

The Creative Launcher

An International, Open Access, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English
UGC Approved- (Sr. No. 62952)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2017.2.4.83>

Kashmiri Literature from 14th to 16th Century

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Abstract

The Kashmir Literature was firstly inaugurated by two great personalities of spirituality “Lal Ded” and Shaikh-Ul- Aalam. No doubt there are some literary works in Kashmiri before these two poets, but the poetry of Lal Ded and Shik-Ul-Aalam considered as earliest literary work in Kashmiri. Before them “Shati Kant” writes “Mahnie Prakash” in twelfth century is a work of 94 Vakh's followed by Sanskrit translation. Shiti Kant followed the philosophy of Trika Shivism and used Sanskrit as a medium of expression.

Keywords- *Kashmir literature, Lal Ded, Shaikh-Ul- Aalam, Literary Works*

Kashmir is not merely one of the most attractive and lovely place on the earth, but it remains also the centre of Knowledge in earlier times. In early times Kashmir was known as “Sharda Peat” (Hub of Knowledge). It was a prominent centre of learning, and scholars from Kashmir were sent to Central Asia and China to impart education. Geroge Abraham Grierson has well said “Kashmiri language is the only Dardi language that has a literature”. Kalhan also as used tree Kashmiri words in “Rajtaranjni” i.e. “Srane paet to Juy Nar”, “Rangas Hul vanev” “Harsh Dev Hew”. Chum Pad, Bansur Vad Katha are also oldest works in Kashmiri literature.

Lal Ded the 14th Century woman saint and great poet inaugurated the Kashmir poetic tradition with her Vakh's, that came down to us orally and it is quite sure that many of the great Vakh's have been lost. Lal Ded followed the Shiva philosophy but the influx of Islam from te regions of central Asia produced its deep impact. In the whole mystic philosophy of Lalla, she wants to attain the ultimate reality. The reality about Lal Ded is that she was accepted by each community. She was “Laleshwari” for Non- muslims and “Afria” for Muslim community. Prem Nath Bazaz said.

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At the time of her death a quarrel arose between Hindus and Muslim over the disposal of her mortal remains. While the Hindus wanted to cremate the dead body and the Muslims insisted on burying it.

Lalla gave the lesson of brotherhood, harmony, and goodness to common man in her Vakh's as.

(Shiv Cheey thali thali rezan
Moe zaan Hund te Muslaman
Truk hay cheek to pan praznav
Sui Chay Sahibas saeti zani zaan.)

Shiva remains everywhere
Do not discriminate between Hindu and Muslim.
If you are wise, know yourself.
That is the true knowledge of Lord.

Sir Richered Temple wrote in his book *The Word of Lalla* as.

The Vakh's of Lalleshwari have become part of day-to-day conversation in Kashmiri households. Her religion is not bookish. Her religion is a mix of people's hopes and miseries. Her Vakh's are of high standard, spiritual, brief to the point, sweet, full of hope, lively and representative of the status of common man.

At present 258 Vakh's of Lalla are known and these spread widely in Kashmiri people. Because of dominant Budhist culture we find maximum words of Sanskrit origin in Lall's entire work. Self realization is the main motive in her poetry.

(Goran vonnem kunei vastun
Nebrai dopnem ander atsun
Suy me lali gov vak to vatsun
Tavay hetum nangay nastsun.)

Guru gave me single speech,
Come from outer world to inner self.
That became my being, my song
And that becomes my cause to more naked.

George Abrahin Grierson and Dr. Lionel Barnett collected these Vakh's of Lalla from the Kashmiri people and compile the book "Lalla Vaakyani" in 1921. Sir Richard Temple was so impressed by the poetry of Lalla that he wrote in "The Word of Lalla".

Thine is a song that enslaveth me,
Son of an alien kin and clime.

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Kashmir, as king Jahangir said it “The Paradise on earth” is also known by the name of “Resh Waer”. The pious land has produced many Reshi saints from time to time and Saikh-Ul-Alam (R.A) is one of them who was born in 1379 at Kaimoh.

“Shaikh-Ul-Aalam” is another spiritual poet popularly known by the name of “Nunde Reshi” was also influential poet like Lalla. He was quietly influenced by Lalla’s poetry and personality that in Lalla’s honour he says as.

(Tas Padmanporche Lalay
Yemi gale gale Amrit Chor
Sir Sanie Artar lolay
Taithi ma var Detum devo)

That Lalla of Padmanpeer
Who had drunk Nector,
She is our Avtar
Oh! God bestow the same on me.

Nund Reshi as a Sufi saint used poetry as a medium of individual and social reform. He was a religious preacher, poet, scholar and a social worker. His poetry leaves a deep impact on our thought. His poetry is commonly known as “Shurks”. One of them is.

Death is a lion
You can’t go away
From the folk it will chose
You like a lamb.

These Shurk’s of Saikh-ul- Aalam are preserved in Noor- Nama and Reshi- Nama almost available in every part of Kashmir. Kashmir University has also honoured this great personality by creating the department “Markaz-i-Noor center for Shaikh-Ul-Aalam Studies”.

Lal Ded and Shaikh-Ul-Aalam have become favorite literary figures of Kashmir around whom whole moss of myth and legend has gathered. Almost seven hundred years have passed but the sayings of these two poets is on the tongue of every Kashmiri.

After these two spiritual leaders Kashmiri poetry remain silent for at least hundred years. In sixteenth century a great lady named “Haba Khatoon” from a small village came with her great lyrical poetry. The poetry of Haba Khatoon is known as “Vastun”. She is remembered as one of the great poetess of Kashmiri literature and her poetry is popular in the valley even today. Habba Khatoon belongs to the Sayyid family. She firstly married with Sayid Kamaluddin of Jamalata. Unfortunately both were opposite to each other. Kamal ud din was against her poetic feelings as he was living his life according to Shariyat. The Prince Yousf Shah Chak, who was attracted by the poetry and artistic voice of Habba Khatoon, began to love her. Yousf Shah Chak married with Habba Khatoon and she became the Queen of Kashmir.

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At the end, the poetry of these three poets become the foundation stone of Kashmiri literature. The period from 14th to 16th century is considered the golden period of Kashmiri Literature.

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