Sindhi *bhagat* songs associated with Kanvar Ram

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Abstract

This article presents a powerful corpus derived from a Sindhi oral tradition, the *bhagat*. Born in Sindh (Pakistan), today it is practiced by Hindu narrators in Post Partion India. A series of six songs stated here are focused upon Bhagat Kanvar Ram, very often mentioned by the current *bhagat* narrators. This essay shows his deep influence on this oral tradition in terms inspiration, authority and performance style.

An innovative coding approach of the "oral texts" offers to the reader a glimpse of the dynamics of a live performance. Initially, this essay was encompassed within a broader study on the *bhagat* tradition in the performance context.

Key words: *bhagat* – Sindhi folklore – Sindhi folk song – Sindhi folk theatre – performance – Bhagat Kanvar Ram – martyr

Contents

Introduction

Figure 1: The *bhagat* performance

Dewan Bhojwani, oil painting 1, 30 x 3m, displayed at the *Sita Sindhu Bhavan*, Mumbai
Photograph Jyoti Garin

Definitions

Sindhi folk sources suggest two definitions of the **genre** *bhagat*: sometimes classified under the heading folk music (Allana, 1982: 99), sometimes under the heading folk theatre (Ruchandani, 1993: 25), the *bhagat* is a form of narration in the Sindhi language attested since 300 or 400 years in Sindh (Lalwani, 1998: 11).

The **term** *bhagat* means at the same time the narrator and the performance, and it is also used as a title, for instance Bhagat Kanvar Ram. It is a polysemous term derived from the Sanskrit root word bhaj "to divide". The bhakta or *bhagat* is "a very pious individual", who surrenders himself to the divinity and takes part in His nature; he is the follower of the bhakti, religious thought founded on Love which binds the devotee to the divinity.

The Sindhi dictionary (Baloch, 1981, vol. 2: 544) offers four definitions for *bhagat*:

- *bhagata*, name of a Hindu ethnic group (often of the Nawabshah region and Larkana);
- Sanskrit *bhaj* "to adore" *bhaktu*, *bhagat* and *bhakti*; in a wide sense, *bhagat* suggests a particular form of music and dance in which narrators sing and dance; *bhagatu lagāyaṇu* or *vijhaṇu* "to make or carry out a *bhagat* session";

- *bhagatu* – a public devotional singer, a dervish, a fakir; in a wide sense, simple, ingenuous or innocent.

According to Lalwani (1998: 14), the Hindu groups are called *bhagata* and the Moslem groups, nācū. The origin of this tradition being uncertain, the exact equivalence between these two groups is still to be proved. He adds a delightful definition: *bha* for *bhāva* "emotion", *ga* for *gīt* "song" and *ta* for *tāl* "rhythm".

Narratives close to the Sindhi *bhagat* are for example the *nauṭaṅkī* (Uttar Pradesh), *harikathā* (Andhra Pradesh), *bhavāī* (Gujarat), *tamāśā* (Maharashtra), *jātrā* (Bengal) and *ujāpālī* (Assam). The art is alive as witnessed by the number of the troops in India today: Gujarat, Arjandas Kuvarani (Ahmedabad), Dilip Kumar, Notandas Pritaram; Maharashtra, Bhagwan Chawla (Mumbai), Khanchand Kusija (Ulhasnagar), Mohan Jagiasi (Ulhasnagar), Chunnilal (Ulhasnagar), late Ghansham (Ulhasnagar); Rajasthan, Hassaram, Kalluram, Kamal Mangnani (Ajmer), Kishin, Pratap Rai.

Depiction

The **group** of five or six men comprises a "leader" mahredār, an "assistant" *bhecī* or *jhelī*, one or two "followers" *boliṛā* or *pīchaṛa*, sometimes a "buffoon" *maśkiro* and two musicians. It is a typical form of Sindhi narration in terms of language, costume and headdress as well as of songs, instruments, movements and gestures… Dressed in an emblematic costume, *mahredār* and *bhecī* talk, while the *pīchaṛa* repeat and dance.

The *bhagat* is not passed on from father to son. The young narrators imitate and learn spontaneously while singing and dancing on all sides of the acting space. It does not have a consciously developed training organization.

The **session** begins at nightfall, in the open air in a village square or in the precincts of a temple and the spectators come from all spheres of society. Formerly, these gatherings lasted three consecutive nights. At the time of joyous festivals such as marriages or fairs, these narrators generate a sense of piety, spread knowledge and acclaim righteousness and social progress. The *bhagats* also commemorate the death of the saints (*varsī*). To this day, these narrators are honoured. These performances generate an atmosphere of simplicity and intense communion. It is considered that the *bhagats* purify the spot, the house and the village where they pass.

The glory of Bhagat Khotaram, Satramdas and Kanvar Ram, the *bhagat* par excellence persists. It is the village committee (*pañcāyat*) or private individuals who **organize** this type of gathering for the peoples' delight.

As for the **acting space**, a perpendicular access strip is used for the *bhagat* to pass (cf. Figure 1, below). It also divides the men from the women seated on the floor on both sides. This corridor physically brings the public closer to the *bhagat* where he moves freely and breaks the rigidness of a stagefront. It encourages spontaneity.

Figure 2: The public participates
Sita Sindhu Bhavan, Mumbai

Within the urban framework, in a confined hall or a pavilion, the stage is more or less in front and permanent: a square or round space and an access strip are utilized for the performance. The current sessions show that, at times, the narrators hardly worry whether they are facing the public or otherwise. Unconsciously, they still seem to be guided by the traditional performance setting with spectators all around them.

The **public** moves about freely while the *bhagat* continues his performance: handshakes or embraces between close family members, women and men, except in certain social contexts where it is inappropriate for a man to touch a woman, (he greets her with words, without looking at her directly). The newcomer touches the feet of an elderly person as a sign of respect (*pere pavaṇu*) by pronouncing "*Hari om*". The same phrase is echoed in answer; according to the religious practices, "*Hari om*" may be changed into "Jhūlelal" or "*salām*".

Source material

The sources of our study are twofold. The documents on which the present study is based are as follows: two recent Indian books on the *bhagat* tradition (Ruchandani, 1993 and Lalwani, 1998), stray articles in popular magazines and a hagiography on Bhagat Kanvar Ram (Talreja, 1977). The untimely death of this charismatic revolutionary produced, under the force of popular emotion, a legend, comparable to the account of a saint's life. The vitality of this form of narrative, created with wide-ranging components, starting from oral traditional sources, represents an irreplaceable source of information with reference to the *bhagat* tradition. We will thus recall a few of these hagiographic elements.

Framework of our approach

The *bhagat* is an **oral tradition** which integrates phenomena as heterogeneous as legends, lullabies, anecdotes… whose common feature is to be handed down by former generations. It gathers statements clearly related to the past: popular tales and legends, but also "recording" the present through anecdotes. Our interest lies in the sum total of the statements transmitted orally by the *bhagat*. Without entering into the criticism of the oral

sources, we use them like a testimony of past events but also as significant data on the contemporary Sindhi culture itself. They reflect the representations and beliefs of the enunciators and the listeners.

Undeniably, this oral tradition has an **artistic dimension**. However, the literary value of a product which is not fixed, not written, defies the fundamental categories of the literary genres; the *bhagat* is neither epic nor drama nor song. We will question the literary value of the corpus in our comments.

In the same way, the **concept of author**, crucial in written literature becomes inapplicable. While performing the *bhagat*, recitation and composition and re-creation coincide; *bhagat* narrators are neither creators nor solely performers.

In all oral literature, anonymous and collective creators get involved in variable proportions. "Pieces" are at the disposal of a group of narrators and there is no planned rehearsal. The performance skill of the *bhagat* resides in the particular combination of elements well-known by the audience ("pool" Honko, 1998 and cf. Figure 3). He further enhances the performance by adding novelties and moreover it is part of his appealing strategy. It would be essential to collect at various intervals the *bhagat* narration by the same narrator in order to understand how this oral literature combines a proclaimed continuity and effective changes.

To **analyse** the semantics of a folk text, it is crucial to question the genre classification in Sindhi folklore even if it does not provide complete solutions to basic problems of meaning. Writing on this tradition elsewhere[1], we have defined the *bhagat* as an "intermediary genre". For the purposes of this paper, however, it will be useful to keep in mind our general conclusions:

- **Genre**

The *bhagat* is an "intermediary genre"; it is neither folk drama nor folk song. On the one hand, it is nestled between the various forms of Sindhi folklore, verbal and non verbal; on the other hand, it is a form of narration between oral folklore and written/literary tradition.

- Two **characteristics** of the Sindhi *bhagat* narration

Though practiced by Hindu narrators, Soufi mystical elements are inseperable from the *bhagat* narration as a popular performance.

There are different levels of meaning because a *bhagat* session may be regarded as a reinterpretation of the Sindhi culture and history, a support for social harmony, and a spiritual communion.

- **Performance**

The ongoing process of a *bhagat* session with the narrators and the public together shows that the "pool" of Sindhi culture is constantly being enriched. It is based on three kinds of exchanges: traditional (from the narrator to the public), interactive and co-creative.

