

# ***The ‘Lover’ Archetype in Punjabi Classical Poetry***

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## **Abstract**

*Archetypes are primitive mental images which we encounter in art, literature and sacred text and they evoke a deep feeling within us. The most important archetypes represent four dimensions of personality to four levels of awareness and functions with one archetype for each gender. Archetypes can help us better understand our own journey of life, increase communication between our conscious and unconscious and trigger a greater sense of meaning and fulfilment in life. Archetypes first appear in folklore, in characters and symbols as they are a part of our collective unconscious. In Punjabi classical poetry, Ranjha, the lover is the archetype who represents love. He is the main character in the poetry of Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah. The poetry of these three poets are discussed in the following article, representing Ranjha, (the lover), as an essential part of our lives. The lover feels something missing in the society or in his life and leaves home and becomes a traveller. The main theme of the poetry of these three classical Punjabi poets is the story of his journey and his encounter with different obstacles in the way of finding love and beauty.*

An archetype is a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, is supposed to be present in the collective

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unconscious and serves as an example of human behaviour by which we can better understand ourselves and those around us. We encounter them in art, literature and sacred text and they evoke a deep feeling within us. The most important archetypes represent four dimensions of personality to four levels of awareness, and function with one archetype for each gender. The warrior, the lover, the magician and the king for male, and the maiden, the mother, the queen and the crone for female. There are mixed varieties as well. Archetypes can help us better understand our own journey of life, increase communication between our conscious and unconscious mind and trigger a greater sense of meaning and fulfillment in life. According to Jung, archetypes are active living disposition - ideas that continually confluence our thought, feelings and actions. In fact, they are not ideas but inherited possibilities of ideas.<sup>1</sup> As spiritual physical beings we have complex psychological and emotional energies that combine to produce our inner and outer reality. Each of us male or female carries the divine masculine and feminine energies, spirituality therefore, is an integral part of a feeling of well-being, wholeness and connectedness. The archetypes carry this spirituality with them.

Folklore is where the archetypes first appear as characters and symbols which exist as a part of our collective unconscious. All the main genres of literature are, in their incipient form, contained in folk lore. Punjabi literature has been drawing on the live source of folk lore through history and it is this source which connects it with the people. It was the people who strove to defend their homeland and adorn it with the toil of their hands and in the process they laid the beginning of poetic language. It is the peasant, pastoralist, seaman, artisan or trader who produces folk poetry. The Punjabi classical poets used folk legend which enabled them to reconstruct a picture of the inner lives of the people in their poetry. These legends were well-rooted in the psyche of the area, from which they inferred the folk spirituality. By analyzing this poetry we can explore the predominant rural culture of Punjab, as we find folk proverbs riddles, beliefs, customs, medicine, foods, costumes, speech, charms, curses, games, dances, music etc,

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1 Carol S. Pearson, *The Hero Within: Six Archetype We Live By* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), pp.1-333.

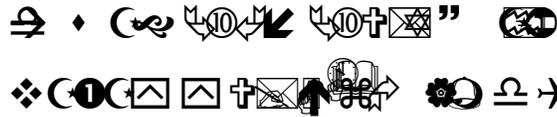
mentioned in it. The archetypes move as characters and symbols in this poetry. There is also a paradigmatic nature of it where the cultural heroes tell us what to do in various life situations. In the same way the heroes of the legends appear in the poetry and participate fully in life and spread this energy around. The Hero is also a protector, with decisiveness and clarity of thought; selfless, genuine and courageous enough to do what is right. He is the 'Ego' in service, watching and engaging his energy with wisdom and toned actions, as needed by synchronistic harmony of life.

Here we are going to discuss the archetype of the lover. In Punjabi classical poetry we find the character of Ranjha, ever present in the folklore of Punjab. He is the strongest character in the poetry of Shah Hussain (1539-1600), Bulleh Shah (1680-1758), and Waris Shah (1722-1798). That is why these three poets are taken here as representatives of Punjabi classical poetry. Ranjha represents the archetype of God (beloved) in the poetry of Shah Hussain and Bulleh Shah, who is transcendent, connected to all that is aspect of self. It is the part of us that resonates, with transpersonal, harmonious love for everyone and all beings. God's archetype is the domain of spirituality mystical experience and intention. With the help of this archetype, Ranjha enters the domain of equality and divine right of happiness for all races and genders, and releases ownership for the greater good. In the poetry of Waris Shah, Ranjha is a rebel lover, a sensitive being, for whom life becomes unbearable because of hatred, jealousy, parochialism and who raises the ante against the existing system of society. Here we are going to discuss Ranjha, as the archetype of a lover, though there are other archetypes of lovers mentioned in Punjabi poetry like, Punon, Mahiwal, Mirza, etc.

