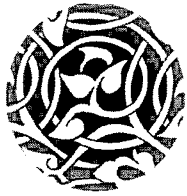

# THE Muslim WORLD

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# Contents

*Qawwālī*: Poetry, Performance, and Politics

Guest Editor: Qamar-ul Huda
United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C.

## ARTICLES

543 Introduction
**Qamar-ul Huda**

548 "*I transcend myself like a melody*": Khwājah Mīr Dard and Music in Eighteenth-century Delhi
**Homayra Ziad**

571 *Qawwālī* Between Written Poem and Sung Lyric, Or . . . How a *Ghazal* Lives
**Scott Kugle**

611 The Performance of Perplexity: A Sufi Approach to the Paradoxes of Monotheism
**Amer Latif**

626 Risky Knowledge in Risky Times: Political Discourses of *Qawwālī* and *Sūfiana-kalam* in Pakistan-Indian Sufism
**Shemeem Burney Abbas**

640 Unseen Power: Aesthetic Dimensions of Symbolic Healing in *Qawwālī*
**James R. Newell**

# Risky Knowledge in Risky Times: Political Discourses of *Qawwālī* and *Sūfiana-kalam* in Pakistan-Indian Sufism

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In this article, I will examine the discourse of Sufi performance that constitutes "risky knowledge in risky times."[1] The two major poets that I will discuss and whose poetry is still sung at their shrines are Bulle Shah and Shah Abdul Latif. Both poets lived in risky political times. Both challenged the theocratic forces of their times and questioned the religious establishment. Shah Abdul Latif was also a roving minstrel, although we do not have such information about Bulle Shah; he was born in Uch Gillian near Bahawalpur and his family moved to Kasur, near Lahore.

Bulle Shah and Shah Abdul Latif were contemporaries: Bulle Shah lived from 1680 to 1758, Shah Abdul Latif from 1689 to 1752. I was fortunate enough to visit the shrines of both the poets during the course of my fieldwork in Pakistan from 1992–99. Both poets wrote in their indigenous languages, i.e., Panjabi, Siraiki and Sindhi, and in their own indigenous contexts. Both challenged the ruling theocracy, although challenging the theocracy is one of the major themes in all the Sufi poetry in the Pakistani languages. Both Bulle Shah and Shah Abdul Latif lived in the post Aurengzeb-Alamgir period (Aurengzeb died in 1707). The Mughal empire was disintegrating; political and religious bigotry was on the rise; these were risky times. Both poets wrote about common people, their sufferings and hopes. Shah Abdul Latif's poetry is replete with suffering female heroines such as Sassi, Sohni and Marvi. According to an interview with Alan Faqir (only a year





before he died in 2000), these sufferings symbolize the suffering of the land. Alan Faqir claimed to be a *faqīr* or minstrel of Shah's shrine in Bhit Shah. He said about Sind,[2]

> It has been looted. It has been plundered. It has been assaulted. But it goes on. It has not died . . . it has existed for centuries and it shall exist. The Tartars came, the Sassanids came. . . they all came and went . . . and yet we sit here . . . this land stays . . . God wishes, it will stay. Sain Latif even at that time talked of this land. Marvi is the land. Malir is the land. All these women, Marvi, Sassi, Sohni leave their homes to walk on this soil. Who is this Marvi whose nails are red and her hands have the red henna on them? Latif put a message in his legends, whether it is Marvi or Sassi or Sohni, Shah puts them all in his narratives.

The late Sheikh Ghulam Hussain, Abida Parvin's husband and music director, spoke to me about Shah's role as a roving minstrel and nomad,[3]

> In the case of Shah Latif you will find at least fifty places where he used to spend the nights. Audiences would come there and sit with him at night. There would be a *parao*, they would make a fire and they would have a *mehfil* and when he sang his narratives there would be *faqirs* and dervishes with him, so like the Shah these dervishes would also wander around the areas, and when night fell, they set up their camps, burnt the fires, came together to sing mystical texts.

Shah's own poetry in the *Risalo* is full of references to wandering minstrels. In *Sur Ram Kali,* he says,[4]

> This community of *jogis* who have their ears slit and lobed
> These Lahutis, according to Latif do not alter their goal
> Let us go and visit the dwelling place of these ascetics, who
> Have consumed their egos completely.

In Shah's *Risalo*, the jogis or wandering ascetics have several names, such as *jajak, manganhar, atai, pan, charan, rogi, barat* and *rababi.* To this day, Shah's *faqirs* still sing in falsetto, imitating women's voices at his shrine on appointed nights. The women's voices are those of Sassi, Marvi or Sohni, who protest oppressive patriarchal political systems.