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[1] Le bhagat, une tradition orale sindhie. Ph.D Doctoral thesis, January 2005, INALCO, Paris.

Pool of Sindhi culture
(mental images, language, history, art, etc.)
⬇

the *bhagat* tradition
(mental text, combinig skills of the different narrative genres of verbal and non verbal folklore)

The *bhagat* narrator		The public
Puts forward: – text excerpts – melodies – gestures and movements	➔	Completes: – fills in the blanks – interprets in diverse manners according to his acquaintance with the "pool" and his sensitivity
Performing skills – observes the public – ajusts (regulating reflexes)	➔ ⬅	Aesthetic evaluation – applauds and gives bank notes – or criticises verbally
Offers novelties and hence modifies gradually the tradition		Creates new cultural references

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The pool of the Sindhi culture enriches
Figure 3: Enrichichment of the *bhagat* repertory

- **Function**

The ritual function of a *bhagat* narrator has changed. These days he has become, to a certain extent, an oral historian. Hence the *bhagat* narration can also be considered as a form of spoken history.

- **Present situation**

Nowadays, the *bhagat* tradition is threatened because of the diaspora of the group, into an urbanised and multilingual India.

In the present study, we want to narrow our scope around texts related to a single personality, Bhagat Kanvar Ram, the ideal *bhagat*. How a simple grocer's son becomes a mythical character, including his influence on the *bhagat* tradition in terms of content, style, values, spiritual and mythical dimension.

Methodology

Transcription, textualisation and translation

Until recently (20th c.), none of the *bhagat* songs were transcribed, the transmission was uniquely oral. The date of their composition is unknown. In India, the repertories vary from state to state, and each narrator is famous for a particular song. One sole narrator sings about fifteen excerpts in two hours within the modern urban setting, but he knows a hundred of them. Some of them have been published in Hindi or English (Lalwani: 1998 and Ruchandani: 1993).

The songs presented here are from diverse oral sources (except for song 1): audio and video tapes.

To transcribe is "to document". The mode of documentation influences the corpus. Our corpus consists of seven oral documents. In passing, let us recall that in a *bhagat* performance, the oral and the written literature circulate freely.

A **phonological transcription** proves to be efficient. It provides traces of the current state of the Sindhi language and its alternative forms in terms of contrasts: standard Sindhi/folklore; standard Sindhi/dialects and Sindhi in a multilingual context in India. Just like the Short Message Service (SMS) orthography, the transcribing of grammatical mistakes in a *bhagat* performance enlighten as much about the linguistic evolution of the Sindhi language.

The transcription alone is insufficient. The *bhagat* narration is a complex group activity. Thus we have attempted a new coding approach – one that rests on a deeper analysis of the *bhagat* in close relationship to the performance context. On one hand, it is a testimony of the creative activity of human thought, and on the other hand, it stores this repertory in a form, other than the oral memory, in view of the fact that the *bhagat* tradition is threatened today.

These field observations led us towards **textualisation**. The textualisation aims at conveying to the reader an oral, visual and emotional experience. Only the textualisation of a *bhagat* performance enables to look upon it as an object of study. The documentation plan is directly connected to that of the performance. It is imperative to try to interpret a performance from the point of view of the narrator. The contextual aspects of the performance are of primary importance in the cognitive process. For instance, it is necessary to note the contextual parameters of a *bhagat* session: the identities of the enunciators and the listeners, cultural anchorings of both, the collateral activity (formerly, a ritual and today, oral history), the reactions of the public, the artistic assessment, etc. During a *bhagat* performance, the comprehension and the memorizing of a statement certainly do not depict a suchlike division.

The objective remains to preserve in writing the maximum features of orality. One cannot avoid freezing oral data and transforming it into an object which the researcher may consult time and again when turning the pages, whilst the characteristic of oral exchange is expansion. The transcription of the audio recordings and video sessions is guided by the corpus itself, and the phenomena which are attested, which would hardly exempt viewing the video recording.

Tools of transcription, the phonological orthography (adapted transcription) try to render certain pronunciation phenomena, grammatical "mistakes" which could be useful in the future study of alternative phrases (*eṛādo* in the place of *irādo* "intention").

But before we proceed to textualisation, we must point out the problem of transcription. The Sindhi language has two scripts: the *nasx* and the *devanāgarī* (only in India). We have opted for the devanāgarī script as the phonological basis to transcribe the songs, for instance the term *xātir* (with خ) is noted *khātir* (with ख). In both the scripts, there are no capital letters; however, to make the reading effortless, we have made use of them for the proper names. Words which have gained a certain familiarity to Western readers, however, appear in their pan-Indian form (Ram, Sita instead of Rām, Sītā, etc.).

Textualising tools

The textualisation thus attempts at highlighting the composition, the performance modes and styles (Honko, 1998).

Composition: a close analysis of our corpus enables us to point out that a *bhagat* session is structured in three parts: 1) chants 2) a combination of legends, anecdotes, etc. 3) concluding songs of grace addressed to the Indus River deity.

Non lexical units

The **time** details enable the reader to follow precisely the course of the performances.

What is perceived as an uninterrupted sequence is noted like a drama script with several speakers: N1 for the main narrator, N2 his assistant, M musicians and P the public.

We have brought to the fore, **three styles of text delivery**:

- Speech style, close to ordinary speech: on the left margin;
- Recitative style as in a Western opera: 1 cm away from the left margin;
- Song style: centred.

We have recorded a few significant movements and gestures.

Smiles and laughter also enhance the reading.

A new paragraph indicates an important caesura in the recitative style or shows that the speaker has changed.

Silences

Meta elements: inaudible or unintelligible.

Not recorded: tiny overlappings; emphasis; intonation curves; volume; the pace and the rhythmical patterns are indirectly contained in the three styles of enunciation.

The *bhagat* repertory is a continuous sound sequence. The transcription of the texts (audio or video based) was guided by the intonation, the transition into the next line marks a breath break in the oral sequence though the sentence is not yet finished. The transcription is akin to the unrolling of a parchment.

The **punctuation** is another problematic aspect of the written codification. We parsimoniously used commas, (for example to translate a vocative) inspite of the fact that it reads almost like a drama script at times (declamation). Due to the critical shift from orality to literacy in the process of textualisation, we have used further punctuation: colons and exclamation marks and brackets. The "filler words" which indicate forms of address to the public or the name of God are noted within brackets to show that they do not belong to the narrative's outline.

Translation

The text is translated directly from Sindhi to English. The literal translation proves to be impossible. The *bhagat* performance is an artistic performance, thus the English translation attempts at capturing the essence, consciously simple to remain popular. We translated the repertory in English by regarding this phase of translation as one of the multiple versions of this text; the relationship to orality is implicit.

We have tried to remain close to the Sindhi tradition on the one hand (precise knowledge of a culture that we wish to share), as well as the requirements of a learned public (editors and librarians seek more and more authenticity - traditional codes - and references of the documented sources). We thus remain close to the narrative outline, without omitting details. In rare footnotes, we briefly highlight a few terms trying not to interrupt the flow of the song. A few terms were added marked within square brackets in order to abide by the English linguistic structure.

Except for the short texts, the translation is presented face to face to the original version in the Latin transcription.

Concise biography

Figure 4: Bhagat Kanvar Ram (courtesy HMV Records)

To this day, Bhagat Kanvar Ram is regarded as a "saint" by the Sindhi community. Son of a grocer, he was born in 1885 in Jarvar village (Sukkhar District, Sindh). According to the legend, it is Bhagat Khotaram who announced to the future parents Tarachand and Tirathbai, the birth of a "chosen" being. During a good part of his childhood, Bhagat Kanvar Ram attended the congregations of the Hayat Pitafi Darbar. The "spiritual guardian" (*gādīsar*) of this village sanctuary was a woman, Mata Sahib Hassibai. She noticed his soft melodious voice and encouraged him to study music with Bhai Hassaram.

One day, Bhai Hassaram, discontented with the child, got angry and flung him to the ground. He treated him as *kalar* literally "barren land" in other words, a good for nothing. Punning, Mata Hassibai retorted that Kanvar was not *kalar* but *kãvar* "a lotus" which would later spread its perfume on the province of Sindh. When Kanvar Ram became a vocal virtuoso and then left Hayat Pitafi Darbar, Mata Hassibai, unhappy at his departure, said: "a bullet will pierce him!". Later, Kanvar Ram who revered Mata Hassibai, carried out all the traditional death rites and held a poignant *bhagat* session on the 12th day of mourning.

Another time, Sant Manghalaram, the 6th "spiritual guardian" of the Hayat Pitafi Darbar and Kanvar Ram were resting on "the place of worship" *ḍevro*. Suddenly, Bhagat Takhtlal appeared and blessed both the *bhagats*. During this same period, Kanvar Ram followed the teachings of Swami Satramdas, who passed on at the same time, the *bhagat* tradition and spiritual values such as deep humility and love of a simple life.

Bhagat Kanvar Ram enriched the *bhagat* tradition by adding a sense of worship and a performance setting. Wearing a long white dress, a turban on the head and metal anklets, he performed *bhagat* when the heat of the day subsided: he began to sing, to recite and dance by telling popular tales until dawn. During the gatherings, he received offerings which he redistributed completely since he had another livelihood (selling boiled peas in the streets).

