jeevay(n) door,

Tum bin vyaakul Keshava, nayn rahe(n) jal poor.

Aap aparchhan hvay rahay, hum kyo(n) rayni bihaai,

Dadu darshan kaaranhay(n), talaf-talaf jiv jaai.

O! Why is the spirit wretched without your "manifested vision"?

(Thou) Keep curtain within conscience; on what basis shall we live?

The always accompanying "beloved"! Now bring out, extricate (us)!

Gusain turning into mysterious! Why not appears now?

Beloved Raam is together; besides, no one else.

Almighty remains in hiding; why should we live far?

Keshav! Anxious without you; the eyes remain filled with water.

Thou remain in hiding; why should we spend the "night"?

For the "manifested vision", Dadu's life goes wasted. (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi 1, Tritaal, Shabd 6, *Viraha Hairaan* (Astonished of Separation):-

Ajahu(n) na nikasay(n) praanh kathor,

Darshan bina bahut din beetay, sundar preetam mor.

Chaar pahar chaaro(n) jug beetay, rayni gamaae bhor,

Avadhi gae ajahoo(n) nahi(n) aaye, katahoo(n) rahay chit chor.

Kabahoo(n) nayn nirakh nahi(n) dekhay, maarag chitvat tor,

Dadu aisay aatur virahanhi, jaise chand chakor.

As yet, my adamant life left not!

Many days passed without seeing my beautiful beloved!

Four dayparts passed (like) four eras, night turned into dawn,

A period passed, still, (you) came not, where have you been, “enticer”?

The eyes never had (their) eyeful; gazing your path.

Dadu, such a “forsaken maid”, like moon (and) chukar. (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi, Tritaal, Shabd 7, *Sundari Shringaar*(Makeup of Beauteous):-

So-dhani peevji saaj sa(n)waree, ab bagi milo tan jaai banwaaree.

Saaj Shringaar kiya man maa(n)hee(n), ajahoo(n) peev pateejay naa(n)hee(n).

Peev milan ko ahnish jaagi, ajahoo(n) mere palak na laagi.

Jatan-jatan kar panth nihaaroo(n), piv bhaavay tyo(n) aap sa(n)waaroo(n).

Ab sukh deejay jaaoo(n) balihaaree, kahay Dadu sub vipati hamaaree.

Dear beloved, that-woman adorned, beautified; Banwari! Now, meet hurriedly; the body deceases.

Did adorn, dressed-up in mind; as yet, the “beloved” believes not.

For meeting the “beloved” kept up constantly; as yet, my eye-lids blinked not.

(I) Keep looking the path strivingly; if pleases the “beloved”, then (I) adorn.

Now give pleasure; (I) go sacrificing; Says Dadu, ‘Hear our hardships out’. (My Translation)

Raga Gaurhi 1, Gajtaal, Shabd 8, *Viraha Chinta*(Anxiety of Separation):-

So din aavayga, Dadurha peev paavayga.

Kyo(n) hee apnay ang lagavayga, tab dukh mera jaavayga.

Peev apnay bayn sunaavayga, tab aanand ang na maavayga.

Peev mere pyaas mitaavayga, tab aapahi prem pilaavayga.

De apna darsh dikaavayga, tab Dadu mangal gaavayga.

That day would come; Dadu would meet the “beloved”.

Why would not embrace? Then would my sorrow go.

“Beloved” would tell discourse; then pleasure would outpour the body.

“Beloved” would quench my thirst; then would make me love.

Would show one’s “vision”, then Dadu would sing joy. (My Translation)

Raga Maali Gaurh 2, Shabd 82, Shankhtaal:-

Piv aav hamaaray ray, mil praanh piyaaray ray, bali jaaoo(n) tumhaaray ray.

Sun sakhee sayaanee ray, mai(n) sev na jaanee ray, hou(n) bhai divanee ray.

Sun sakhee sahelee ray, kyon rahoo(n) akelee ray, hou(n) kharee duhelee ray.

