

# Spiritualism in Sri Krishna's Flute and Sufi Poet Mohammad Jalaluddin Rumi

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## Abstract-

avyāja-mañjula-mukhāmbuja-mugdha-bhāvair  
āsvādyamāna-nija-venu-vinoda-nādam |  
ākṛīdatāmaruna-pāda-sarojruhābhyām  
ārdremadīya-hrdayebhuvanārdramojah ||15|| (Thakura, 2017)

*Indian land is considered as abundance dignified folk lore through its rich traditions and culture. Music is in its soil that generates sweet melody that has its own unique embellishment. Nevertheless the land is known for its monuments, rivers, capes, Himalayas but music connects all part in one single thread crossing all boundaries of nation along with spiritualism. The ambition of this paper is to dig out the connectivity through the Lore of Indian Mythos and Sufism of Rumi. The flute is a common musical instrument which is the part of our Lord Krishna prayer while Rumi's flute or reed a poem that glorify the process of its separation as soulful instrument. Lord Krishna being the avatar of Vishnu is known for his flute and its melodious music contain the philosophy of this universe whereas Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi world greatest Sufi poet also composed a song on the basic philosophy of reed and its hollow part. The divine love and its pain is hidden in this reed attract the world towards its. The flute of Northern Indian tradition lore is associated with Lord Krishna while Rumi's reed portrays his agony, grief, desire and tears. Hence forth the same instrument presents two value systems of our life and constructed a new part of ethicality.*

**Keywords:** Krishna, Flute, Reed, Rumi, Indian Folk Music, Sufism, Spiritualism

## Introduction

The land of Shiva and Krishna, the land of music and dance, where each particle of land produces masterful chanting sound is also known for flute, the music. This Bamboo flute is one of the only instruments which is most natural and does not depend on any mechanical tool. Folk music originates from its traditional well known culture and later on composed in their style that sustain in its oral form and learned through hearing rather than reading. In this way it passes from one generation in a natural way and surrounding to the next generation of that particular period

In Indian land Lord Krishna is portrayed with a crown of Peacock's feather playing with flute and is considered the epitome of divine love that yearn sweet melodious sound from the hollow soul of performers that connects to the heart of Lord. The peacock feathers crown leads towards the music of the heart that can be expressed through head. The mixture of both produces euphonious song. In accordance to this the Peacock feather is considered the symbol of beauty and knowledge as it enhances the charm of divine love in Hindu mythology. In Indian culture Bamboo flute exist from the time of Lord Krishna and there is a Sanskrit shloka where he tells his love of flute to Radha. According to him Bamboo flute is symbol of total surrender. If anyone desire to be like bamboo flute he resembles the soul with unification towards the supreme power.

As we know in process of becoming flute a bamboo has to leave all its ego completely and face lots of suffering of being bored as the holes are made. All pulp inside it has to be removed completely and surrender to its creator or the cosmos. As it gets completely hollow so easily any melody can be performed by God.

Conversely, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, the Islamic Jurist, Mystic Poet, scholar and great Sufi one is also known as Whirling Dervishes. He expressed his agony through these words-

"...Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, My lament hath caused man and woman to moan. I want to bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold (to such a one) the pain of love-desire. Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it..." (Nicholson 23)

He dedicated these soulful lines to his disciple at the age of fifty one. Rumi the great soul was born in Afghanistan but he with his family travelled 13 years due to political disturbance through present day Iran and Iraq. Lastly they had settled in Konya. The above mentioned lines of Rumi was composed in Masnavi the world classic which contains 24,000 verses and divided into six books in which the allegory portrayed the journey based on spiritualism.

Masnavi describes the beautiful voyage of flute which attracts the whole universe because of its appealing nature. Basically for becoming the musical instrument or for producing the melody it has to be cut from its original stem. Next process is to make a hole in its heart to produce music. For this process the heart of reed faces the pain and breaks down several times as it becomes hollow from such deeds. After it becomes a flute apart from stem, the players takes it to play the melody, if something in way of pipe, it has to be removed for better performance. While becoming empty a perfect flute can produce divine melody and it can play the music of Orpheus which has ability to the touch the heart of listener.

This paper focuses on the Indian flute of our culture and tradition with Jalaluddin Rumi in a single thread of spiritualism. The statement of problem is to throw light on the importance and real picture of the Indian flute and Rumi's reed. Rumi's holds high philosophical spiritual essence of reed flute while Indian flute of Krishna is the epitome of our folk culture and identity.