### **Historical Background**

The first Punjabi classical poet Baba Farid (1188-1280) appeared in the sultanate period. There were times when the whole of Punjab was integrated in the Delhi Sultanate and there were other times when the bulk of it was incorporated and its territory frequently became the scene of bitter warfare. The thirteenth century was a crucial period for the Punjab, not only due to internecine wars, but also because of foreign invasions. In 1236, the Mongols broke into the Punjab, sacked Lahore; and in 1241-42,

repeatedly raided and ransacked Multan. They again invaded in 1292-96 and 1299 when they attempted to capture Delhi. In 1328-29, the Mongol hordes again swept into the Punjab. Even at the end of the century, in 1397-98 they gave the territory no peace, this time invading under the leadership of Timur. An eternal sad tone pervades in the poetry of Baba Farid which more than anything else captures the melancholy, of the injured soul of the Punjab. In one of his couplets he says:



*Oh! Farid I thought that I was the only grieved soul on the earth But when I saw below from a height I found that every house was burning with sorrow.<sup>2</sup>*

Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah belonged to the Mughal period. Babar became the first Mughal emperor in 16<sup>th</sup> century. Akbar (1556-1605) tried to establish a religious eclecticism in which the best elements of all religions known to him would be contained. The mystical movement also aimed at the unification of Hindu and Muslim. This was the time of Shah Hussain. After the Muslim ascendancy from Muhammad Ghauri, slave kings and their successor Muhammad ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, the Muslim ruler attained its widest scope under Aurangzīb and then declined rapidly.<sup>3</sup> During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the fall of the Mughal Empire, many vicissitudes, raids of Marathas and the invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali, took place. That is the time of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah.

Shah Hussain laments:

2 Aziz ur Rahman, ed., *Dīwān-i Farīd* (Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy, 1995), p.223.

3 Stanley Lane Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammedan Rule (A.D. 1712-1764)* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p.422.



Wherever you see there is deceit, peace is nowhere  
O! Hussain from the treacherous world it is better to retire.

The soul and body are separated, heart yearns for the beloved but body wants comfort.

How can the matters go straight when there are two kings in one kingdom.<sup>4</sup>



You have built-high and big palaces.  
Your real house is the poor grave.<sup>5</sup>

Bulleh Shah seeks his beloved in such hard times:



The door of doomsday and anguish has been opened.  
Punjab is in a very bad state.

There is no fear of hell as hell has broken here.  
Oh! My friend come and meet me.<sup>6</sup>

Waris Shah reflecting on the social and political situation says:

4 Muzaffar A. Ghaffar, *Shah Hussain Within Reach*, Vol.1 (Lahore: Ferozsons, 2005), p.347.

5 *Ibid.*, p.395.

6 Abdul Majeed Bhatti ed., *Kāfiyān Bulleh Shah ma' Manzūm Urdū Tarjumah* (Islamabad: National Institute of Folk Heritage, 1975), p.148.



revenue and rest of it had to be given to their servants and workers. So the peasants could seldom make their ends meet. They also suffered loss after the invasions as the soldiers of victorious army used to plunder the conquered region.<sup>10</sup> According to Amir Khward, the Chisti Sufi looked upon social service as the supreme object of all spiritual exercise. When Shaikh Mu‘īn al-Dīn was asked about the highest form of devotion, he replied that it was nothing but helping the poor, the distressed and the down trodden. This shows the plight of common men in the Sultanate period.<sup>11</sup>

Punjabi poetry presents a system of practical wisdom to people to live harmoniously with one another, with the natural environments of the world beyond. In contrast to the monolithic projection of orthodox Islam the Sufi tradition exists in a variety of real life expression, blended with local cultures and their semiotics, imagery and symbolism. The Punjabi poets and consequently, the character of the Lover (Ranjha), is influenced by the Sufi tradition i.e., Ranjha rebels against the materialistic attitude of his family and leaves his home. Ranjha tries to reform the society by bringing it together into one single whole. For that purpose he had to go on a journey of self discovery. At the time of Ranjha's departure, Waris Shah symbolized the schizophrenic tendencies of his society thus.

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*Ranjha, the mendicant leaves his home as if the soul is leaving  
the body of a person.*<sup>12</sup>

Waris wrote his epic of Heer Ranjha when the Mughal Empire was declining and the country was plagued by political convulsion — dacoits, thieves, thugs, plunderers were moving freely. The official revenue collectors were an added menace. In such circumstances the society loses its balance. Waris illustrated this

10 L.S. Chandel, *Early Medieval State: A Study of Delhi Sultanate* (New Delhi: Common Wealth Publication 1989), pp.509-11. Irfan Habib, *Mughal Hindustan Ka Tarik-i-Zaraat* (Lahore: Nigharshat, 1988), pp.142-69. Mu‘ammad Hāshim Khāfi Khān, *Muntakhub-al-Lubāb*, Vol.1 (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1963), pp.187-88.