These offerings went to the needy or were used to build "Community host houses" *dharamśālā*. Hindus, Moslems, untouchable, influential or the weak, even gangsters attended the *bhagat*; there reigned no discrimination. Thus, through the *bhagat*, he also defended the statutory values; humanism, love for one's neighbour, unity, patriotism and social progress occupied a central place in his narration. Become famous, he travelled much in various parts of Sindh and in particular at the time of "the death celebration of the saints" *varsī*. He thus took part in popularizing the *bhagat* tradition.

He married in 1903 and had a son Pessuram and two daughters Bhagwantibai and Kalawantibai. Six years later, his wife died. He then married Gangabai. On November 1, 1939, two fanatics killed him at the Ruk station, where an immense crowd had come to welcome him as was customary throughout all his journeys. He was 55 years' old. Thus Mata Hassibai's prediction bore fruit.

Today, the *bhagat* narrators mention very often Kanvar Ram's piety and miracles. Ten recordings of his *kāfī* [2] and *bhajans* are published by His Master's Voice (see discography). Among his most famous songs, the *bhagat* narrators cite the following:

- *nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo* "In the name of the Eternal One, allow my boat to navigate" (the Dawn melody);

- *āu kāṅgā kari ḡālhi mūsā̃ tani māruaṛani jī* "Come crow, speak of the Mārus" (the *māru* melody);

- *Rām sumar prabhāt mere manu, Rām sumar* "Remember to name Ram at dawn, my spirit, remember Ram" (the Dawn melody);

- *kīyã rījhāyã̄, kīyã parcāyã̄ tokhe, ḍasi ko ḍāũ* "How to cherish you, how to console you? Guide me";

- *jeḏo tũhiñjo nāõ* "To the measure of Your name…";

- *milaṇā hove to milu* "If you want to meet, then …";

- *prāt samay Mohana* "At dawn, Mohan…";

- *lolī lāl nũ̃* "I sing a lullaby to the little one…";

- *saco Sã̄'ĩ Satrām* "The true Swami Satram";

Four of these songs have been presented here.

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2 A poetic form, which borrows its style from certain ballads of the oral tradition, with a succession of stanzas of four lines and a refrain of two lines. The first three lines rhyme together and the last with those of the refrain, according to the following structure: AAAB BB CCCB BB, etc. There are two different etymologies for this term: *qāfiyat* "rhyme or poem" and *kafa'* Arabic "rattle". In Sindh, the fakirs and soufis passed in the streets with a rattle or a *yaktāro* to beg alms. It is a form of poetry which the Sindhi people cherish: in the countryside, everyone sings the *kāfī*: women, the camel driver (*jat*) the fakirs in a soufi sanctuary and of course, the *bhagat* narrators.

Corpus

Song 1: the legend of Umar-Mārūī

sur māru

> *āu kāṅgā kari g̱ālhi*
> *mūsā̃ tani māruaṛani jī*
> *māruaṛani jī, sāṅgīyaṛani jī*
>
> *ghaṛiyū̃ ghāraṇ ã̄yū̃ unhani rīa*
> *sāit-sāit sālu*
> *mukhe tani māruaṛani jī*
>
> *ã̄ū̃ ḏuhāg̱iṇi āhyã̄ unhani rīa*
> *hai-hai hahaṛā hāla*
> *mukhe tani māruaṛani jī*
>
> *Dariyākhān māruaṛani hitaṛe*
> *hai-hai kahaṛo hālu*
> *mukhe tani māruaṛani jī*

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

> come crow, speak
> of those Mārus,
> of the Mārus, my [village] friends...
>
> without them, each moment
> seems likes a year,
> of the Mārus, my [village] friends...
>
> without them, I am akin to a widow,
> in a pitious state, sobbing
> of the Mārus, my [village] friends...
>
> thus Dariyākhān[3] is deeply moved
> sobbing, sobbing
> of the Mārus, my [village] friends...

Ruchandani, 1993:183

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[3] The composer

Song 2: the Dawn melody

Rām sumar prabhāt mere manu, Rām sumar
uṭhīye prāṇī japīye Sāhibu, kau amṛt vāṇī vāt
vaṇijāro thī jaga mẽ ā'ẽ, samjhī bharijāĩ sāthu
surat nirt kī dahī jamāo, jñān māndhāṇī hāth
joī joī sumīre, soī lāl pāve, Rām na puchandai jāt
Rām japije, bilay na kīje, Nānik labhe' sāth

᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁᠁

remember to name Ram at dawn, my spirit, remember Ram
all sentient beings, wake up and pronounce the name of Sahib, pronounce the word of nectar
you came in the world as a merchant, take heed before making friendship
practice meditation with the diligence of a butter churn
he who remembers Ram finds the jewel, Ram will not ask for your caste
do not delay, sing the name of Ram. Nānik accompanies you.

Cassette: Bhagat Kanvar Ram (Sindhi Bhajan), Life Time Cassettes, face A, n°5

Song 3: the Dawn melody

kīyã rījhāyã̃, kīyã parcāyã̃ tokhe
ḍasi ko ḍāũ

yã̃ thyã̃ hindū, pūjã̃ butixānā
Gaṅgā Jamunā Kāśī āśnānā[4]
tilaku lagāyã̃ kīna jaṇyā pāyã̃? kīyã rījhāyã̃

yã̃ thyã̃ mominu neku namāzī,
jãhĩ mẽ Rāñjhana tũ thyẽ rāzī,
jā'e joṛāyã̃ kīna siriṛo nimāyã̃? kīyã rījhāyã̃

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[4] See also Ruchandani, 1993: 182

yã thyã nācū, pāyã peśuwāzī,
dhukaṛa dhamacara sāza āwāzī,
pheraṛī pã̄yã kīna cheru chimikāyã̄? kīyã rījhāyã̄

āu ta Pyārala karyū̃ parcāu
sāṇi Sulemān je sarcāu
lāyaqu nāhyã̄ ta bi tuhiñjī āhyã̄. kīyã rījhāyã̄

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how to cherish you, how to console you?
guide me

must I become a Hindu, worship statues on the altar?
take a bath in the Ganges or the Yamuna?
must I put a sign on the forehead, wear the sacred thread? how to cherish you?

must I become a Moslem, a good observer of the Book?[5]
whatever pleases you, Rāñjhan[6]
should I build a house or bow my head? how to cherish you?

must I become a tumbler, put on costumes?
pick up drums and boisterous instruments,
perform pirouettes or make jingling sounds with my anklets?[7] how to cherish you?

come, o Beloved One, let us console each other,
be one with Sulemān[8],
without being worthy of you, I am yours[9]. how to cherish you?

Bhagat Kanwar Ram: Sindhi Bhajan, Life Time Cassettes, side B, n°1

Here are three songs illustrating how Bhagat Kanvar Ram lives in the memory of the current *bhagat* narrators.

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[5] The Holy Coran
[6] Name of the Lord: the Lover, the sweetheart.
[7] Perhaps like a bhagat
[8] The composer
[9] The poet Suleman presents himself as a woman (in the Sindhi version).

Song 4: excerpt from a live *bhagat* performance (video recording)

1h01'47"

	nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
N1+N2	*nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo*
	nidharu āhyã̄ nimāṇ̄ī,
	nidharu āhyã̄ nimāṇ̄ī,
	ādhāru Tũhiñjo
	ādhāru Tũhiñjo
	sadike Dhaṇīya je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
	nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
	ḏā̱ḏhī āhe caṇḍī duniyā duraṅgī
M+N2	*ḏā̱ḏhī āhe caṇḍī duniyā duraṅgī*
	ḏā̱ḏhī āhe caṇḍī duniyā duraṅgī
	binā dhanu hite pã̄hiñje
	inā dhanu hite pã̄hiñje
	koneko māeṭu kã̄hiñjo
	koneko mā'eṭu kã̄hiñjo
	sadike Dhaṇīya je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
	nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
	Śrī Rām
N2	*cao hare Rām*
	o hare Rām
	ḏaḍho ā satāyo duniyā je gardiśa
	ḏaḍho ā satāyo duniyā je gardiśa
	(bhalo, bhalo, bhalo)
	(ḇeli) hīya duniyā sabhu dariyāh atha'ī
	ko ko tārū tãhĩmẽ
	hikirī lahara lobha jī
	ḇyo ta ātaś jo mer ā
	o mũhiñjā Sajaṇa
	?[10]
	o mũhiñjā Miṭhala
	ki moṛe cāṛyami makaṛyũ ?[11]
	ḏaḍho ā satāyo duniyā je gardaśi

---

[10] Inaudible
[11] Inaudible

Song 4

1h01'47"

N1+N2

in the name of the Eternal One, [please] allow my boat to navigate (Allah)
in the name of the Eternal One, please allow my boat to navigate
I am filled with humility, helpless
I am filled humility, helpless
but Your help is there
but Your support is there
in the name of the Master, allow my boat to navigate
in the name of the Eternal One, allow my boat to travel indeed,

M+N2

it is dreadful, this double-sided world
it is dreadful, this double-sided world
it is dreadful, this double-sided world
without wealth,
without wealth,
no relatives!
no relatives!
in the name of the Master, please allow my boat to navigate
in the name of the Eternal One, please allow my boat to travel indeed
Sri Ram

