

The effect of his Master on him was so profound that but for his Master nothing else mattered to him. He became strangely selfless and impervious to affairs of the world. Prof. Puran Singh has described an interesting incident of this phase of Bulleh Shah's life in his book, *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry*.¹ One day he saw a young girl whose husband was expected to come home, and in whose preparation she was putting plaits in her hair. A strange desire arose in his mind. He also dressed himself like that woman, put the same type of plaits in his hair, and went in this guise to meet his Master. For the worldly people such an act would look ridiculous, but it shows not only the great love for his Master but also his unconcern with public opinion and his desire to sacrifice himself for his beloved. In the manner of true lovers he shed his masculine pride and assumed the form of a helpless woman, who renounces her ego and surrenders herself completely to her lord.

Whatever questions and doubts Bulleh Shah had in his mind before he met his Master, were all drowned in the experience of his inner light. When he had made up his mind to come to Inayat Shah, people had dissuaded him from doing so, saying "You are a great scholar, a master of miraculous powers and a descendent of prophet Mohammed. Does it seem right to you to go to an ordinary gardener of low caste and become his disciple? Is it not shameful?" But his Master was true to his name.² He showered such grace on Bulleh Shah that a single glance of his made him saturated with spiritual light. In ecstatic gratitude Bullah proclaimed: "O Bullah, if you seek the pleasure of a garden in spring, go

1. Page 15.

2. 'Inayat' literally means favor or bounty.

and become a servant of the *Arain*." Bulleh Shah held the hem of his Master's cloak so firmly that he never let it go from his hand for the rest of his life. All of Bulleh Shah's compositions are suffused with love and gratitude for his Master. In this love he identified his Master with the Lord. He has addressed Shah Inayat with such words as guide, as one who unites people with God, besides calling him spouse, husband, Lord, friend, and beloved.

1. He listens to my tale of woe ;
 Shah Inayat guides me and takes me across.
(Week)

2 a. Shah Inayat is my Master, who has come
 to grace me.
 All my wrangles and strifes are over.
 Who can now delude me ?
(Acrostic)

b. Bullah has fallen in love with the Lord.
 He has given his life and body as earnest.
 His Lord and Master is Shah Inayat
 who has captivated his heart.
(Baran Maha)

c. He pervades in everyone.
 Shah Inayat himself showed it,
 And then alone I could see.
(Baran Maha)

3 a. Inayat will come to my nuptial couch ;
 I am in great delight.
(Knot)

b. My friends have come to congratulate me.
 Shah Inayat, my Lord, has fulfilled my hopes.
(Baran Maha)

As soon as his spiritual experiences were stopped, Bullah hastened to his Master, but the Master turned his back on him and asked him to leave the place. For one thing, the annoyance of his Master, for another the command not to see him! What greater torture could there be for a disciple? Bullah was miserable. He began to burn in the fire of repentance, and his condition was like that of a fish out of water.

In the compositions of Bullah, many references can be found of this heart-rending state of his mind. In many of his *kafis* there is a touch of his personal life. No one can say with certainty when these *kafis* were written. But the descriptions in these poems bespeak of such a mental state. The pain of separation erupts in them like turbulent waves. "In poignancy of emotion, sincerity of feeling, ardor and longing, these *kafis* are matchless."¹

From the *kafi* given below it is evident that the memory of the bliss of union with the beloved and the pain of separation from him are continuing to burn Bullah to ashes like a house on fire. He cannot give up love, but in the separation of his beloved, he can find peace neither by day nor by night. He is not blessed with the sight of his beloved, but without seeing him, fire rages within his breast, and his heart is breaking. It is hard to bear such a state of mind, but it is also impossible to relinquish love. So he hangs between life and death:

I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
 what shall I do?
 I can neither live, nor can I die.

1. *History of Punjabi Literature*, Language Deptt., Patiala, Sufi Poetry (Medieval) p. 60..

Listen ye to my ceaseless outpourings,
 I have peace neither by night, nor by day.
 I cannot do without my Beloved even for a moment.
 I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
 what shall I do?

The fire of separation is unceasing!
 Let someone take care of my love.
 How can I be saved without seeing him?
 I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
 what shall I do?

O Bullah, I am in dire trouble!
 Let someone come to help me out.
 How shall I endure such torture?
 I have been pierced by the arrow of love,
 what shall I do?
 I can neither live, nor can I die.

In another *kafi* he describes his pain thus:

He left me, and himself he departed;
 What fault was there in me?

Neither at night nor in the day do I sleep in peace;
 My eyes pour out tears!
 Sharper than swords and spears
 are the arrows of love!

There is no one as cruel as love;
 This malady no physician can cure.
 There is no peace, not for a moment,
 So intense is the pain of separation!
 O Bullah, if the Lord were to shower His grace,
 My days would radically change!

He left me, and himself he departed.
 What fault was there in me?