11 Sayyid Mu‘ammad Mubārak Alvi Kirmani Amir Khward, *Siyar al-Awalīyah*, Urdu trans. Ejazul Haq Quddusi (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1980), p.110.

12 Baqir, *Heer Waris Shah*, p.54.

split in the opening scene when he describes the display of cheerful and exuberant life style of the people of Ranjha's town, Takhat Hazara. But as you see deeply, you can feel the spiritual hollowness of the people. So the rebel lover becomes a sufi.

Islamic teachings have three constant themes, submission, faith and doing the beautiful;<sup>13</sup> Sufi philosophy is based on the third. On the external level Islam tells us what to do and what not to do and on the deepest level Islam is a religion that teaches people how to transform in such a way that the change brings about human goodness and perfection. This goodness is inherent and intrinsic to the original human disposition, created in God's image.

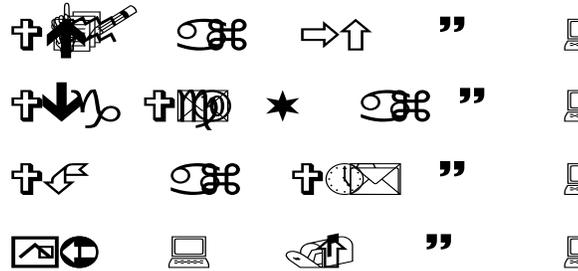
Punjabi poets moved in a multi-religious society and the sufi teaching suited them well to convey their message of love to the common people of Punjab. They used the folk language of Punjab. Human equality, justice, and tolerance shown to other religions required a medium of expression that was commonly understood. The common people who were bent under the burden of polarization of society, were released and sung the songs of these poets who showed a humanistic approach towards religion.

When we analyze the poetry of a certain period we dig the social attitudes that are internalized by people, pulling the poetry against its historical context. There are structures of domination, fragmentation of prejudices that are internalized by everyone in the system including the poets themselves.<sup>14</sup> Negating these attitudes Bulleh Shah says:

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13 William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), p.2.

14 Kamran Ahmad, "A Hermeneutic Analysis of the Heer Ranjha Legend". Ph.D. Thesis, Introduction.



*I am neither a Muslim in the mosque,  
Nor am I a non-believer,  
I am not a pure among the polluted,  
I am neither Moses nor Pharaoh.<sup>15</sup>*

Taking this plea he gives a message of love and tolerance, going through the path of transformation.

Poetry has a great influence on the common man of Punjab. As a tool, poetry invades our being and changes it forever. It is the most ingressive, transformative summon available to human experience. It is a call to transform. It is intrusive, invasive, indiscretion that queries the lost privacies of our existence, an annunciation that breaks into the small house of our cautionary beings so that it is no longer habitable in quite the same way as it was before. It is a transcendent encounter that tells us in effect, 'change your life'. If great poetry is read with serious attention, it can become an initiation that helps us to make a painful rite of passage from one phase of life to another i.e., becoming a fine thread from cotton. It teaches us to see the world differently and bring fresh insight to our own lost and damaged world. As by changing ourselves we, consequently change and reform the world around us. The destructive philosophies of materialism, racism, ethnicity and egoism, triviality selfishness, greed, nihilism are replaced with tranquility of love of and peace. It offers an unexpected insight or a sharp observation, and offer consolatory and comfort. It serves as vehicle for medication with its power to stay in mind and provides mental coordination and emotional reassurance. Its function is reassurance. It imparts the comforting sense that we are on a familiar ground, that we have the perpetual

15 Bhatti, *Kāfiyān Bulleh Shah*, p.60.

tools to make sense of what we are encountering. Even rebels of society or lovers need this sense of security and that is why they select their own societies and often their own rules, which they adhere to with the same fierce unquestioning liberty. Great poetry shows the common man the way to liberate through the power of love and compassion in the time of turmoil. It stays in their mind all the time and becomes a part of their work suggesting different ways to participate in life.

Prior to taking into account the journey of the Lover, we would consider the journey of human consciousness from ancient times and see how after a long struggle man became conscious of himself and his surroundings while overpowering it. It is relevant here because the journey of the lover symbolizes the journey of the human consciousness, through which one can take possession of one's self. It is a story which portrays the whole history of mankind.

### **Journey of Human Consciousness**

The journey of the lover is a journey of his consciousness. Hegel<sup>16</sup> very pertinently, has shown the stages of human transformation. This is a little like the Buddhist theory of the levels of spiritual attainment. It can be explained as the history of human thinking, which starts from the ancient times with the sensory consciousness, from this evolve the perceptual consciousness and then the understanding consciousness. The understanding consciousness sees itself as a great unifying force. It then develops self-consciousness not merely of mind but consciousness of a real person. Then struggle begins between individuals and then evolves the masterly self-consciousness and the servant self-consciousness. The masterly self-consciousness does not progress, but the servant self-consciousness evolves new technologies and sciences to serve the master. Hegel describes how the human mind has risen from mere consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit and religion to absolute knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

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16 G.W.F. Hegel, *The Elements of Philosophy of Right*, Eng. Trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp.315-16, 320-36.