N2

say, hare Ram
oh hare Ram,
I am disturbed by the world's adversity,
I am disturbed by the world's adversity
(may the good come forth, may the good come forth, may the good come forth)
(friends) this entire world is an ocean
someone or other succeeds to cross
it is a wave of cupidity
an array of covetousness,
o my Beloved
?[12]
o my Sweet One
I forged the thole pins?[13]
indeed, I am disturbed by the adversity of the world

---

[12] Inaudible
[13] Inaudible

muhaṛo miṭāyo miṭani aĩ je mā'eṭani
kari ḇājha ḇānhīya te
kari mehara ḇānhīya te
ḍe dīdāru pãhiñjo
ḍe dīdāru pãhiñjo
dīdāru pãhiñjo
sadike Dhaṇīya je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
ho nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
nidharu āhyã mã nimāṇī
nidharu āhyã mã nimāṇī
ādhāru tũhiñjo
ādhāru tũhiñjo
sadike Dhaṇīya je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo
ho nāle Alakha je ḇeṛo tāri mũhiñjo

1h05'02"

The ideal *bhag̱at*

1h05'40"

N1   *vāh mũhiñjā Sã̃yĩ Kãvar Rāma*

     bhag̱at sāhiba, bhag̱at kare vyo ta mũhiñjo Sã̃yĩ Kãvar Rām kare vyo

     asã sabha'ī bhag̱ata jeke bi āyũ, Sã̃yĩ Kãvar Rāma je cole mẽ likyala āyũ

N2   *vāh vāh*

N1   *hikiṛo'ī mũhiñjo mehbūbu*

P   *kahaṛo?*

N2   *kurbudāri*

N1   *kurbadāri mũhiñjo Sã̃yĩ Kãvar Rām*

N2   *hā hā*

N1   *jekī bi kuchu milando ho gaṛībani khe bã̃ṭe ḍīndā hā*

<div align="center">
parents and relatives would not face me
grant Your compassion to this slave,
grant Your mercy to this slave
please show Yourself
please show Yourself
please show Yourself
in the name of the Master, please allow my boat to navigate
in the name of the Eternal One, please allow my boat to navigate
I am filled with humility, helpless
but Your help is there
I am filled with humility, helpless,
but Your help there
in the name of the Master, please allow my boat to navigate
in the name of the Eternal One, please allow my boat to navigate
</div>

1h05'02"

The ideal *bhagat*

1h05'40"

N1   well done, my Kanvar Ram

            Sir *bhagat*, if there were to be a *bhagat* at all, that's him, my Swami Kanvar Ram

            all *bhagats* that we are, we hide in Swami Kanvar Ram's cape

N2   well done, well done

N1   I only have one lover

P   who is it?

N2   the affectionate

N1   the affectionate one, my Swami Kanvar Ram

N2   yes, yes

N1   all that was offered to him, he distributed it to the poor

N2	*laṅgiṛani lūlani jī śevā kando huyo*
N1	*lūlani laṅgiṛani jī śevā kandā hā*
N2	*vāh vāh*
N1	*sab kuchu ḏe'ī chaḏīndā hā*
M	*na rakhandā huā pāṇa vaṭi*
N1	*(yāra) santana mẽ santu*
N2	*hā hā*
N1	*bhagatana mẽ bhagatu*
N2	*hā hā*
	gulani mẽ gula ḫyā bi ghaṇā (lā)
M	*ho'e [...]*
N1	*chā thyo, chā thyo?*

> *gulani mẽ gula ḫyā bi ghaṇā*
> *para gulāba jahaṛo ḫyo na ko*
> *motyuni mẽ motī ḫyā bi ghaṇā*
> *para hīre jahaṛo ḫyo na ko*
> *pakhyuni mẽ pakhī ḫyā bi ghaṇā*
> *para mora jahaṛo ḫyo na ko*
> *mevani mẽ mevā ḫyā bi ghaṇā*
> *para amba jahaṛo ḫyo na ko*
> *tīyã bhagatani mẽ bhagata ḫyā bi ghaṇā*
> *ho… mũhiñje Sãyĩya Kanvar Rāma jahaṛo ḫyo na ko*

1h06'45"

N2   he served the lame and the handicapped

N1   he served the lame and the handicapped

N2   well done, well done

N1   he gave away all

M   he kept nothing for himself

N1   (friends), the saint among the saints

N2   yes, yes

N1   the *bhagat* amid the *bhagats*

N2   yes, yes

N1   there are flowers amid flowers

M   hey […]   the musician is not ready

N1   what's up? what's happening?

          there are flowers amid flowers
          but none is like the rose
          there are precious stones amid stones
          but none is like the diamond
          there are birds amid birds
          but none is like the peacock
          there are fruits amid fruits
          but none is like the mango
          thus there are *bhagats* amid *bhagats*
          but none is like my Swami Kanvar Ram

     1h06'45"

Song 5

Music

<div align="center">

kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā
o ḍiyẫ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
hokā ḍīndo halyo Rāma nāma jā
o ḍiyẫ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
hokā ḍīndo halyo Rāma nāma jā
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā

</div>

Music

<div align="center">

miṭhī ḫolīndo halyo ḫolī
jite lathala santana jī ṭolī
(o 'llāh)
miṭhī ḫolīndo halyo ḫolī
jite santan jī ṭolī
miṭhī ḫolīndo haliyo ḫolī
jite lathala santana jī ṭolī
āvāzu vayo kana te
neṇa khulyā Sẫyī Satirāmajā
āvāzu vayo kana te
neṇa khulyā Sẫyī Satirāmajā ('llāh)

kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāga khulyā Sẫyī Kãvar Rāma jā

</div>

Music

are bhāī Rāma nāma jā miṭhirā kohira
Sẫyī Kãvar Rām kohira khaṇī kare Sẫyī Satirāmdas sāhibajana khe
(ḫelī) manā'e āyā āhin Jarvārana je śahara mẽ

Song 5

Music

<div style="text-align: center;">

he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas[14],
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram
I send a handful[15] for a *paisa*[16]
in the name of Ram, he cried as he passed by
a handful for a *paisa*
in the name of Ram, he cried
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

</div>

Music

<div style="text-align: center;">

he walked speaking sweet phrases
where the group of saints rested awhile
(o Allah)
he walked speaking sweet phrases
where the group of saints rested awhile
he walked speaking sweet phrases
where the group of saints rested awhile
the call reached Swami Satram's ears
Swami Satram opened his eyes (Allah)
the call reached Swami Satram
Swami Satram opened his eyes (Allah)

he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas,
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

</div>

Music

hey brother, in the name of Ram, here are some sweet chick peas!
Swami Kanvar Ram taking his hot chick peas, he goes towards Swami Satramdas Sahib
(friends) in the Jarvar town

---

[14] *kohira*: millet, peas or chick peas boiled and sold in the streets.
[15] A paper bowl
[16] 1 *paisā* is the 64th part of a Rupee. 1 Rupee is also equal to 16 *ānā*, 8 *b̤iyānyū̃*, 4 *pāolyū̃* or 2 *ādhyā*.

Kãvar Rāmajī mātā cavethī: ḫaciṛā Kãvara, (ḫelī) adhu seru khani tokhe kohira
vañī vikiṇī ā   [radhe ḏyã
ḫa ṭre paisā milī pavandā
Sãyī Kãvar Rām ājñā vaṭhī kare, ūhe kohira khaṇī kare vikiraṇi lā'e pyo vañe
cavando pyo vañe: Rāma nāmajā miṭhirā kohira khāo
miṭhiro āvāzu
Rāma nāma jā miṭhirā kohira
Sãyī Satirāmdās Sāhibajana je kana the parlāu payo āhe

> *santu nikrī ḫāhar āyo*
> *acaṇu sã gale laḡāyo*
> *santu nikrī ḫāhar āyo*
> *acaṇu sã gale laḡāyo*
> *(o) cayī̃: lāla sakhī ḫaciṛā*
> *āyo veṭhala kahaṛe gãva jā?*
> *(o) lāla sakhī ḫacirā*
> *āyo veṭhala kahaṛe gãva jā?*

> *kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo*
> *bhāḡa khulyā Sãyī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)*
> *kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo*
> *bhāḡa khulyā Sãyī Kãvar Rāma jā*

Music

Sãyī Satirāmdās cavetho: ḫacā Kãvara
are abā tuhiñjo nālo chā āhe? kahaṛe goṭha jā veṭhala āyo? ahaṛo [ahaṛī] miṭhirī
varī cavetho: Rāma nāma jā miṭhirā kohira   [ḫolī
are abā, tuhiñjo nālo chā āhe?
Kãvar Rām cavetho: mũhiñjā bābala

> *nãv Kãvar mã saḏāyã*
> *puṭu Tārāchandajo āhiyã (Allāh)*
> *nãv Kãvar mã saḏāyã*
> *puṭu Tārāchandajo āhiyã*
> *(Allāh), o mũhiñjā dātāra*
> *o Jarvāru ā mũhiñjo gãv*
> *āyũ naukara tuhiñje nãva jā*

Kanvar Ram's mother says: child Kanvar, (friends) I will cook a pound of chick peas
go and sell them
that will get us two or three paisas
Swami Kanvar Ram takes leave, takes the chick peas and leaves to sell them
while passing, he says: in the name of Ram! eat soft peas
what a melodious voice
in the name of Ram! [here] are soft peas
the cry reached Swami Satramdas Sahib's ears

<div align="center">

the saint came out
and at once embraced him
the saint came out
and at once embraced him
he says: generous child
which village are you from?
generous child
which village are you from?