Hou(n) karoo(n) pukaara ray, sun sirjanhaara ray, Dadu daas tumhaara ray.

Our beloved, come! O dear to our life, meet! O! Go sacrificing for you.

Hark! O adept friend! I know not servitude; O! I have gone crazy.

Hark! O friend, mate! Why should (I) remain lonely? I am very depressed.

O! I make appeal! Hark! O creator! O! Dadu – yours slave. (My Translation)

Raga Maali Gaurh 2, Shabd 83, Shankhtaal:-

Vaalha sayj hamaaree ray, too(n) aav hoo(n) vaaree ray, hoo(n) dasee tumhaaree ray.

Tera panth nihaaroo(n) ray, sundar sa(n)waarou(n) ray, jiyara tum par vaaru(n) ray.

Tera angrha pekhoo(n) ray, tera mukhrha dekhoo(n) ray, tab jeevan lekhoo(n) ray.

Mil sukhrha deejay ray, yahulaahrha leejay ray, tum dekhay(n) jeejay ray.

Tere prem kee maatee ray, tere rangrhe raatee ray, Dadu vaaranhay jaatee ray.

O beloved! Come on our bed. O! I go sacrificing. O! I'm your maid.

O! (I) keep looking your path! O! (I) adorn beautifully. O! Sacrifice life unto you.

O! (I) see your build. O! (I) see your face. O! Then (I) live life.

O! When (you) meet, give pleasure. O! Take this benefit. O! (I) live by seeing you.

O! (I am) crazy in your love. O! (I am) painted in your colour. O! Dadu goes sacrificing. (My Translation)

Raga Kaanharha 4, Varnham Bhinntaal, To be sung during Night between Twelve to Three, Shabd 98, *Viraha Vinati* (Request in Separation):-

De darshan dekhan tera, to jiy jak paavay mera.

Peev too(n) meree vedan jaanay, hou(n) kaha, duraaoo(n) chhaanay, mera tum dekhay man maanay(n).

Peev karak kalejay maa(n)hee(n), so kyo(n) hee nikasay naa(n)hee(n), peev pakar hamaaree baa(n)hee(n).

Peev rom rom dukh saalay, in peero(n) pinjar jaalay, jeev jaata kyo(n) hee baalay.

Peev sayj akelee mere, mujh aarati milanhay teree, dhan Dadu vaaree feree.

Let your vision be seen, so (that) my mind attains peace,

Beloved! You know my sorrow, I hide it not; you saw mine in (your) mind,

Beloved! Pain in heart; why it does not leave? Beloved! Hold my arm!

Beloved! Sorrows fill each pore; they burn the "cage-body"; life departs; why not (you) hold?

Beloved! My bed lonely; I experience your disjunction-sorrow; Dadu sacrifices wealth for you. (My Translation)

Raga Kaanharha 3, Varnh Bhinn Taal, Shabd 99:-

आवसलौनेदेखनदेरे, बलिबलिजाऊबलिहारीतेरे।।टेक।।

आवपियातूंसेजहमारी, निशदिनदेखूबाटतुम्हारी।।१।।

सबगुणतेरेअवगुणमेरे, पीवहमारीआहनलेरे।।२।।

सबगुणवन्तासाहिबमेरा, लाडगहेलादादूकेरा।।३।।

Aav salaunay(n) dekhan de ray, bali bali jaaoo(n) balihaaree tere.

Aav piya too(n) sayj hamaaree, nish din dekhoo(n) baat tumhaaree.

Sab gunh tere avgunh mere, peev hamaaree aah na lay ray.

Sab gunhvanta sahib mera, laad gahela Dadu kayra.

Hark! Come the charming one, let (me) see; (I) go sacrificing for you.

Come beloved! You – our bed; each day, (I) wait for you.

All merits – yours; demerits – mine; Beloved! Do not take our curse.

My virtuous, accomplished Master! Take Dadu's hand lovingly. (My Translation)

Raga Kedaar 6, Rajmrigaank Taal, Shabd 124, Viraha Vinati:-

Kab milasee peev grah chhaatee, hoo(n) auro(n) sang milaatee.