17 T.M. Knox, "Hegel: Hegelianism" in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica Macropedia*, 20:488.

Love for humanity is the outcome of absolute consciousness. It is a desire of the whole being to be united to something or some being, felt necessary to its completeness, be it a person, a cause, society or the whole humanity.

In the light of the journey of human consciousness we can now analyze the journey of the lover. Ranjha, here being the symbol of the lover archetype, along his path of self-consciousness is going to show us how he faces the obstacles and struggles against them during his journey. Working with a particular topic of love, cultural, historical or symbolic information could be extracted from the lover's journey. For example during Ranjha's different phases of the journey he portrays different personalities, like a darling son of his father, an unhappy brother, a traveler, a poor man without means to cross the river, a cowherd, a *jogi* and an archetype of the ultimate beloved.

In Punjabi classical poetry the same sort of human interaction that leads to personal growth of the common people is present, leading them to profound alternations and Ranjha is the main mover in it. Ranjha on the path strengthens his love which encourages him to undergo the severest hardships for reaching the spiritual goal. The poets we are going to discuss in this article disclose through their poetry the subtle secrets of his path, that is; transcendence of the finite with the infinite, and infinite into finite as the mind of infinite becomes actual only via its particularization on the minds of his finite creation. Thus Ranjha serves to realize his own self-consciousness and thereby his own perfection. But man does not exist in this world alone, he lives his life in relation to others and in relation to God. So they all make a unity.<sup>18</sup>

### **Lover Transforming the Self and the Society**

The Punjabi classical poetry is a direct expression of the life of Punjab. There is much conscious and encoded material in it that can be interpreted and analyzed on socio-cultural level to give us an insight into the theme of love and tolerance. In its historical perspective we may be able to get a deeper insight into why things appear as they do and may also add to how the essential meaning

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18 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Eng. Trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p.111.

appear in a particular situation. Once the poetry has been examined and understood in the context of that age, it becomes easier to utilize it, namely, how the poetry and its meaning become relevant in the present age for transformation of a society. How the lover archetype may be evoked in a society marred with hatred, jealousy injustice, selfishness. Love is a desire of the whole being to be united to something or some being felt necessary to its completeness. The lover seeks completeness of his being and the society. The crisis in a love-tale depicts the actual crisis in the society and stresses the universal human situation.

If we look at the themes of the Punjabi classical poetry the most commonly recognized recurrent pattern of it is the poets' intense and unwavering concern with the ultimate and the eternal. As soon as the human beings had completed the evolutionary process, they found that a longing for transcendence was built into their condition.<sup>19</sup> It means that one of the essential yearnings of humanity is the desire to get 'above' the human state. This theme of primitive spirituality would recur in the spiritual journeys undertaken by mystics and yogis in all cultures. Likewise the agrarian societies developed a spiritual awakening that gave people an understanding of themselves and their world. They realized that there was a hidden force at work, and the crop becomes an epiphany. But the poets concern with the ultimate and the eternal is not an indulgence in abstract speculation. It is a search for perspective through which to interpret everyday experience. As man is like a sketch which calls for a surface upon which it can be executed.

Whenever we find limitations, individualization, graduation, qualification, phases, degrees, or parts, we must presume a whole, a foundation upon which grades and degrees can be drawn. Only upon an united sub-stratum can limits be set.<sup>20</sup> The lover in the poetry knows this union and interconnectedness of all things described in Islamic tradition as *Tauhīd*. The search of the lover arises out of the belief in life's potentiality for some

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19 Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005), pp.23, 36.

20 See Max Horton, "Mystics in Islam", *Islamic Studies*, Journal of the Islamic Research Institute (Islamabad) Vol.XIII, No.2, June 1974.

meaningfulness. It is also a concern with the temporal and the transient, and affirmation of the fact that he is intensely alive to the urgency and seriousness of the question of this life. He is as well the symbol of transcendent good.