Abida Parvin herself reaffirmed Shaikh Ghulam Hussain's statements. However, what I found interesting in my interview with Parvin was her take on gender in Shah Latif's poetry, in particular, but in Sufi poetry, generally. She said,[5]

> Male and female does not even come into it—what you call Allah is one — God is the *mehver,* the center of everything . . . it does not matter whether it is male or female, in fact we can really say that in the Sufi's terminology, if someone is not a male he is called a female.

Global gender theory is only now looking at the nuances of gender from various perspectives; in Sufi poetry, such awareness has existed for centuries.

The figure of the nomad as an outcast, as someone on the margins of the social order, presents itself strongly in the Sufi poetry of Pakistan and India, especially in the *sūfiana-kalam* traditions associated with roving minstrels.[6] Fear of the clergy promoted the *sūfiana-kalam*, which shared cross culturally with the Bhakti.[7] For centuries, grassroots Sufi musicians used mystical poetry to express resistance against the clergy who colluded with the establishment: Mira Bai, Shah Abdul Latif, Sultan Bahu, Baba Ghulam Farid, Bulle Shah, Shah Hussain, Waris Shah and Khavaja Ghulam Farid all wrote mystical poetry with political meaning. Their poetry is sung in the roving minstrel tradition, as well as in the formal settings of *Qawwālī*. The fact that they wrote and composed in the Hindi, Braj, Gujrati, Sindhi, Saraiki and Punjabi vernaculars bringing the spiritual metaphor to their audiences was in itself a political act for the Sufis. They challenged elitist claims of reading Arabic, the language of the Qur'ān, or Persian, the language of higher intellectual thought. These poets simplified Qur'anic teachings and infused their poetry with spirituality by using alphabetic *zikr*, the repetitive use of a word or phrase such as the *alif*, the first phoneme of the Arabic alphabet, which is an A. Allah or God is said with the *alif*. Thus we have, in the twenty-first century, the Junoon group singing Bulle Shah's *kafi* (short devotional verses) about the *alif*. The Junoon consider their music Sufi rock and use steel drums:[8]

**kafi 80-Bulle Shah**[9]

| **Panjabi Transliteration** | **Translation** |
|---|---|
| ilm o bas karen o yar | withhold knowledge, o friend |
| ik ho *alif* tere darker | *alif* is enough, *alif* is all |
| ilm o bas karen o yar | withhold knowledge, o friend |
| ik ho *alif* tere darkar | *alif* is enough, *alif* is all |
| ilm na ave vic shumar | knowledge is not included |
| ilm na ave vic shumar | knowledge is not included |
| jandi umar nahi itbar | life passes nothing is certain |
| ilm o bas karen o yar | withhold knowledge, o friend |
| ik ho *alif* tere darkar | *alif* is enough, *alif* is all |

Sufi poetry continues to be sung as political protest. Whenever and wherever there is oppression in the Muslim state, Sufi poetry is sung in resistance. This will be discussed in more detail later in this article.

Male protagonists in Sufi poetry sung in the performance traditions of *Qawwālī* and *sūfiana-kalam* are nomadic, living on the peripheries. Hence,





Ranjha is a nomadic cowherd, a *vanjlivalla* (flute-player) in the Siyal territory of the Panjab. Hir, the beautiful daughter of the powerful, landowning Siyals, falls in love with Ranjha.[10] Mahival is an Iranian nomad, albeit an aristocratic merchant, in Sohni's territory in Sind.[11] Punnu is a nomadic Baluch aristocrat in Sassi's territory in Sind.[12] Male nomads come to seek resources in female territory: Ranjha comes seeking a livelihood; Mahival for adventure and knowledge and eventually a livelihood; Punnu for grain, as his own Baluch territory faces a famine. The females are in power — it is they who own the land and the resources. Hir's family members are landowners who employ Ranjha to tend the buffalo; Mahival too ends up tending buffalo for Sohni's family after he squanders his own fortune buying pottery. Sassi is the ruler in her land when Punnu comes from Hot, Baluchistan to purchase grain. According to Deleuze and Guittari, nomads as opposed to citizens are different in the spaces that they occupy: citizens are at home in the striated space of the state form, while nomads occupy the smooth spaces of nonstate relationships.[13] Thus, as a condition for him to marry Hir, the Siyal tribe in a Hir-Ranjha Sufi narrative insists that Ranjha bring his clan to them to show himself worthy of marriage to Hir. Without his family patriarchy, Ranjha is only a nomadic cowherd. The same principle applies to Mahival, who although an Iranian merchant, is only a nomad with no family or state to back him in Sind. Punnu is a royal prince married to Sassi, herself a state ruler. However, his patriarchal Hot tribe cannot give him up to Sassi's matriliny. His tribe kidnaps Punnu; he is whisked away to Baluchistan.