</div>

<div align="center">

he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

</div>

Music

Swami Satramdas says: child Kanvar
little father, what is your name? which village are you from? what sweet phrases...
at that time, he says: in the name of Ram! sweet peas
oh little father, what is your name?
Kanvar Ram says: my father

<div align="center">

they call me Kanvar
I am Tarachand's son (Allah)
they call me Kanvar
I am Tarachand's son
(Allah) oh my benefactor[17]
Jarvar is my village
we are the servants of Your name

</div>

---

[17]   Respectful

Jarvāru ā mũhiñjo gā̃v
āyū̃ naukara tuhiñje nā̃va jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̲a khulyā Sā̃yī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
o d̲yã̃ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
hokā d̲īndo halyo Rāma nāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̲a khulyā Sā̃yī Kãvar Rāma jā

Music

Sā̃yī Satirāmdas sāhibajan miṭhiro g̲ālāyaṇu budhī kare mohitu thī payā
santana jī jekā saj̲ī ṭolī niṇḍra mẽ sumī pe'ī
āvāza te sabhe'ī nikrī b̲āhar āyā
Sā̃yī Satirāmdas sāhibajana d̲iṭho sajīya ṭolīya khe
Kãvar Rāma khe cavanthā: abā, hīyaṇa hoko ta d̲eyī d̲ekhāri
Kãvar Rām cavetho: mũhiñjā sā̃yī, Rāma nāma jā miṭhirā kohira khāo
Rāma nāma jā
miṭhirā kohira khāo
Sā̃yī Satirāmdas cavetho: abā, kohira, abā, b̲acā Kãvara, īhe kohira

sādha sabha'ī khāīndai,
pāṇī piyandai, na pāī d̲īndai ('llāh)
sādha sabha'ī khāīndai
pāṇī piyandai, na pāī d̲īndai

mũhiñjā Mālika,

āhe siru bi sādhana sadike,
āyū̃ naukara tavã̃je nā̃va jā ('llāh)

Kãvar Rām cavetho: mũhiñjā Mālika,

āhe siru bi sādhana sadike,
āyū̃ naukara tavã̃je nā̃va jā (Allāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̲a khulyā Sā̃yī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̲a khulyā Sā̃yī Kãvar Rāma jā

Music

Jarvar is my village
we are the servants of Your name (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
I sell a handful for a *paisa*
in the name of Ram, he cried as he passed by
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

Music

hearing the soft phrases, Swami Satramdas Sahib is enchanted
the group of saints who was sleeping
awake to the cry, come out
Swami Satramdas Sahib looks at the whole group
he says to Kanvar Ram: little father, repeat your phrase
Kanvar Ram says: my Masters, eat sweet chick peas in the name of Ram!
in the name of Ram!
eat sweet chick peas
Swami Satramdas says: little father, chick peas, little father, child Kanvar, the peas

all the ascetics will eat them
drink water, but to none of them will give you a *paisa* (Allah)
all the ascetics will eat them
drink water, but to none of them will give you a *paisa*

my Master

this head also is an offering to the ascetics
we are the servants of Your name (Allah)

Kanvar Ram says: my Master

this head also is an offering to the ascetics
we are the servants of Your name (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas,
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

Music

kohira sādhana sabhinī khādā
jeke Kãvar Rāma āndā ('llāh)
kohira sādhana sabhinī khādā,
jeke Kãvar Rāma āndā
vayā kohira tuhiñjā adhu thī
Viṣinu kama kare vayo āma jā
(o mũhiñjā rāṇā mũhiñjā rāṇā
mũhiñjā rāṇā, mũhiñjā rāṇā)
vayā kohira tuhiñjā adhu thī
Viṣinu kama kare vayo āma jā

Kãvara, tuhiñje kohirana jā
aju kaṇā vyā pokhi jī
Kãvara, tuhiñje kohirana jā
aju kaṇā vyā pokhi jī
umaru sārī pyo luṇe o
umaru sārī je luṇe o
ta bi saṅgu na vendu sokhi jī
ā

Satirāmdās duā tho kare: ḫacā Kãvara, tuhiñjā kohira aghāmiji vayā

kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā
o ḏyã̄ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
kosā ḏīndo halyo Rāma nāma jā
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā
o ḏyã̄ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
kosā ḏīndo halyo Rāma nāma jā
o ḏyã̄ paise mẽ panu ta bhare
kosā ḏīndo halyo Rāma nāma jā
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā ('llāh)
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo
bhāg̱a khulyā Sã̄yī Kãvar Rāma jā

all the sadhus ate the chick peas
which Kanvar Ram had brought (Allah)
all the sadhus ate the chick peas
which Kanvar Ram had brought
your peas decreased by half
so Vishin[18] says: thus he served the people
(oh my king, my king
my king, my king)[19]
your peas decreased by half
so Vishin says: thus he served the people

now Kanvar
you have sown the seeds of your peas
now Kanvar
you have sown the seeds of your peas
all life long, you will harvest
even if all life long you harvest
the pods will not dry up
ah!

Satramdas praises [Ram] and says: child Kanvar, your peas are accepted

he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram
I sell a handful for a *paisa*
hot chick peas, in the name of Ram
in the name of Ram, he cried as he passed by
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram
I sell a handful for a *paisa*
in the name of Ram, he cried as he passed by
I sell a handful for a *paisa*
in the name of Ram, he cried as he passed by
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram (Allah)
he moved on carrying with him hot chick peas
destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram

---

[18]   The composer
[19]   Another form of address to the public like "friends"

Sãyī Kãvar Rāma jā kohira aghāmī vyā
Sãyī Satirāmadās aju b̲acir̲e Kãvara khe vaṭhī kare
Tārāchanda vaṭi āyā āhin
Sãyī Kãvar Rāma jī b̲ãhu vaṭhī kare
pãhiñje Raharkīya mẽ thā vaṭhī acan
aju Sãyī Kãvar Rāma je mathã Satirāmdāsa jī mehara thī ā
(b̲eli) bhagatyũ karaṇu sekhārīnthā
(sabha'ī cao Rām)

Music

(ā) d̲isi joṛī mazedār
kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e
d̲isi joṛī mazedār ā
d̲āḍhī ṭhahethī, d̲āḍhī vaṇe pe'ī
d̲isi joṛī mazedār
kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e
Satirām Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām
rāsa racā'e
Satirām Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām
rāsa racā'e
śahara Śikārpura mẽ
chad̲yaũ raṅgir̲o racā'e
hīya g̲ālhi budho tavhĩ
pyār dhyān lagā'e
āhā joṛī ā
d̲āḍhī vaṇe pe'ī, d̲āḍhī suṭhī ā

Music

ā
ca'ī kāfī Kãvar Rāma
b̲ola b̲ole pyo miṭhirā
ca'ī kāfī Kãvar Rāma
b̲ola b̲ole pyo miṭhirā
hika bheṇa, o hika mātā
hika amaṛu kayo sad̲u hāka[20] *puṭirā*
hīya ṭopī kalābāza jī
pā'e ta tũ b̲acir̲ā

---

[20]   Inaudible

Kanvar Ram's peas are accepted
today, Swami Satramdas accompanies the child
on the way to Tarachand
taking Swami Kanvar Ram by the arm
he takes him to Raharki
today, Satiramdas's grace takes care of Swami Kanvar Ram
(friends) he teaches how to to perform the *bhagat*
(every one, pronounce the name of Ram)

Music

look at the happy pair
how jubilant they are
look at the happy pair
how they blend together, how charming they are
look at the happy pair
how jubilant they are
Swami Satramdas
and Kanvar Ram dance with joy
Swami Satramdas
and Kanvar Ram dance with joy
in the town of Shikarpur
they brought colour
listen to this phrase carefully
with devotion
ah, the happy pair
how they blend together, how charming they are

Music

ah!
Kanvar Ram recited the *kāfī*
he pronounced sweet phrases
Kanvar Ram recited the *kāfī*
he pronounced sweet phrases
ah, a sister, yes, oh, a mother
mummy called: son!
child, come and wear
the performer's hat[21]

---

[21]   Thus, symbolically Kanvar Ram is initiated into the *bhagat* tradition (usually done by a senior *bhagat*).

hīya ṭopī kalābāza jī
pā'e ta tũ baciṛā
bhagvān kando sadā
jīyandẽ tũ lāla guliṛā
Dātāra kando sadā
jīyandẽ tũ lāla guliṛā
ṭopī vaṭhī chaḍī
Kãvara likā'e