The lover as a hero feels that there is something missing in the society or in his own life. The old ideas that have nourished his community for generations no longer speak to him. So he leaves home and endures death defying adventures. He confronts different obstacles and during the process dies to his old self and gains a new insight or skill. Ranjha only had his flute, singing songs of freedom. You cannot be a hero unless you are prepared to give up everything, no new life without some form of death. 'Die and become' to end the exasperating spiritual vacuum responsible for all frustrations, anxieties, woes and wars and to recognize the power of love and compassion and its transcendence over all kind of social and religious fragmentations. This point of view was a popular cultural value and the Punjabi classical poetry serves the purpose of reintroducing and reinforcing the cultural values. The theme of love plays an important role in Punjabi classical poetry. Love is often the central concern of it. Quran speaks of love in a number of key verses that clarify its essential role: "He loves them and they love him".<sup>21</sup>

The large number of sufi masters who wrote on divine love, Ibn al-'Arabī and Rumī can be considered the greatest. The Persianate world, from Turkey to India looks back upon Rumī as the greatest spiritual poet of history and the whole of Islamic world considers Ibn al-'Arabī the greatest Sufi theoretician. Most formulators of Sufi teachings after them are inspired by one or both on the divine level, love can be called the motive force for God's creative activity. In many of the commentaries on the Hadith of the Hidden treasure, 'I was a hidden treasure so I loved to be known'.<sup>22</sup> According to Ibn al-'Arabī, the kind of knowledge that God loves to achieve through creation was a knowledge that had its origin in time. Since he knew himself and all things in eternity. Ibn al-'Arabī makes this remark while drawing a parallel

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21 *Al-Quran*, Eng. Trans. Abdullah Yusuf (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1990), 5:54.

22 William C. Chittick, *Sufism*, p.64.

between sexual union between humans for the sake of having children and God's love to be known for the purpose of creating the universe.

God created the world through love. So love produces the multiplicity that fills the universe. He never ceases loving and this keeps the universe in a perpetual state of transformation and flex. All things are infused with love because God's attributes of love brings them into existence and motivates all their activities. God is beautiful and loves beauty, so the whole cosmos loves God because He is beautiful. Human love is God's own love reflected in the creatures. Their love and desires eternalize God's love. Love for any creature is the love for God only ignorance veils us from perceiving it. As no one is worshipped but God, but man is veiled from Him by worldly love. God's love brings him so near to Him that his actions become God's actions. In Shah Hussain and Bulleh Shah's poetry Ranjha is the archetype of God, and the poets are the lovers. Ranjha lover is on the path of seeking God (beauty), when Heer meets him and introduces him to his father and convinces him to keep him as a cowherd. She says:



*His face is shining with God's light.  
He is all the time repeating the names of God.<sup>23</sup>*

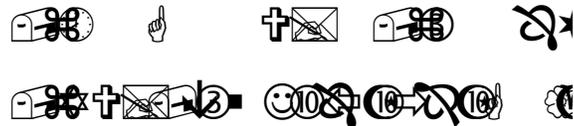
At first Ranjha was the lover and Heer the beloved, but when they meet each other at Jhang, Heer becomes the lover and Ranjha the beloved. This means that the lover and the beloved can change places and one can become a lover or beloved at the same time, because every love relation is mutual, inspired by the beloved and answered by the lover. In Waris Shah's poetry Ranjha is the lover who seeks beauty (Heer), and is under a process of transformation to achieve selfhood during the process. This change is sometimes sudden for which the poets use the image of suddenly getting up, coming from darkness to light, or flying like birds in the air, or taking up a journey but sometimes these changes are very slow. Bulleh Shah speaks about the sudden change:

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23 Baqir, *Heer Waris Shah*, p.30.



*Look my beloved has possessed me during my dream.*<sup>24</sup>  
As Shah Hussain says about the slow change.



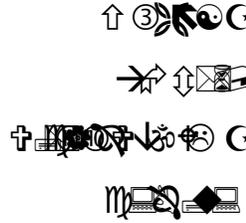
*If you are a lover, you would gain love,  
Lover's way is the eye of a needle,  
If you were a thread you will pass through it.*<sup>25</sup>

Loving is a continuous process, it can be carried with the unity of mind and body. The tradition of love is to link up with the beloved, becomes a part of the union and then to unite others. The way of love is not easy, it is like going through the eye of a needle, becoming a thread which has found union with a needle. It then becomes a productive tool, for stitching together a relationship. Becoming a thread means that the lover is under a process of rediscovering or recreating the authentic self, similar to that act involved in converting cotton into yarn. Cotton cannot pass from the eye of a needle unless it becomes fine, strong and flexible. Once a lover experiences the process of spinning and making himself fine like a thread, he passes the path of love very comfortably and easily. The motif of spinning and wearing can be observed as a natural propensity in a cotton growing region. The remembrance of the beloved could therefore be compared to the act of spinning. Such spinning can turn the heart into fine, precious thread. It could be noted that the sound of the spinning wheel resembles that of the sounds coming out of the mouth when a person is chanting the names or attributes of God.