Sufi poetry, especially in the *sūfiana-kalam traditions*, is about wider social movements outside the domain of the state, within anarchist theory and the theory of social movements. The Panjabi *ang* of *Qawwālī* may be considered part of such traditions. My research in *Qawwālī* and *sūfiana-kalam*, which began in the 1980's, investigates Sufi poetry and performance within such traditions in the diaspora of the West. Such evolution occurred for a number of reasons, including the emergence of orthodox Islamic states such as that established in Pakistan under General Ziaul Haq in 1978. As state policy became more and more obscurantist, artists, freethinkers and intellectuals, Sufi scholars and musicians found the native soil less receptive to plurality. These were risky times. Musicians such as Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and the Sabri Brothers explored performance opportunities in Europe and the West. In addition to political factors, there was also the emergence of "world music" and directors like Peter Gabriel. Expatriate South Asian audiences also provided rich opportunities. It was in the Western diaspora that Sufi musicians like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan transported the original Sufi shrine performances from the 12th century to the modern concert arena. Khan also resurrected a Bulle Shah-like critique of the orthodox state under Ziaul Haq by performing

Bulle Shah's poetry in the Western concert hall, as well as in Pakistani venues. Khan transformed the traditional *Qawwālī* of the Sufi shrine by infusing it with a new *ang*, using innovative linguistics and orchestration. Khan's adaptation of Sufi poetry was indeed so politically provocative and challenging in its appeal to the Pakistani youth that I personally witnessed a large-scale gate crashing of his concert at the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad in August 1992. Most of the grate crashers were young men from the upper class Islamabad schools and colleges. Later, during my personal interview with him, Khan confided that he wanted the youth to connect to Islam. He affirmed that he wanted to do this through an intelligent and simple interpretation of the Islamic concepts of humanity and love, the way the Sufis had done. Khan said that like the Sufis, he updated "the message" for his modern audience, today's youth. Many of the Sufi songs that he sang at the concert had significant political and aesthetic dimensions; he used traditional musical instruments as well as innovations from Western music, such the subtle use of the saxophone. Khan's performance was a political statement about *Qawwālī* and its emerging structures, especially through its poetry.

I quote here a text transcribed from a live performance of a Bulle Shah text that Khan sang:[14]

| **Panjabi Transliteration** | **Translation** |
|---|---|
| Makke gaya gal mukdi nahi | Going to Makka will not resolve this |
| Panve sau sau Jume pa*rh* aiye | Even if you say a hundred Juma prayers |
| Ganga gaya gal mukdi nahi | Going to the Ganges will not resolve this |
| Panve sau sau *gh*ote khaye | Even if you take a hundred baths |
| . . . | . . . |
| Bulle Shah gal tanve mukdi | Bulle Shah the matter is only resolved |
| Jadun mai nun gale lagaiye | When you hold the beloved to the heart |
| Pa*rh* pa*rh* alim fazil hoya | Many books you read, became an Alim-Fazil |
| Kadi apne aap nun pa*rh*ya nahi | Never you read your own self |
| Pa*rh*i namaz na riyaz na sikhya | You learnt to pray, never you learnt riyaz |
| Teri kis kaam pa*rh*yian namazan | What good have your prayers done? |
| . . . | |
| Rati jagi soyen, *sh*aikh sadavein | At night, you sleep, you wake<br>The shaikh's call wakes you up |
| Par rat nun jage kute tenti ute | At night, the dogs are awake<br>The dogs are one up on you |
| Yar da boha na chade panve mari jute | They do not leave the beloved's threshold<br>Even when you throw shoes at them |
| Bulle Shah uth yar mana le | Bulle Shah, wake up<br>Reconcile with the beloved |
| Nahi te bazi leygaye kute tenti ute | Or else, the dogs are one up on you. |





The references in this *Qawwālī* are obvious: the humor targets the textual interpreters of scripture.