## **Discussion**

The flute is known as 'Nay' in Persian land and was found in Iran during 6th century B.C., firstly it was used by Shepherds in rural part of the country and by musicians in high court. 'Nay' basically came from the family of wind instrument named "Na". Na was made from cane. The performer who plays nay is called "Nayi" in Arabic and "Neyzen" in Farsi. In conformity with Neyzen is connected with Mevlevi order that had become sacred instrument in Islamic world. Rumi is considered as the first Neyzen among the Sufi world. There are supposed to be twenty two types of Nay.

Even though the flute is one of the most important instrument while walking on the path of Sufism, but there are differences in Sufi 'nay' or 'flute' as it contains seven holes which symbolizes the human being. It's a part of any ritual ceremony and Rumi the great Sufi compare the flute and reed as a life of human. As a like, the reed goes through various phases of suffering and pain of life. Then it becomes a nay which produces sweet music. In harmony to this a soul's journey faces various obstacles after becoming hollow it maintains connection with God that produces music. Actually a flute is a symbol of total surrender.

In concordance with Sufi tradition is facilitated by music and dance and through this process a Sufi can maintain a good connectivity with Lord. Mystic in Islamic world gives weight to sounds practices which has potential to bring a devotee closer to the divine force. Among all Islamic landscape nay is considered the most powerful instrument. The reed flute is popularly well known musical instrument which produces beautiful sound that create a soothing atmosphere for divine life. It also has ability to produce different languages of love which directly reach to the heart. Its spontaneous flow can create the ample atmosphere to develop the relation with lord. There is a good bounding between Nay and Sufi culture as a well known story from the life of Prophet Muhammad that is in association. As Prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven he told all secret of God's divine power and beauty to his son-in-law Ali who would not tolerate its divine beauty and shared it to a dump well. One day Prophet heard this secret as was passing by the well. As he peeped into the well, noticed a cane swinging in the wind was narrating the secret. That's why nay adopted to describe the density of love and always complain the process of separation from the cosmic power. After this word Nay had become the symbolic representation of the human being.

It is believed that after coming to this materialistic world a soul in human body yearns for the love of God and continue struggle for that reunion. The Nay and its sound produce the same love based on its personal experiences of separation. The basic ethereal, poetic, pure, smooth and sweet sound of the nay is well linked with the mystical or spiritual nature of Sufi poet. By virtue of this Rumi emphasized that language and melody are only possible as we are hollow as well as empty from inside and live a life after separating from creator. His whole theory of diction is based on the reed flute.

The song of the reed” poem of Rumi reveals his mastery above his diction and style. He used metaphor and allusion as two prominent figures of speech which provide the beauty and magnificent style to the language. Although Rumi is less interested in language rather than attuned to the source of it. He wants to create silence and emptiness through his poems. At the end of it the poem beautifully portrays the silence from the bottom of his heart and completes its philosophical theory based on one single poem reed-flute. He expresses in his word: “...Body is not veiled from soul, nor soul from body, yet none is permitted to see the soul. This noise of the reed is fire, it is not wind: whose hath not this fire, may he be naught! It’s the fire of Love that is in the reed, tis the fervor of Love that is in the wine. The reed is the comrade of every one who has been parted from a friend: its sustain pierced our hearts...” (Nicholson 23)

Being the most trusted son of Sufism he does not speak from mind but his hearts speaks spontaneously. Even readers can experience the same density in his words. Through his words he takes the readers to other realm of the universe that nourishes longing for spiritual connection and universal belonging. While acquiring this reader’s move towards joy, love and inner satisfaction and peace.

According to Hindu philosophy the human being structure is made like a flute with eight main spots and the five main organs of perception, mind, ego and intellect. For becoming hollow we have to leave all our ego then there is possibility that God will reside in us with great love for performing beautiful music. That melody will emerge for all creation of universe for total enjoyment. Lord Krishna being cow boy played melodious tune of flute which not only attracted the Gopalas but gopikas with divine music. As their love towards Lord Krishna was true a like bamboo, divine to his flute. In Indian land Lord Krishna is known with various names and few of them are based on his flute’s love as Murlidhar, Venu Gopala and Vamsi Krishna had become the epitome of true love. Few interesting things are the part of his flute as ‘Venu’ is the smallest among all about six inches long in size that contain six holes on its small body and ‘Vamsi’ is longer about fifteen inches with nine holes on its body. But ‘Murali’ is totally different as one hole at the end and four holes on its body. The longer one is called ‘Akarsini’ and next one is known as ‘Anandini’. Not only bamboo one is popular but gold one is known as ‘Akarsini’ and made with Jewels is known as ‘Sammohini’ or ‘Mahananda’.