Bulleh Shah says about love:

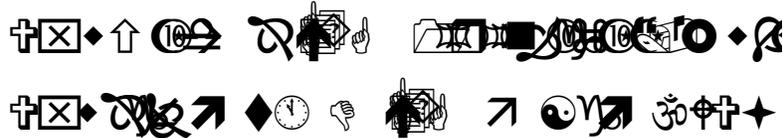
24 Bhatti, *Kāfiyān Bulleh Shah*, p.298.

25 Ghaffar, *Shah Hussain*, 1:p.127.



*Now we are lost.  
 In the city of love.  
 We are renewing and reorganizing ourselves.  
 We are intoxicated with love and are not conscious of  
 ourselves.*<sup>26</sup>

Waris in the beginning of the epic says:



*We must first praise God who made love the basis of the  
 world. As He Himself became a lover and the beloved was the  
 Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).*<sup>27</sup>

All three poets believe that love is the basis of this world. Ranjha seeks the passion of love, which has disappeared from the society, for that he takes the journey to the unknown lands. He crosses the river leaving behind him his previous self. He becomes a cowherd at the house of Heer. But when she is married to the Khera tribe, he has to undergo another process of transmigration and become a *Jogi* or *Faqir*.

**Lover Archetype as *Faqir***

The precondition for love is the ability to see straight and see the things in their true color. We must know that we do not know. We should acknowledge our own ignorance and inadequacy. We know that God alone is adequate. We are far from wholeness, far from balance, wisdom, compassion and every other desirable quality. Human inadequacy yields a deep longing in the soul, which is commonly known as pain. It is sometimes called poverty

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26 Bhatti, *Kāfiyān Bulleh Shah*, p.22.  
 27 Baqir, *Heer Waris Shah*, p.1

which is the non-existence of every existent thing and the abandonment of every lost thing.<sup>28</sup> The Quran also calls this human nothingness poverty, especially in this verse, "O people, you are the poor towards God-He is the wealthy, the praiseworthy".<sup>29</sup> To be poor towards him is to acknowledge one's need for him and the deeper and more sincere this acknowledgement becomes, the more it turns into an overpowering drive to reach the beloved. Few pains are as deep as the lover's pain. The journey towards him never ends as the beloved is always drifting away from the lover.

During the journey of a lover, love is tasted and experienced. Both terms '*faqir*', and '*Darvesh*' means a traveler towards the way of God. In Punjabi poetry the image of a *faqir* is at the core of the idea of the lover. It is the *faqir* who comes to occupy the centre of arena at the most vital, the most crucial moment on our literary experience. As he acts he evolves into a *faqir*. In the poetry of Shah Hussain and Bulleh Shah the lover becomes the beloved. It is because he is the one who has dared to love in a special way. For example Ranjha, who was born in the class of 'haves' was reduced to the level of a 'have not' because he would not compete with his brothers for the possession of better land. He allows himself to be deprived of the better land, and choose freedom rather than competing for possession of wealth. Ranjha becomes the beloved because he opted for life he wished to live. He had risked starvation, psychological isolation and the terror of loneliness. He chose his flute because in songs was the way to being of a *faqir*. The lover is also the servant of the beloved as Hussain says

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*The poor faqir Hussain says, you are the master and I am the servant.*<sup>30</sup>

In the poetry of Waris Shah, Ranjha is a lover. His journey is the continuously unfolding antithesis of the system dominated by

28 Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhis, *Kitāb al-Ta'ārauf: The Doctrine of the Sufi*, Eng.trans. A.J. Arberry, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1986), p.95.

29 *Al-Quran*, Eng. trans. Abdullah Yusuf, 35:15.

30 Ghaffar, *Shah Hussain*, 2:p.570.

his brothers. As he proceeds, he is continuously dispossessing himself. He had given up his land, his clannish entitlement, his corrupted relationship. Now finally, he gives up the last vestige of his class, he takes up a job in the lowest class of working men. In the end he becomes a *jogi* or *faqir*. He can transform himself, but we compared to him cannot 'become', we cannot love and cannot sing. We live in a way of ease, which is devoid of the possibility of pain. Ranjha *jogi's* condition signifies the futility of any compromise between the powers of possession and the elements that seek to transform, renovate and re-discover life. Any attempt at compromise will be fatal for the latter. Because Ranjha can exist only as long as he is most intensely himself. The opposition between the *faqir* and the existing socio-economic system is total. The only choice before him is to keep his pledge as a *faqir*.

Shah Hussain says.



*O Hussain! the path of poverty is very difficult.*<sup>31</sup>

When Ranjha become a *jogi*, he seeks a Guru and goes to the Tilla Balnath and says to the Guru:



*I wished to become a jogi since I fell in love with Heer*<sup>32</sup>

Ranjha *jogi* says to the girls of Rangpur:



*Ranjha said, don't be perplexed about my identity, because a tiger, a snake and a faqir don't have a country to be identified with.*<sup>33</sup>

Becoming a *faqir* or servant of God is a stage in self-realization or self-discovery. It is also a stage during the journey of human consciousness. The theme of breaking for the sake of

31 *Ibid.*, 2:p.761.