During the same period of General Ziaul Haq's 1980s orthodoxy, Abida Parvin did something courageous: she sang Shah Latif and Bulle Shah's poetry to large audiences in Islamabad's Lok Virsa and at the Open University.[15] She sang to Ziaul Haq's bureaucracy, officials in the federal government, and the individuals who implemented his theocratic agenda. I quote here a text from an original transcription of a concert performance; this is in the *sūfiana-kalam* tradition of the roving minstrels. Parvin improvised verses that challenged the theocracy in the same way as did Ali Khan. The political references in the song, a Siraiki composition of Sultan Bahu, are evident,

| | |
|---|---|
| pa*rh* pa*rh* ilm hazar kitaban | They read books, thousands of them |
| alim hoe sare hu | They think they are scholars |
| ik harf ishq da na parh janan | Not a word of love they know |
| bhulan phiran bichare hu | Poor, lost souls |
| lakh nigah je alim vekhe | Thousands of scholars, the eye has seen |
| kise kandhi na ca*rh*i hu | No one carried them on the shoulder |
| hik nigah je ashiq vekhe | One lover, the eye has seen |
| lakh harazran tare hu | A thousand stars that lover has been |

Both Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's and Abida Parvin's (in the 1980's) performances and their references to theocracy and politicized orthodoxy have interesting connections to the apostasy trials of Mahmoud Taha that took place in the Sudan in 1985;[16] Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's trial in Egypt started around the same time and culminated in early 2000, with Nasr Hamid and his wife seeking political asylum in Belgium.[17] It was the state and the religious establishment that used orthodox, textual arguments against intellectuals to remove them for political purposes. Throughout history, the textual "scholars" have sided with the state to remove political opposition. Sufi poetry in the *Qawwālī* and *sūfiana kalam* traditions is a statement of political resistance or the reaffirmation of political altruism. The *qaul* in the *Qawwālī* traditions, "*Mun kunto maul fa Aliun maula*," is a prime example of a political statement. The qaul is derived from a *hadith* mainly upheld by Shiʿi Muslims and followed in the Chistiyya tradition of the *qawwal bacce* musicians.[18] As such, Sufi poetry and performance are viewed with ambiguity by Muslim imams and mullahs.

Many consider Sufi mysticism dangerous to existing power structures, as its epistemology threatens ruling hierarchies. While the ruling hierarchies exclude the general population from knowledge, thereby ensuring their disenfranchisement, Sufi poets reiterated that the *alif* is enough to establish contact with the divine. Much of the existing Sufi scholarship in English, which includes the work of Lajwanti Rama Krishna, Annemarie Schimmel, Margaret Smith and myself, looks at the feminine voices in Sufi poetry mainly from an aesthetic point of view: there is much encoding in the myths that are sung in public contexts.[19] As a result of the "coding" and "female myths," the performances become disguises and musicians are sometimes able to escape being persecuted by the clergy, who throughout the ages have validated the hegemony of the ruling classes.

My argument is that whenever rulers exercised extreme political-ideological repression in Pakistan and India, Sufi poetry and other mystical poetries emerged, giving a voice to oppression. These voices were disseminated through performance and the encoding of the female myths, the rulers and the oppressed, the male and the female. Though I look primarily at the Pakistani situation between 1980 and the present, I have also seen the resurrection of Sufi poetry in performance in international settings in Europe, particularly in England and in the Middle East, from 1980 until now. The fact that the singing of Sufi poetry in public contexts (especially in concerts) was resurrected and the performances adjusted to the instrumentation and electrification of "world music" has much to do with the establishment of an orthodox, fundamentalist regime under General Ziaul Haq in the 1980s. In order for the military ruler to validate his authority, his establishment sought the support of the clergy.[20] It is exactly during this time that Abida Parvin resurrected the work of Shah Abdul Latif, Sacchal Sarmast, Bulle Shah, Sultan Bahu and other Sufi poets who wrote in indigenous languages. It was precisely in the 1980's that Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan made a place for himself in Europe, particularly in France and England among the diasporic South Asian and Middle Eastern populations in these countries, as did the Rai musicians.[21]

It was thus performers like Abida Parvin and Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan who became the mentors for the young Pakistani musicians who adapted the themes of Sufi poetry in electronic environments and integrated their performances within the genre of "world music." We speak here of postcolonial contexts, of course. Whereas in Pakistan, the obscurantist regimes upheld the mirror of orthodox Islam, younger musicians followed Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Abida Parvin and Alan Faqir, who coded their ideological and epistemological objections through the myths and metaphors of Sufi poetry. The young musicians within the country and those who grew up in the





diasporas of England sought an alternative identity. Seen from the perspective of the Twin Towers disaster and the Madrid bombings, the 1980s seems a crucial period in the search for identity among Muslim youth, both in the diasporas of the West and within Pakistan. One can see both trends: a trend toward orthodoxy in Bradford and also a trend toward a secular identity rooted in the cultural myths and metaphors of the homeland in the musical productions in Birmingham and Southall.[22]