āhā joṛī ā
ḍāḍhī vaṇe pe'ī, ḍāḍhī suṭhī ā

Music

Śikārpura je śahara mẽ
Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām Sãyĩ Satirāmdas Sāhibajana sã pandhre sāle je umaru mẽ pahaṇyo
pahaṇyo bhagatu karaṇu vyā āhin
hazāre khalqa ā
cār premī uthī kare cavanthā: mũhiñjā Sãyĩ hina baciṛe khe āndo athava (vo, vo)
hina baciṛe khã bi hikiṛo bhajan cavāyo
Sãyĩ Satirāmdās Sāhibajan Kãvar Rām khe saḍu thā kani : bacā Kãvara, hikiṛo
heḍã Sãyĩ Satirāmdās, heḍã Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām   [bhajan cao
(beli) mauja lagī pe'ī ā

māṇhũ cavanthā: abā hoḍe ta nihāri

ḍisi joṛī mazedār
kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e

Music

hikiṛī mātā jo saḍu kayo Sãyĩ Kãvar Rāma khe
ūha ṭopī pahiñje puṭa je lā'e ṭhārā'ī hu'ī
miṭhiro rāgu budhī kare (belī) vīcāru mātā kayo
mākhe Sãyĩya gañja ḍinā āhen
chā ta miṭhiro Kãvar
(belī) gā'etho miṭhiro
cho na īhā ṭopī ghurā'e ḍyã baciṛe miṭhiṛe Kãvara khe
mākhe Sãyĩya gañja ḍinā āhen
cho na mã pahiñje puṭa khe bī ṭopī ṭhārā'e ḍindasi
Kãvar Rāma khe mātā saḍu kayo
Sãyĩ Kãvar Rāma cavetho: amā tuhiñjo Kãvar baciṛo hāzuru ā
mātā cavethī: puṭa Kãvara hīya ṭopī pā'e

child, come and wear
the performer's hat
may God grant
long life to you, dear flower
may the Giver grant
long life to you, dear flower
Kanvar Ram took
the hat on the sly

ah, the happy pair
see how they blend together, how charming they are

Music

in the town of Shikarpur
Swami Kanvar Ram went to present his very first *bhagat* session
at the age of fifteen, beside Swami Satramdas Sahib
thousands of people are there
there, four admirers rise and say: my Master, you have brought this child
so let the child sing a *bhajan*
Swami Satramdas Sahib calls Swami Kanvar Ram: child Kanvar, then, sing a *bhajan*
Swami Satramdas Sahib is here, Swami Kanvar Ram is there
(friends) there is delight

people say: father, look there...

look at the happy pair
see how they blend together, how charming they are

Music

a mother called Swami Kanvar Ram
this hat, she had got it tailored for her son
by listening to his melodious song (friends) the mother said to herself:
the Master gave me a lot
how sweet he is, Kanvar
(friends) he sings so well
why not give this hat to the lovely child Kanvar
the Master gave me a lot
why not get another hat tailored for my son?
the mother called Kanvar Ram
Swami Kanvar Ram says: mother, your child Kanvar is here
the mother says: son, Kanvar, just wear this hat

Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām sāmū jo nihāre
Sãyĩ Satirāmdās Sāhibajan nihārīnthā
(ḫeli) ḍisī kare mātā khe ca'etho: mã vaṭhaĩtho
(ḫeli) puṭhī ḍe'ī bhīhījī vyo
Sãyĩ Satirāmdās nihāre pyo
heḍã mātā cavethī: puṭirā vaṭhu
mātā vaṭhaĩtho
santani hoḍe nihāryo
ḫaciṛe Kãvar Rāma ūhā ṭopī vartī
Sãyĩ Kãvar Rāma ṭopī vaṭhī khīse mẽ vidhī
mātā cavethī: puṭa Kãvara, śābās hujeī, mākhe ta pā'e ta ḍekhāri, ḍisã ṭha'e ta athī
Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām hūa ṭopī pātī ā
jaṇi ta ṭhayala ī santa je mathe jī

mātā khã dãhã nikrī ve'ī: puṭa Kãvara

> *o bhagvān kando jīyandẽ*
> *sadā lāla tũ guliṛā*
> *ṭopī vaṭhī Kãvara*
> *chaḍī ute likā'e*
> *ṭopī vaṭhī Kãvara*
> *chaḍī ute likā'e*
> *ḍisi joṛī mazedār*
> *kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e*

Music

Sãyĩ Satirāmdās Kãvara khe cavetho: ḫacā Kãvara, hāṇe pahiñje goṭha vañu
bhagatyũ bi konani
je bhagatyũ thiyũ tokhe ghurā'e vaṭhandumi
(ḫeli) Satiguruni jī ājñā vaṭhī kare Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām pahiñje mulku Jarvārani mẽ tho ace
acī pitā khe pere pa'ī, mātā khe pere pa'ī
ḫãha khã vaṭhī kare, andar vaṭhī āyo ā, ca'etho: amā heḍe ta nihāri
mātā ṭopī ḍiṭhī, sundar ṭopī
garībī hālu, mātā cavethī: puṭa Kãvara (ḫeli) kahiñjī khaṇī ā'ẽ?
                              [mātā etrā akhara cavaṇu, Kãvar Rām cavetho:
                                    [amā, mã bhagatyuni te vayumi
Śikārpura je śahara mẽ hikiṛī mā'īa saḍu kayo
hīya ṭopī ḍinī atha'ĩ
pā'e kare māu khe cavetho: amā ḍisu ta sahĩ, ṭha'e ta athī?
heḍe ta nihāri, o mũhiñjī amā, ḍisu ta sahĩ
mātā cavethī: puṭra Kãvara, bhalā santani khe khabara āhe?
mātā jā etrā akhara budhī kare Sãyĩ Kãvar Rām cavetho: amā santani vaṭi jekā
                              [bi śaha acetī, bhagatu bandi kare viṛahe thā chaḍīni

Swami Kanvar Ram looks in front of him
Swami Satramdas Sahib is watching him
(friends) on seeing him, he says to the mother: I will take it
(friends) he turns round
Swami Satramdas is still watching him
the mother says: son, just take it
mother, I will take it
the saints faced on the other side
child Kanvar took the hat
Swami Kanvar Ram took the hat, put it in his pocket
the mother says: child Kanvar, congratulations, put it on, let's see whether it suits you
Swami Kanvar Ram wore the hat
as if it were cut for the saint

the mother exclaimed, child Kanvar

may God grant
long life to you, dear flower
Kanvar took the hat
hid it at once
Kanvar took the hat
hid it at once
look at the happy pair
see how they blend together, how charming they are

Music

Swami Satramdas says to Kanvar: child Kanvar, now go back to your village
these days, there are no *bhagat* sessions
if they occur, I will call you
(friends) while taking leave from the holy Master, Swami Kanvar Ram returns in the
he bows before his father, he bows before his mother   [Jarvar town
taking her by the arm, he enters and says: mom, just look at this
the mother saw the hat
the mother who knows her poverty, says: son Kanvar (friends) whose hat is this?
                    [the mother hardly pronounced these words that Kanvar Ram says:
                              [mom, I went to perform *bhagat* sessions
in Shikarpur town, a woman called me
it is she who gave me this hat
he takes it and says to his mother: mom, just have a look, it suits me fine, isn't this?
look here, ah mom, just have a look
the mother says: child Kanvar, by the way, do the saints know about it?
on hearing these words, Swami Kanvar Ram says: mom, everything that the saints
                    [collect at the end of the *bhagat* sessions, they just distribute it

aharī śaha mã̄ kīyã̄ viñāyã̄
likā'e rakhu
jaḏahã̄ jaḏahã̄ bhagatyũ thiyani, taḏī̃ taḏī̃ pā'e pyo vendumi
mātā thī moha je vasu
uhā ṭopī likā'e rakhī ā
para Yāra jī qudrata

        o ḏī̃ha thoṛā thyā
        Kã̄vara khe bukhār thī payaro
        o ḏī̃ha thoṛā thyā
        Kã̄vara khe bukhār thī payaro
        kani ke'ī davāũ pyā,
        para farqu na payaro
        hutã̄ Tārācanda dili mẽ
        vicāru hī kayaro
        āhe jã̄hiñjo ḏinalu
        tani vaṭu chaḏe acã̄ ḇaciṛo
        Satirām Sã̄'ī̃ya je dara te
        āyā puṭa khe khã̄ṇā'e
        ḏisi joṛī mazedār
        ḏāḍhī vaṇe pe'ī, ḏisi joṛī ā

Music

Sã̄yī Kã̄var Rām (ḇeli) bukhāra mẽ gaśu lagā pyā āhen
Sã̄yī Satirāmdās sāhibajan (ḇeli) vacanu pyā tā vaṭhan
Sã̄yī Kã̄var Rāmajā mātā pitā ḇaciṛe khe khaṇā'e āyā āhen rohī kare, cavanthã̄ mũhiñjā
mālika, mũhiñjo ḇaciṛo, jīyã̄ tavhã̄ vaṭã̄ āyo ā, ahaṛo ta bukhāru thyo athasi
jīyã̄ davā ka'ī, tīyã̄ dukhu vañetho vadhando
ḏinalu bi tavhã̄jo, davā bi tavhã̄ kandāu
Sã̄'ī Satirāmdās sāhibajan budho aṇabudho kare vyo

hiku ḏī̃hu guziryo, ḇa ḏī̃ha guziryā
ṭriyẽ ḏihāre prabhāti je samay mẽ
Kã̄var Rāma jī mātā aju rohetī zāraũ zār
uhe goṛhā kirani Kã̄var Rāma je galani te pyā pavani
Kã̄var Rāma jī akhu khulī
mātā khe ruando ḏisī kare ca'etho: mũhiñjī amā, santani je dara te,
                                    [mũhiñjā satiguru dayālū

this beautiful object, how to lose it?
hide it
each time that a *bhagat* session will take place, I will wear it for the occasion
the mother succumbed to attachment
she hid the hat
but who knows the nature of the Friend…