Tisaj laage tisahee keree, janm janm no saathee,

Meet hamaara aav piyaara, taahra rang nee raatee.

Peev bina manay neend na aaye, gunh taahra lay gaatee,

Dadu oopar daya mayaa kir, taahray vaaranhay jaatee.

When would the “beloved” meet, embrace? I embrace others.

Thirst arose for the “vision”; Companion of every birth!

Our friend! Come, beloved! (I am) painted in your colors.

Without the “beloved”, I cannot sleep; keep singing your praise.

Shower kindness, blessings upon Dadu; (I) go sacrificing for you. (My Translation)

LOVE, SENSUALITY, AND DEVOTION IN DADU DAYAL'S COMPOSITIONS

In “Women in Love: Mysticism and Eroticism in Virashaivism”, *Dissent and Devotion in Indian History*, Vijaya Ramaswamy explains that love is central to the path of devotion (122). It is a contrast to sectarian and communal schism, and conflicts which are hate driven since the path of devotion is marked purely by a love which is simultaneous, both

intensely physical as well as transcendental (122). The same idea is also reflected in Dadu's compositions in which Dadu expresses his devotion to God in the form of love.

Ramaswamy also mentions the chief moods of *bhakti* or devotion:-

- *Sayujyam* or union, and
- *Viraha* or separation (122).

The presence of these moods, sometimes, results in love poetry which is often characterized by separation and unrequited love while the other times, devotional poetry in love mode can be passionately sensual and filled with the ecstasy of the union (122). The scholars of religion and spirituality term the intense love of the devotee for God as "bridal mysticism" (122). In the above compositions, Dadu also portrays similar emotions.

In "Important Elements of Sufism and Bhakti and their Social Relevance", *Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparative Study*, Sirajul Islam explains that devotion has five distinct stages of spiritual development (215). They are:-

- **Santa:** The stage where the Bhakta feels awe and humility and realizes God as the Supreme Deity;
- **Dasya:** The stage where Love appears as a form of respect or reverence, and the Bhakta considers oneself to be a servant of one's divine Master;
- **Sakhya:** The stage where the Bhakta establishes a personal relationship between oneself and Bhagwan (God), as friends;
- **Vatsalya:** Paternal or maternal affection; and
- **Madhurya:** A purer stage of the Lover-Beloved relationship; an ultimate and unalloyed form of love (215). Some mystics refer to it as *kevala preman*. It is the stage where the discrimination between the Lover and Beloved disappears and Love ends for the sake of Love – similar to the Sufi concept of *Fana-fi-allah* (annihilation in God) (215).

Just like Kabir and in the line of tradition of various other bhakti-poets of Medieval India, Dadu also gives importance to devotion to God in one's life and it is *madhurya*, which is depicted in many of his compositions. As a female "lover", he or his soul pines to meet the male "beloved" and longs to be united with Him (God).

Dadu has a reason for portraying himself as a female lover and not as a male lover in his poetry. Ramaswamy explains that the "feminine" has a very special place in the spiritual realm and that the devotion itself is portrayed in the form of the *viraha* (the separation of the woman from her beloved) (123). In *nayaka-nayika bhava* (the hero-heroine emotion), the *jeevatma* (the individual soul) is always feminine while the *Paramatman* (the Supreme Soul) – masculine (123). For this intense spiritual urge which imitates the sexual urge can come only if someone is a woman (123). As per a particular ontological construct, it is fairly common to find the male saints, such as Kabir in the north or Nammalvar, Tirumangai Alvar and Manikkavachagar in the south gendering themselves as feminine, in the *bhakti* mode (123). This kind of identification of the woman as body-centered, and the close association of the unbridled sexuality and desire with the feminine is essentially a male epistemological construct (123). What is referred to "concupiscence", which approximates to an ardent sexual desire in the Lacanian sense, locates sexual desire as much in the male psyche as it

does in the female psyche (123). Both male and female saints relocate their desire or the feeling of “lack” in a divine symbol, whether it is the phallic symbol of Shiva or any other symbol which becomes the sole object of their passion (123-4). Since erotic desires as well as passion, are associated with the female, therefore even the males resort to transvestism and gender crossing in their spiritual quest (124).