"World music" provided a creative, encouraging forum for musicians trained in the classical traditions, such as Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, who was able to influence the Junoon group. One of them was Salman Ahmed, who grew up in New York and performed with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. In his personal interview with me in August 1992, Khan said that it is the duty of musicians to create music for the people and the times. He also said that it was his aim to bring the youth of the country within the fold of Islam, and that he intended to do this through his music. He said that this was why he had modified his traditional *Qawwālī* style to newer forms of instrumentation and experiment.[23] It is precisely because of this that young Pakistani musicians felt confident enough to imbibe Khan's Sufi kafis of the Panjabi poets, such as Bulle Shah and Shah Hussain. It was Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's influence that made the Junoon group explore the texts of these two poets to create their lyrics. In his conversation with Jacques Dupont in Paris in March of 1988, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan said:

> When we sing in Pakistan the public is very varied, with diverse motivations. Some come for the music, some to hear the message, and others to find a solution to their problems. Those able to understand the message and its depth will react to the message and to the music, but for those others, the exact effect sought by the master's words will be created by the music alone. A recited text will not have the same effect as the same thing sung. Depending on the public I have and the message I wish to convey, I choose a raga, a particular melody and the musical backing will give the text all its majesty. If the poem is not sung, it remains in the book and cannot get out. It can only really reach the people if it is sung.[24]

Khan told Dupont that this is something he learned from his ancestors and passed on to the Junoon group. Junoon used the Sufi kafis to bring out the messages coded in the *carkhi-namas, cakki-namas* and in the feminine mythologies of Sufism.[25]

Junoon's music has defied the politically motivated orthodoxy and corruption of the Pakistani state; its members criticized Pakistan's building of a nuclear bomb. Their album *Ehtasab* (accountability) was a bold political message. According to Junoon, at that time everyone was confused, scared.

"Our people have always lived under somebody's rule or other. They lived under the rajas, then the Britishers came in and when they left, they gave it to the *zamindars* (landowners). These people never left their slave mentality."[26] The Junoon call themselves a Sufi rock band that combines heavy metal infused with local instruments like the *tablas*, *dholak*, and *talion*. They compose their lyrics to ethnic folk tunes and strings, and are a mixture of *sitar* and the guitar: rock and resistance. A *New York Times* review says of their performance,[27]

> . . . the rhythms meshed a rock 4/4 with the cross rhythms of *bhangra* and other Eastern styles; the guitar parts moved between hard-rock cords and sustained sitar-like phrases. Mr Azmat's lines were often as succinct as rock choruses, swelling with the vibrato of a rock lead singer but gave way to airborne melismatic flourishes out of a South Asian and pop and Sufi songs called *Qawwālī*. At times, with Mr Ahmed's guitar lines wailing over speedy percussion, Junoon could have been an Asian answer to Santana.

Sufism in the Junoon performances came much later, after Salman Ahmed had performed with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Ali Azmat, a Junoon member, says,[28]

> Actually, that energy which is there in the *qawwālīes* is very similar to that of rock music. The movements were very similar, mesmerizing. So, we got into it, recorded a song and it turned out to be so powerful with the *tablas* and we were amazed . . . we started going after Sufism and studied them. . . . Bulle Shah was an amazing man who recited his poetry in Panjabi. He basically translated from Shah Hussain and Rumi who wrote in Persian and sang in Panjabi with a sitar. He was this musician with soul and people just came to listen to his words. It was so pure and peaceful.

In the course of my work with political signification in Sufi poetry, I find many fascinating elements. For example, the play on gender issues is interesting in Sufi poetry in the indigenous Pakistani languages. Bulle Shah's poetry is quite explicit in this: he uses the image of the "kanjri" or the dancing girl. I have heard the word *kanjri* used with no taboo whatsoever when Abida Parvin, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan or the Qawwals at the Bulle Shah shrine sing. The defining incident goes back to Bulle Shah's mentor, Shah Inayat, who banished his rebellious pupil from his company for his outspoken political views against the religious establishment of the time. Bulle Shah then went and lived among the dancing girls for twelve years, where he learned to dance. He returned after this period to dance for Shah Inayat to win back his favor, for Bulle Shah knew that his *murshid* loved the dance. I quote here from a Panjabi *Qawwālī* that I recorded at the Bulle Shah shrine,





| | |
|---|---|
| Kanjri banya meri zat na ghat di | To become the dancing girl affects not my caste |
| Te menu nac ke yar manavan de | Dance I shall to win my beloved, my mentor |

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan affirmed the same in his Islamabad interview with me:

> I'll tell you something, something about Bulle Shah. When his *shaikh*, his mentor got annoyed with him, got weary of him, his pir, he went away to spend twelve years among the dancing girls. He adopted the dancing girls' identity, that female voice, her identity and returned to dance. Dance like the dancing girl before the mentor to woo him back.