Although there are was about 108 names Lord Krishna with the development of Bhakti movement Krishna became a prominent and favourite figure of the arts. The songs of the Gita, Govinda later on became well known one apart from India and it added a new chapter to repository of both folklore and classical singing. Even various dance form of India is also associated with his name as Ras Lila of Vrindavan shares elements with Kathak. Later on Krishna and his flute had become the part of literature too. The Gita Govinda is a great work composed by Jayadiva a renowned poet of 12th century and many more poets of all across the country described their love for him. Such vast culture and traditional approach we can find on our Indian land and memorization of the western world too with its diversity in its soil which

taught us Kamayoga, Bhaktiyoga while walking on the path of spiritualism and Lord Krishna's flute or 'bansuri, teaches us the love for entire humanity.

“ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।

“मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग् भवेत् ॥ 14 ॥” (Easwaran, 2009)

“om sarve bhavantu sukhinah  
Sarve santu nirāmayāḥ  
Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu

Mā kaścidduḥkha bhāgbhaveta ॥ 14 ॥ ...” (Easwaran, 2009)

The very concept of Ancient India can be reflected in folk culture of our country.

The flute is to be called the Lord's eco-friendly gift to the world. According to ancient scriptures flute is one of the three original form of rendering Indian classical music 'Vanni' or 'Vocal', 'Veena' or 'String' and 'Venu' or 'Flute'. Even though it had become the Prominent figure of our folk music tradition its name is very associated with Lord whereby in present time aspirant are want that work should become worship and it is expected that one should never engage in it for material gain. It is hidden in its performance deniable for sense gratification.

Furthermore it teaches us to walk on the path of divine love portraying like a flute which is completely hollow bearing all the adversities and lust shedding of egocentric tunes that is not good in the way of spiritual path creating great obstacles. Through this Lord Krishna is considered as the cosmic player and produces music which flows cosmic energy. Even though his own life on this earth was a tale of tragedy inspite of performing his duty he was always cheerful. His life sets an example for others to change his attitude and personifies how one can perform his duties. His glory is described in these lines:

वेणु— रमधुरोरेणु— रमधुरः  
पाणि— रमधुरः पादौ रमधुरौ च  
नृतं रमधुरं सखं रमधुरं

मधुराधिपतेरखिलं रमधुरम् ॥ 3 ॥ (Tejomayananda, 2010)

Vennur madhuro rennur madhurah

Paani rmadhurah paadau madhurai

Nrtyam madhuraṁ sakhyam madhuraṁ

Madhura- adhipater akhilaṁ madhuraṁ ॥ 3 ॥ (Tejomayananda, 2010)

His entire personality is sugary and such action performed to sweetness in the whole atmosphere. This paper embarks upon the textual methodology through the Lore of Indian Mythology and Rumi's verses. It analyses the basic structure of their presentation, tradition, philosophical aspects and cultural identities. It emblazes the different period for a better usage of texts.

It has been elucidated until my knowledge the readers are not aware of the philosophical aspect of Reed in Masnavi to the context of the Indian Flute of Lord Krishna. It furnishes as to how Krishna's flute influenced the Sufi Poet Rumi. It also depicts the relationship of cosmic love that inspired Rumi from Persian land and Indian Lord Krishna.

Moving forward in future we have to think deeply about the connection of Lord's Krishna flute and Rumi's reed as both represent the philosophy of our entire Life force. It is the need of the hour for a comprehensive study. Through this an amazing outcome of the fact is that Lord Krishna's flute spreads the message of divine love with philosophical approach of life, in contrast to Rumi's reed cries for being the part of separation from its original phase conveys the philosophy of reunion with the cosmic world. Up till my knowledge, it is very rare to find a connection of the cosmos love that inspired Sufism in Indian folklore.

### **Conclusion**

It is well known story that once it was asked by someone to Lord Krishna, why does he keep flute always with him. Apparently as God replied instead of him firstly it was a bamboo rod, a part of a tree rooted in ground, after that while facing tedious process it emerged as a flute. For becoming a useful tool it faced the heat of sun, the rain and every face of nature. Later on the penance was uprooted from its original place and detached. During this process it suffered pain and it was pierced seven times for seven holes. The deep silence and patience constructed the flute to perform its action. In symphony to this it generates the sound of love on every rituals performed and important aspect of our life of cosmic energy. At the same point Rumi's flute filled with sorrow as it also passed several episode of suffering for performance. Rumi could understand the pain of separation as well as this reed flute became the source of love in Masnavi. It affected his heart and he himself played flute for expressing his pain.

The folk music of India influenced the Sufi poet of whole world. The traditional way of our living is also a way to walk on spiritual ground where 'Atma' or 'Soul' feels the presence of 'Parmatma' 'Lord'. Here after Folk Lore can be noticed even today through the real realm of flute that teaches the lesson of cabalism.

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