The scholars of religion and spirituality term the intense love of the devotee for God as “bridal mysticism” (122). Though, bridal mysticism is only one albeit the most sensual, of the many ways in which the devotees relate to the Supreme (122). While bridal mysticism cuts across gender lines, passionate love, in all its intensity and abandon, has been more often associated with the feminine rather than the masculine because in the spiritual path, the male as well as the female saints, speaking in the female voice, emphasise the qualities which are considered “feminine” (submission, surrender, blind love and loyalty in relation to the Lord, their “husband”) (124).

If judged within the paradigm of a patriarchal epistemology, such men and women taking on “feminine” attributes reinforce patriarchy, instead of rejecting or subverting it (124). Then, the egoless, self-effacing sacrificing “bride of the Lord” is glorified who constitutes a mirror image of the earthly, “pious” housewife to whom her husband is “God” (124). ‘The husband is the woman’s palpable, perceptible God’ (*kanavane kankanda daivam*) (a Tamil proverb qtd. in Ramaswamy 124).

Similarly, in Sufism, there are examples such as that of Ibn al-Arabi’s (1165-1240) symbolisation of the sexual and profane love which is a stage leading towards the love divine and is same as the concept which underlies the practices of the Hindu deity – Krishna and those of the Shakti cults (Mohamed 94). It is similar to the Upanishadic idea of Brahmin’s bliss with an unconscious sleep in the arms of a beloved woman (94).

Hence, it can be said that Dadu’s poetry, irrespective of its various influences (Bhakti and Sufism), also portrays devotion in the form of love which is profane, sensual and similar to bridal mysticism. It also reflects the pining of separation and the longing to meet and be united with God.

CONCLUSIONS

The mysticism in Dadu’s poetry overflows with the love nurtured by the female “lover” – Dadu for his male “beloved” – God. His poetry and poetic diction cut across gender, multiple cultural affiliations, and religious traditions. Not only do they epitomize the poetry of *Ritikal* (a period in the age of Hindi Literature when there was an abundance of rift poetry) and *Bhakti kaal* (a period of devotional literature in the age of Hindi Literature) but also the love of Sufis.

In terms of translation, although, the English equivalents are also available for several terms which have been intentionally retained in this English translation of Dadu, in order to highlight the poet, the method of transliteration has been used. Hence, no attempts have been made by me in order to become visible as a translator and I have faithfully surrendered to the text. Such a practice also highlights the differences between the source and host languages, and cultures. Besides, certain terms in their source language exhibit Dadu’s choice of words and rhyme schemes which would have surely evoked cultural resonances in the contemporary audiences of his poetic inventory. Also, the translated compositions -remain almost same in their length as they are in their source language. Therefore, this translation has not become a “transcreation”.

Though the English language acquires a hegemonic position in the Indian context (being the language of the colonizers), but with “transliteration”, the differences between the two cultures and time periods do not get rendered. The “operational terms” have not been influenced by such hegemony. However, it has caused violence or “disruption in translation” by preventing the translation from being fluent. Nevertheless, this translation affects the current state of the host language by not preserving it in which it happens to be but by powerfully affecting it.

At the syntactical level, to achieve perfection in a free rendering, literal translation has not been easy since the syntactic pattern of the source languages is also in a process of standardization; and translation in English only functions as a mode. Attaining the specificity of the source language has also been difficult for it gets disrupted by the rhetorical nature which the host language possesses. Hence, with the “logical specificity”, jumping from word-to-word, by “means of clearly indicating connection”, has been done for capturing the rhetoric which underlines the silence between and around the words. Modals, as additional terms, in the translation have, however, been favored for they do not produce “disruption in translation”; rather, they improve readability.

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