The play on gender is quite significant in Panjabi Sufi poetry, especially in the personal life of Shah Hussain, who is also called Madho Lal Hussain because of his relationship with Madho Lal, a young Hindu lad. As such, due to the "questionable elements" in indigenous Sufi poetry, it has been viewed with much suspicion by the religious establishment. Elements that are sometimes too threatening in Sufi poetry's oral traditions have now led to Sufis being charged with blasphemy and heresy.[29]

Finally we come to Hosayn, the martyr of Karbala. Sufi musicians like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan sang of moral altruism such as that of Hosayn at Karbala. The references were complex tropes from Islamic history ranging from Karbala to Mansur Hallaj to Sarmad. Thus, sings Khan, a Panjabi kafi from Baba Ghulam Farid,[30]

| | |
|---|---|
| sir devin par vafa na mangin | Give thy head, expect no loyalty |
| ehi Pir Farid da dase | This is Pir Farid's message |

Fateh Ali Khan also used Hallajian motifs in his *Qawwālīs*. Hallaj and Sermad (a Hallajian mystic) were political dissenters; both were executed on heresy charges. Hallaj was executed in 922 A.D. in Baghdad by Muqtadir, an ʿAbbasid ruler, and Sermad by Aurengzeb in 1661 A.D. A recurrent theme in Sufi poetry is a reference to Hallaj and Sermad for their non-textual interpretations of the scriptures. Their punishment and eventual glorification was death.

To conclude, I have in this article explored various performance contexts from *Qawwālī* and *sūfiana-kalam* traditions in Pakistan and India to argue that Sufi poetry is political protest encoded through myth and metaphor. Sufi poetry in Panjabi, Sindhi and Siraiki is the poetry of resistance, which audiences understand in a largely oral culture in indigenous environments and now in the global diasporas, especially those of the West. My own scholarship evolved in the diaspora of American academia. It was there in the academic freedom of the American academic environment that I was able and continue to explore the political nuances of Pakistani and Indian Sufi poetry.

# Endnotes

1. The arguments in this article crystallize from the following public talks that I gave:

"On the margins, Pakistan's blasphemy laws." Presentation for South Asian Forum, Columbia University, NY, April 10, 2006.
"Islamic State, Heresy and Freedom of Speech." Public talk for SUNY/ Purchase College and Scholars at Risk, March 27, 2006.
"Sufis, Performers, Orthodoxy." Public talk for Embery-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott, Arizona, March 13, 2006.
"Protest Elements in Sufi Songs," Paper presented at Pan Asian Music Festival, Stanford University, CA, February 10–12, 2006.
"Musical responses in Islam: law, culture and humanities." Presentation for the faculty colloquium at SUNY/ Purchase College, September 21, 2005.
"Whose Islam is It? The clerics or the Majority?" Public talk at Queen's University, Canada, October 26, 2005.
"Risky Knowledge: Postcolonial Laws in Islamic Societies." Paper presented at the Eight Annual Conference of the Association For The Study of Law, Culture and Humanities 2005 Conference, University Texas at Austin, March 11–12, 2005.
"Defending 'Dangerous' Ideas: Responding to Attacks on Intellectuals." Presentation at the University of Chicago's Human Rights Program, October 7, 2004.
"Pakistan's postcolonial Islamic laws in the era of post-cold war politics." Paper presented at "Beautiful Minds, Risky Times," seminar at Duke University, September 23–24, 2004.
"Threats to intellectual freedom in the post-cold war era." Presentation at the Institute for International Education, Scholars at Risk Fund, New York, March 15, 2004.
"Ideologies of Class and Power in South Asian Popular Musics: Protest songs of young musicians in South Asia." Paper presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Tuscon-Arizona, November 3–7, 2004.
"Interfaces of literacy and orality: aesthetics of resistance in the mystical poetry of Pakistan and India." Paper presented at the South Asian Language Association, University of Texas at Austin, October 10–12, 2003.
"Song-Texts of Popular Pakistani Music." Paper presented at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Boulder-Colorado, October 24–27, 2002.
"Sakineh: The Narrator of Kerbala." Paper presented at the Conference for Iranian Studies in Washington, D.C., May 2002.