32 Baqir, *Heer Waris Shah*, p.154.

33 *Ibid.*, p.178.

construction of one's new self, is common in Punjabi poetry. The ego (*Nafs*) has to be broken, the body and heart and everything in it naughted, so that God can reside there. To know the inner most heart means to discover the point at which the divine is found, which is the meeting point of the human and the divine. The only means of drawing near the divine beloved is by constant purification through love. Love for God and love for his creation having transformed him through 'Loving *Tauhīd*'<sup>34</sup> man sees with the eye of intuitive knowledge and understands the way to God. Ranjha gains spiritual strength and knowledge of the world. Being *jogi* suggests a different way of life. He has broken all his relations for developing an authentic relationship with Heer. His eyes are stitched towards the beauty (Heer). Both are on the path to freedom and together they pass over the road of love and understanding.

### Female Lover

When the poets use the character of Ranjha to represent the archetype of God or a beloved, Heer becomes the archetype of a female lover. Her goal becomes to inspire the female sensibilities of the universe, i.e., to inspire tenderness, productiveness and passion. Her self-assurance usually serves her well. She does not experience her self directly, due to virtue of her nature, but instead searches for herself through the response of others. The lover's self-esteem is tied to the quality of her relationship with the beloved though she may seem full of feminine wiles, she sings harmony to her beloved. She thrives on stimulation and is capable of intense passionate appreciation of all that adds beauty and excitement to her life. Many myths to the lover type goddesses are tales of transformation, which teach them a lesson that the other must learn. The power to transform one's self, to shed the old skin and start over again, rejuvenated, belongs to the female lover's archetype, in the same way it belongs to the male lover.

Hope and vitality grace and confidence are other features of the female lover, by which she shows us how we can leave behind those parts of ourselves that have outgrown and become goddesses. She bestows love and healing to those around her. It is very easy

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34 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006), p.140.









have some situations, themes, plots common in our lives through which we realize our place in the society and in our family. These archetypes are the characters in the stories, like the warrior, the king, the lover, the mystic, the queen, the maiden, the female lover etc. In this article the archetype of a lover (Ranjha) has been discussed, who is also inspired by a mystic path, or *sufi* way of life, searching God (beauty). The lover archetype is giving, caring, intimate. He is the primal energy, passion and appetite for all human hungers, such as food, well being, reproduction, creativity and meaning. He is the symbol of man's connectedness to all other people. The lover Ranjha is a traveler in Punjabi poetry, whose goal is to move into another life, or go into the other dimension of life, that is less alien and more 'us'.

The symbol of love in the Punjabi poetry is the lover, who is a traveller, going on a journey of self-discovery. By taking this journey he discovers himself as well as the remedies to the ills of his society. He meets the people at the helm of affairs and by encountering them comes to know the hollowness of the important institutions and the people holding offices there. The lover also comments on the worldly gains these people have gathered to feel secure in life, but wealth cannot give you security. It only lures with a potential luster. The lover makes fun of the heaps of wealth and takes refuge in the real essence of the world that is love. According to him God is the source of all love, so he comes near to God. He realizes the inadequacy of human beings, which yields a deep longing in the soul which is commonly known as pain. This path of separation, this knowledge of man's essential nothingness is called 'poverty' or '*faqr*'. *Faqir* is the driving force behind the lover; by becoming aware of his poverty he reforms himself and the society.

Ranjha, the traveller is homeless and chooses a life of abstinence from worldly pleasures to pursue religious and spiritual goals. Religion teaches him that salvation and liberation involve a process of mind-body transformation that is effected through practicing restraints. Max Weber<sup>52</sup> in his study of society and

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52 For details, see Max Waber, *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hindustan and Buddhism* (New York: The Free Press, 1958).

religion of India notes that Indian beliefs tended to interpret the meaning of life as otherworldly or mystical experience. The intellectuals tended to be apolitical in their orientation and the social world was fundamentally divided between the educated whose lives were oriented towards the exemplary conduct of a prophet or wise man, and the uneducated masses who remained caught in their daily rounds and believed in magic to possess power over gods. He further argues that in Asia, no messianic prophecy appeared that could have given "Plan and Meanings" to the every day life of educated and uneducated alike, like the Near East. If we analyze the character of Ranjha in the light of what Max Weber concludes, Ranjha is a lover, traveller, *faqir*, intellectual, looking for a *Guru* to be initiated in the path of *Jog*. *Guru* is an important icon in Hindu culture, as *Pir* in the Muslim culture. He is a person who is regarded as having great knowledge, wisdom and authority and uses these abilities to guide others. He is the spiritual advisor, the enlightened master who derives his authority from experience, he is sometimes the *Avatar*, who is considered an incarnation of God. In Shah Hussain's and Bulleh Shah's poetry, the lovers are females. So Ranjha becomes the beloved, the *Avatar*, the incarnation of God. In Waris Shah's poetry he is the philosopher and seeks a *Guru* who could guide him towards the path of beauty. The *Guru* tells him that this path of *jog* is very difficult and he will have to kill his senses and desires and he will have to die before dying to attain spiritual power.