<div align="center">

a few days later
Kanvar Ram has fever
a few days later
Kanvar Ram has fever
many remedies were given
but nothing changed
so Tarachand thinks
he thinks:
he who gave us the child[22]
I will take back the child to him
he went to Swami Satram's door
carrying the son
look at the happy pair
see how they blend together, how charming they are

</div>

Music

Swami Kanvar Ram (friends) is exhausted by the fever
Swami Satramdas (friends) is uttering the Word
Swami Kanvar Ram's parents carry the child
in tears, they say: my Master, my child, since he took leave from you, the temperature
though drugs were administred, the pain increases   [suddenly shot up
it is you who gave him to us you who will look after him
Swami Stramdas ignored the call

one day passes, two days pass
the third day, at dawn, today
Kanvar Ram's mother is still crying
the tears fall on the Kanvar Ram's cheek
Kanvar Ram opened his eyes
on seeing his mother crying, he says: my mother, at the saints' doorstep!
                                             [my Satguru is compassionate

---

22 Though according to the legend, it was Bhagat Khoṭārām who announced Kanvar Ram's birth (cf. concise biography)!

mũhiñje santani je dara te ruandā āyā, khilandā vayā
tũ varī rohetī pe'ī
dãha kare cavethī: baçā Kãvara, aju ṭre ḍihārā thyā āhen santani je dara te
(beli) ājũ kayũ āhen, nīzāryũ kayũ āhen
(beli) mũhu'ī nathā ḍiyani
ahaṛī kā galtī thī va'ī ā
o mũhiñjā baciṛā (beli) mukhe ārām kiyã īndo cho ta pīyu māu puṭra khe ḍukhu na ḍīndo
sab kuchu pãhiñje sira te sahando
o mũhiñjā lāla baciṛā, pe'ī thī dāhũ karyã satigurani khe
mana jī pukāra budhani
Sãyī Kãvar Rām, (beli) ro'ī kare mātā khe cavetho : parvāh na kari, mũhiñjā satiguru dayālū āhin
ro'ī kare aju pãhiñje satigurani khe prārthanā tho kare

<center>

(beli) ajho na ' tham āsiro
ajho na ' tham āsiro
(o) mũhiñjī jhugī jhale nathī
sartyũ Śāhu Latīfu cave
āhe hālu ta mũhiñjo hī
(vo, vo) hāṇe Ḍholā ḍhakaṇa thī
(o beli) mũhiñje hinan madāyun jo
(bhalo)
vāh mũhiñjā nimāni jā māṇa,
o, e Hari

</center>

Kãvar Rāma jo prārthanā ka'ī
(beli) pyāra jā saḍirā budhī kare satiguru jo langhanthā
Sãyĩ Kãvar Rāma jo ḍiṭho pãhiñje satigurani khe, hatha joṛe, ho bãhũ badhī
ho pere pe'ī Kãvar Rāma cayo

<center>

āhyã mã bīmār, mũte dayā karyo dili sã
āhyã mã bīmār, mũte dayā karyo dili sã
āhyã naṇdhiṛo mã bār

</center>

Music

Satirāmdās cavetho: re Kãvara, chātho cavẽ tote dayā kayã, chājī tote dayā kayã?
Kãvar Rāma Sãyĩ ro'ī kare cavetho: mũhiñjā mālika
o mũhiñjo dukhiṛo lāhyo
o mũhiñjo mālika, mũte dayā kayo

at the saint's doorstep, they came crying and left laughing
and you are crying!
complaining, she says: child Kanvar, today I have been here for three days
(friends) I have made sincere prayers, begged   [at the saint's doorstep
(friends) he did not even turn to see
surely, something has gone wrong
oh my child (friends) how to remain calm? father and mother will not let
a son suffer
they take everything upon themselves
my dear child, I pray to the Satguru
that he may listen to my heart's call
Swami Kanvar Ram (friends) in tears, he says to his mother: do not worry
my Satguru is compassionate
in tears, today, in front of his Satguru, he implores

<div align="center">

(friends) I have neither refuge, nor protection
I have neither refuge, nor protection
my hut does not hold
thus Shah Latif[23] says: friends
this is my state
Friend, now become the one who covers
(oh friends) my faults
(may the good come forth)
congratulations, Thou paragon of humility
(oh Hari)

</div>

as soon as Kanvar Ram called
(companions) passing by, Satguru hears this call of gentleness
when he saw his Satguru, Kanvar Ram, arms joined, hands folded
prostrating, Kanvar Ram says:

<div align="center">

I am unwell, have mercy on me
I am unwell, have mercy on me
I am only a little child

</div>

Music

Satramdas says: hey, you say have mercy, what kind of mercy?
weeping, Swami Kanvar Ram says: my Master
remove my pain
my Master, have pity on me

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[23]   The composer

Satiram Sã̄yĩ̄ya cayo: to ta kayo na vīcār
to ta kayo na vīcār
vīcār kona kayu, aju tho cavẽ, mũhiñjo dukhu lāhe
para puṭa Kã̄vara yād rakhijaĩ

ho, jeke ṭopī likā'ĩndā
sadā hūndā bīmār
ho, jeke ṭopī likā'ĩndā
sadā hūndā bīmāra
je vacanu ḏẽ Kã̄vara
chaḏu dukhiṟo miṭā'e
je vacanu ḏẽ Kã̄vara
chaḏu dukhiṟo miṭā'e
āhā joṟī ā
ḏāḏhī vaṇe pe'ĩ, ḏāḏhī suṭhī ā

Music

Sã̄yĩ̄ Kã̄var Rām hatha joṟe cavetho: mũhiñjā mālika, jīyã̄ hukumu kandava tīyã̄
para yāra, mũhiñjo dukhiṟo lā'e   [kandomāva
Sã̄yĩ̄ Satirāmdās cavetho: abā, avala īhā ṭopī khaṇī ā, jãhĩ mẽ dukhu ā
                                                          [jãhĩmẽ bukhāru ā
Sã̄yĩ̄ Kã̄var Rām māu ḏe nihāryo
māu cavethī: puṭa Kã̄vara, mã̄ khaṇī ā'ī āhyã̄
mātā ṭopī khaṇī Kã̄var Rāma khe ḏinī ā
Sã̄yĩ̄ Kã̄var Rām ṭopī khaṇī kare pã̄hiñje satigurani khe tho ḏye
Sã̄yĩ̄ Satirāmdās cavetho: puṭa Kã̄vara, hoḏe sāmū nihāri, o mastāno veṭho'thī
hina mastane mẽ Māliku vase, (ḇeli) rakhijẽ tũ Tani sã̄ nāto
(ḇeli) mastāne khe ṭopī pā'e Sã̄yĩ̄ Kã̄var Rām āyo, satigurani je caraṇani te hathu
satigurani jī nazar thī va'ī   [rakhiya'ĩ
je nazar thī ve'ī po'e kahaṟo bi dukhu hūndo ta dūr thī vendo
Satiramdās cavetho: puṭa Kã̄vara, hāṇe jīyã̄ mã̄ cavaĩ, je mũhiñje vacana te tho
                                    [halẽ ta asã̄ bi tosã̄ vacanu thā karyũ ta
puṭa Kã̄vara jesta'ĩ siju caṇḍu tārā āhen testa'ĩ duniyā pe'ĩ tuhiñjā guṇa gā'ĩndī''

Sã̄yĩ̄ Kã̄var Rām perante kirī kare ca'etho: mũhiñjā murśida, o mũhiñjā satiguru
bākī mukhe chā khape, jīyã̄ cavandava mã̄ tīyã̄ kandomāva
he dāsu Kã̄var tavhā̄ñjo naukaru hāzuru āhe

Swami Satramdas says: you did not even ponder
you did not ponder
you did not ponder and today you say, remove my pain
but child Kanvar, remember

they always will be sick
those who hide the hat
they always will be sick
those who hide the hat
if you give me your word
then I will remove the pain
if you give me your word
then I will remove the pain
ah, the happy pair
see how they blend together, how charming they are