2. Alan Faqir. Personal interview. Hyderabad, February 26, 1999. (in *Female Voice in Sufi Ritual: Devotional Practices of Pakistan and India*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 184.

3. Abida Parvin and Shaikh Ghulam Hussain. Personal interview. Islamabad, October 15, 1992. (in *Female Voice in Sufi Ritual: Devotional Practices of Pakistan and India*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 186.

4. Translated and annotated by M. Yakoob Agha, *Shah Jo Risalo alias Ganje Latif*, vol. 2, 770; *Female Voice in Sufi Ritual*, 22.

5. Abida Parvin. Personal interview, 1992.





6. Tirathdas Hotechand, "The Risalo: Its Musical Compositions." *in Shah Abdul Latif: His Mystical Poetry.* ed by Abdul Hamid Akhund, 157–63 (Hyderabad: Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Cultural Center Committee, 1991).

7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti (28 April, 2006):

> "In the 12th to 17th centuries in India there was a surge of this movement where the proponents sang and formed congregations of people, many from the lower classes. The movement is by nature rebellious because of its egalitarian stance; some of its most charismatic proponents were women."

8. Salman Ahmed (guitarist) and Brian O'Connell, two of the band's key members, grew up in New York. Ali Azmat is the vocalist who sings in Pakistani languages with a passion. Jay Dittamo plays drums and Ashiq Ali the tabla and the dholak. John Alec, a graduate of SUNY/Purchase music conservatory is now with the group and plays the guitar and the bass. The Junoon is a hybrid group that uses a combination of the rock and steel drums. The band play Pakistani folk melodies and sing the poetry of Sufi poets like Bulle Shah and Shah Hussain. Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan inducted them into singing Sufi lyrics.

9. Bulle Shah, *Kafian*. ed. by Muḥammad Sharif Sabir (Lahore: Syed Ajmal Hussain Memorial Society, 1991).

10. In the folklore, Hir was the beautiful daughter of Cucak Siyal, a powerful Jat chief of Jhang Siyal, a territory now in Pakistan. She falls in love with Ranjha, the youngest of the eight sons of another Jat chief of Thakht Hazara. After his parents death, Ranjha's brothers collude with the clergy to give him the least fertile land. Ranjha leaves home and works as a buffalo herd for Hir's family. Hir and Ranjha fall in love, the Siyal clan oppose the lovers. Against her will and with clerical support, Hir is married off to Said Khera, son of another powerful chief. Hir leaves her husband to elope with Ranjha. Her family poisons Hir. Ranjha dies heartbroken on her grave.

11. Sohni, which means beautiful, is a potter's daughter. She falls in love with Izzat Beg, a wealthy merchant from Bokhara who traveled through her territory. Izzat Beg falls in love with Sohni, squanders his fortune to buy pottery from her family, ends up becoming a buffalo herd for Sohni's family. He acquires the name Mahival, buffalo herder. Against her will Sohni is married off to someone else and Mahival is forced to leave Sohni's village. However, the lovers continue clandestine meetings as Sohni swims the river every night on a "ghara" or baked clay pot to meet Mahival. Sohni's family replace the baked "ghara" with an unbaked one to prevent Sohni's meetings. As she tries to swim the river on the unbaked pot, it melts in the river consuming Sohni. Mahival hears her cry, he tries to save Sohni but both the lovers are wiped away with the stream.

12. Sassi is the adopted daughter of the king of Bhambor in Sind. She was the ruler in Bhambor when Punnu, a handsome prince arrived from the neighboring Kec Mekran territory. His land faced famine, so he came to purchase grain in Sassi's territory. Sassi allows the Hot tribe from Kec Mekran to buy the grain but keeps Punnu for herself, whom she marries. The Hot tribe returns to take away Punnu; the lovers are drugged during nuptial celebrations; Punnu's tribe kidnaps him back to Baluchistan. Sassi treks the desert lands of Sind and Baluchistan searching for Punnu. She dies of thirst and starvation in the desert. As the tribesman build her mausoleum, Punnu returns to find Sassi buried. He kills himself on her grave.

13. Richard J. F. Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 194.

14. Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Qawwal and Party. DVD. Vol. 1 *Live in Concert in U.K. 1988 Tour Recorded at the University of Aston Birmingham, 1988* (Oriental Star Agencies, Birmingham, U.K.).

15. *A Musical Evening with Abida Parvin*. Videocassette. Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University, 1985.