Self-negation or breaking oneself is what he is doing during his journey. In the end he becomes a totally new self. A new self is also a symbol of a new environment and of a reformed society. Great poetry helps one to trust one's abilities and to have confidence in others and the society and enhances the better self within him and others. It weaves a net among all the people around and brings them closer. They start knowing and recognizing each other, and become a single whole. They look towards one and the same direction. They act and speak sanely. There are gains and losses. There are gains and losses. Great poetry helps making a healthy society and the lover is its agent in society. That is how great poetry becomes relevant in present age. The love is the needle which joins and stitches the patches of the society in a single whole. Lover is the

communicator, the connection between the poet and the reader, in the poetry of the three poets that we have discussed in the above article, namely Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah.

The lover, be it male or female, tells us what values the great thinker poets respected and wanted to promote in their society. They experiment their electuary, a remedy for the ills of the society on lover and he gladly offers himself for that. If he could reform himself, everyone else could, if he could become a traveler, go on a journey towards his inner-self, others could follow him, if he could negate his previous self by self-realization and reorganize and renew himself through the power of love, other can do the same. The ideal of both the male and female lovers is the archetype of God, the beauty, the truth. To acquire their goal, they struggle, they yearn for the unity. They cross the river of their existence. They have to work against the forces of determinism and fetch the opportunities of freedom. They are here to break the shackles of subjection and helplessness. The poets have created these characters to help them to expand and spread their message. In fact, the lover archetype has forcibly entered in the poetry, rising up from the folk tradition and making its way into the present, in which the poets dwell peeping into the future. As great poetry is a window towards the future, which can not only predict it but also helps building it up for the coming generations by suggesting different ways to participate in life.

Humans not only interact in a society but they collectively create relatively enduring cultural products like poetry stories dramas, within which they can realize their own pattern of life as reflected. Furthermore such cultural products themselves provide conditions allowing individuals to adopt particular cognitive attitudes. Punjabi classical poetry is written for singing, when sung collectively, lifts the mood onto the level of religious worship. The lover of the poetry helps us refine our imagination and channelize our energies, and our hopes. He is the guiding force, the hero of our stories in which we live and identify ourselves with its characters. We sympathize with him, we are acquainted with him. He is our mentor. By befriending the lover, we befriend the ideal of the great thinkers the Punjabi classical poets, because the poets also love him, adorn poetry with his acts of love and passion. By

using the vernacular language of Punjab they bring their ideal closer to the common people, showing them the way of the lover that should be followed by them.

If we look at the story of Heer-Ranjha as a great narrative, the great religions of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, institutionalized this narrative knowledge and monotheism invested the narrative with a unitary extra mundane subject as the central agent, the Mover, the Designer, the Ultimate. These narratives are a form of knowledge sharing, which not only explained but legitimized knowledge to construct a world view, which is rooted in the social order of society. Everyone looks for the story of his own life within the story of the universe -within the story of the hero. The Muslim grand narrative, or the view of history is the story of divine contact through prophets to teach purity of heart, so that people may receive the guidance of the one true creation of God. Victory ultimately is for those who have purified their hearts and accepted the divine nature of the world. Postmodernists are sceptic about the totalizing nature of the grand narrative by some form of transcendent and universal truth. The postmodernists deny benefits in the modern age as they ignore the variety of human experience. They are also seen to embody unacceptable views of historical development in terms of progress towards a specific goal.

The hero of the legend receives a call to adventure, sets out on a quest, crosses various thresholds and rivers, overcomes adversity and trial, encounters a women temptress, obtains a boon from society and attempts to return and bring it back. But the latent diverse passions of human beings make it impossible for them to be marshalled under some theoretical doctrine. The hero is determined to find a utopia but the society turns the rebel hero into a saint. The grand narrative is lobbying its function, its great heroes, its great dangers, its great goals. The obsolescence of the grand narratives apparatus of legitimating corresponds with the crisis of metaphysical philosophy. According to the postmodernists small narratives are now required in the place of these grand ones.

In the present authors view grand narrative are the way wisdom and knowledge is transformed in diverse cultural background and are oral record of history transferred generations

after generations. Through them we can live on several levels of consciousness simultaneously. These narratives save and enrich a language and define a culture. We live with the narratives, the characters and places and they become real to us. Poetry based on these love legends is the link with our past and the vision of the future, as every symbol of authority every relic of past endeavour, is a message to the future.