16. Declan O'Sullivan, "The Death Sentence for Mahmoud Muḥammad Taha: Misuse of the Sudanese Legal System and the Islamic Sharia Law." http://alfikra.org/jan18/jan18_30_e (28 February, 2006).

17. Charles Hirschkind, "Heresy or Hermeneutics: the case of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd" SEHR. Vol. 5, issue 1: Contested Polities, updated February, 1996. www://file//C\Documents and Settings\shemeemabbbas\Desktop\spring\heresy\nasr abu zayd.html (28 February, 2006).

18. Kamran Scott Agahie, "Gendered Aspects of the Emergence and Historical Development of Shi'i Symbols and Rituals," in *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 2. The *hadith* goes back to an incident in the Prophet Muḥammad's own life time at a place called Ghadir Khom where according to one account the Prophet, "took Ali by the hand and said to the people 'Do you not acknowledge that I have a greater claim on each of the believers than they have on themselves?' And they replied, 'Yes!'" Accordingly, the prophet took Ali's hand and said, "Of whomsoever I am Lord [Maula], then Ali is also his Lord. O God! Be thou the supporter of whoever supports Ali and the enemy of whoever opposes him."

19. Lajwanti Ramakrishna, *Panjabi Sufi Poets* (New Delhi: Ashajanak Publications, 1973); Margaret Smith, *Rabi'a: The Life and Work of Rabi'a amd Other Women Mystics of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1994; 1928); Annemarie Schimmel, *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam* (New York: Continuum, 1997); Shemeem Burney Abbas, *The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual: Devotional Practices of Pakistan and India* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

20. Jamal Malik, *The Colonization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996).

21. Marc Schade-Poulson, *Men and Popular Music in Algeria: The Social Significance of Rai* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

22. According to one account, conservative working class South Asian Muslim communities in Bradford raised the heresy charges against Salman Rushdie in 1988 leading to a *fatwa* from Iran. At the same time in 1988 when I did fieldwork in Birmingham, U.K., Oriental Star Agencies promoted qawwals such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the Sabri Brothers, the Faridi Qawwals and others in secular concerts for South Asian diasporic audiences; majority among these audiences were professionals such as physicians, educators, accountants and investors. These patrons were from diverse cultural and religious background who were not necessarily Muslims. These groups were as diverse as Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and Parsis including native English patrons. The Sikh diaspora has patronized both Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Parvin for singing the Panjabi poetry of Baba Ghulam Farid and Guru Nanak. My claim here is backed up in a personal interview with Mr. Muḥammad Ayub, proprietor of Oriental Star Agency who I met in December, 2006 in Birmingham.

23. Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. *Magic Touch*. Mixed by Bally Sagoo, CD ROM. Vol. 12. Oriental Star Agencies, Birmingham. U.K. No date (199?) In his personal interview with me Mr. Muḥammad Ayub, stated that *bhangra* music in England evolved in the *gurdwaras*, from Sikh devotional music. Thus, *Magic Touch* is an experiment between *Qawwālī* and other devotional/world musics.

24. Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, "Conversation with Jacques Dupont," Paris, March 21, 1988 in *PAKISTAN: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan en concert 'a Paris. CD ROM*, Vol. 5 Ocora: Radio France, 1988.





25. *Junoon* (Salman Ahmed, Ali Azmat and Brian O'Connel). *Azadi*. CD ROM. EMI, Pakistan, n.d. The Junoon Group sing the traditional Sufi *chakki namas* and *charkhi namas* that express existential metaphors of struggle and stoicism in the face of political oppression. See Shemeem Abbas, *The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual*, xxiii.

26. Ali Azmat. Junoon website. http://junoon.com/details.asp?id=62(26 September, 2002).

27. *New York Times*, "Asia's Answer to Santana!" May 8, 2002. Junoon website. http://junoon.com/details.asp?id=62(26 September, 2002)

28. Ali Azmat. Junoon website. http://junoon.com/details.asp?id=62(26 September, 2002). On his role as musician and the band's version of rock, Salman Ahmed says,

> "it's a different kind of rebellion. In the west the music is seen as a force of rebellion, our music is seen as a force of unity in Pakistan. It has really played a role for national reconstruction." Salman Ahmed further says, "The great Sufi saints Bulle Shah and Rumi inspire our words. We are great admirers of Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Robert Plant, Jeff Beck, Santana and Queen . . . our message is not about Islam alone, we hope it transcends religious and cultural differences. . . . it is for all of humanity."

29. Adnan Ali, "The Trial of Yusuf Ali," *The News* Encore 4 (Islamabad: August 13, 2000).

30. *Female Voice in Sufi Ritual*, 57.