Music

Swami Kanvar Ram, hands folded, says: my Master, I will follow your orders
but friend, remove this pain
Swami Satramdas says: little father, to start with, bring the hat in which reside
Swami Kanvar Ram turns towards his mother   [pain and fever
mother says: son, I have brought it
the mother gave the hat to Kanvar Ram
Swami Kanvar Ram takes the hat and hands it over to his Master
Swami Satramdas says: son Kanvar, look over there, in front of you stands the
Enchanted One[24]
the Master lives in the heart of the enchanted ones, (friends) keep in touch with Him
(friends) Swami Kanvar Ram put the hat on the Enchanted One, he prostrated
Satguru's glance swept across [Kanvar Ram]   [at the feet of the Master
if the glance sweeps across, all pain will disappear
Satramdas says: son Kanvar, here's all I have to say, if you listen to my words
                                                              [then I also give you my word
son Kanvar, as long as the sun will remain, the moon and the stars, the world will talk
                                                              [about your virtues
Swami Kanvar Ram says while prostrating at his feet: my spiritual guide, my satguru,
what else do I need, I will do what you say
Kanvar, this slave, your servant, is here

---

[24] Probably the saint of the sanctuary

Sãyĩ Satirāmdās ca'etho: puṭa Kãvara

ḏe vacanu īyo
kaḏhaĩ pā'ī na khaṇandẽ
jekī mila'ī tokhe
Dhaṇīya nāle pyo ḏindẽ
je vacanu khaṇandẽ
Viṣina amar thīndẽ
je vacanu khaṇandẽ
Viṣina amar thīndẽ
āsīsa asãjī
tũ vasandẽ aĩ vadhandẽ
āsīsa asãjī
tũ vasandẽ aĩ vadhandẽ
ḏino vacanu Kãvar Rāma
pãhiñje sira khe nimā'e
āhā joṛī ā
ḏāḍhī vaṇe pe'ī, ḏāḍhī suṭhī ā
ḏisi joṛī mazedār
kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e
ḏisi joṛī mazedār ā
ḏāḍhī ṭhahethī, ḏāḍhī vaṇe pe'ī
ḏisi joṛī mazedār
kīyã pe'ī mauja macā'e
Satirām sãyĩ Kãvar Rām
rāsa racā'e
Satirām sãyĩ Kãvar Rām
rāsa racā'e
śahara Śikārpura mẽ
chaḏyaũ raṅgiṛo racā'e
hīya gālhi budho tavhĩ
pyār dhyān lagā'e
āhā joṛī ā
ḏāḍhī vaṇe pe'ī, ḏāḍhī suṭhī ā

Swami Satramdas says, son Kanvar

promise me
you will not take even one *paisa*
all that you will receive
you will bestow it in the name of the Lord
if you promise me
thus Vishin says: you will be immortal
if you promise me
thus Vishin says: you will be immortal
here are my blessings
you shall live and you shall grow
here are my blessings
you shall live and you shall grow
Kanvar Ram promised
bowing his head
ah, the happy pair
how they blend together, how charming they are
look at the happy pair
how jubilant they are
look at the happy pair
how they blend together, how charming they are
look at the happy pair
how jubilant they are
Swami Satramdas and Kanvar Ram
dance with joy
Swami Satramdas and Kanvar Ram
dance with joy
in the town of Shikarpur
they brought colour
listen to this phrase carefully
with devotion
ah, the happy pair
how they blend together, how charming they are

Song 6

śahīdīya jo pā'e jāmo
śahīdīya jo pā'e jāmo
vyo Jarvārani jo jānī
dharam aĩ deśa je khātir
kare kūndhar vyo kurbānī

        laḏe lālu Kãvar vyo Jarvārani mã̃
        Jarvārani mã̃ (vo, vo)
        halyo hīro viyo

Music

        o vyo śeru śahīdīya jo nālo haṇī
        runo hindū muslimu neṇa khaṇī
        āyo bhagavata jo mathã̃ bhāṇo baṇī
        vyo mauja miṭho man ṭhāru

Music

        o ka'ī varsyũ̃ melā lagā'ĩnithā
        ka'ī bhagata acī jasu gā'ĩnithā
        ka'ī sāza surīlā vajā'ĩnithā
        halyo hīro viyo

Music

        o vyo jamaṇa maraṇa khã̃ dehu chaḏe
        vañī veṭho dargāha mẽ ḏera kare
        tãhĩkhe Sãvala veṭho sika mã̃ saḏe
        halyo caṇdu ta vyo sitārani mã̃

Song 6

dressed in a martyr's robe
dressed in a martyr's robe
the soul of Jarvar[25] departed
for integrity and for the motherland
the noble one peformed a sacrifice

he left Jarvar
Jarvar (la la la)
the jewel left.

Music

he departed, the lion, in the name of martyrdom
they wept, Hindus and Moslems, eyes drowned in tears
he came in this world by the will of God, by the will of heaven
he departed, the joyous, the sweet, and the enchanting one.

Music

they commemorate the passing of the pious[26]
a few *bhagats* sing to glory
they play melodious instruments
the jewel has left.

Music

liberating his body from birth and death
he sat down with the saints
(Sãval[27] calls Him with yearning and gentleness)
he departed like the moon amidst the stars.

Audio Cassette: *sindhī bāgbahār*, chant Lakhmichandra, Music Gulzar
LC Series

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[25] Bhaḡat Kanvar Ram's birth place
[26] Annual celebration
[27] The composer

Comments

At the moment, a *bhagat* perfomance is restricted to the Sindhi community in India and a part of the Diaspora, the narrators being Hindu and Sindhi speaking. It is impossible to imagine a *bhagat* gathering in another language, for another public. The form itself of the narration, the fragmentations and interruptions, would be incomprehensible to the uninitiated audience.

The boundary between popular literature and all other literary work is blurred, because from its original forms, all literature shares the oral tradition, and both types are preserved by no other means than individual memory.

There is also a link beween the songs and historical evocations. As for the epic poem Ramayana, the narrators have a tendency to romanticise the past, idealise it, which actually gives reason for the *bhagat* to continue narrating. It connects the community to its history. In his narrative, no political actor of the conflict appears. Gandhi or Jinnah are here replaced by very powerful symbols such as the martyr Bhagat Kanvar Ram and Mārui.

Did our texts circulate orally, in poetry or prose before the recordings? The observations of the process of composition in the performance context lead to textualisation. Only through textualisation can the text mass assist the reader in the interpretation of the *bhagat* songs. In a broader sense, our enterprise produced an accurate archive of audio visual documents around the *bhagat* tradition. The way the *bhagat* narrators perform this repertory compels us to infer different **levels of significance** in order to comprehend the text.

General review

Song 1: Marui was kidnapped from her village well by Umar, the Soomra chieftain who ruled over Thar (Sindh) from 1355 to 1390 A.D. Umar offered her all the comforts of the palace, but she refused to see him. She insisted that she should be restored to her fiancé Khetsen. Finally, Umar learnt that he had been nourished by Marui's mother when he was a baby. So he sent Marui, his foster sister, back home.

This song clearly belongs to the large set of popular Sindhi legends (Rā'e Ḍiāc, Līlā-Canesar, Mūmal-Rāṇo, Nūrī-Jām Tamācī, Suhiṇī-Mehār, Sassuī-Punhũ, Koyal-Dīpak, etc.); in the form of the versions before us, it belongs to somewhere on the boundary between the learned-literary and folk-oral milieux, its narrative content is much more closely allied to the latter. Though undisclosed, the Sindhi audience recognizes the name of the heroine, Marui because the legend of the separation between Marui and her village folk is renowned (cf. Figure 3 "pool"). From a common village girl, Marui stands for the Sindhi diaspora; her village becomes the motherland Sindh, the desired realm.

Song 2: this is a description of a morning ritual and a call to all sentient beings; only the naming of Ram can liberate you from the worries of this world, so awake. The God invoked is Ram, a Hindu God, but he is called Sahib, one of the names for the Lord in Islam. The saint

who can help you attain Ram is the founder of Sikkhism, Nānik. A *bhagat* song is the song of the Sindhi religious community refering to three religions.

Song 3: this is a devotional song with a traditional theme: how can all creatures be worthy of God? As above, we can notice a reference to both the religions, Hinduism and Islam. We can see two characteristic features: firstly, this could be a love song (Beloved One; I am yours) it is common to find in *bhagat* songs such parallelisms between human love and the love for God. Secondly, this song may also be considered as Meta *bhagat*. What is emphasized is the fact that the *bhagat* narrator cannot perform his songs without God, his source of inspiration (Be one with Suleman).

Song 4: Bhagat Arjandas's video recording in Sita Sindhu Bhavan, Mumbai, May 7, 2000. Reminder: titles, subtitles and other indications have been added for the conveniences of the reader (cf. Non lexical units). We chose to present here an excerpt of a *bhagat* performance within the urban modern framework. This *bhagat* performance is part of a cycle of monthly cultural events programmed for the Sindhi community in Sita Sindhu Bhavan, Mumbai. This residence is dedicated to Ram Panjwani (1911-1987).

nāle Alakha je is the most famous song of Bhagat Kanvar Ram. This prayer, integrated in a *bhagat* session, presents life as a turbulent ocean and God as the only solace (the Eternal One, the Master, Beloved and the Sweet One).

The following passage is a Meta comment on the traditions of the *bhagat* community. There is a shift from an invocation to God to an invocation to Bhagat Kanvar Ram (metaphor of the cape: protection and affiliation). He is cited as the Lover, the affectionate one. Then he is portrayed as the generous one, the servant of suffering humanity and finally the song links the saint amid the saints, and the *bhagat* amid the *bhagats*. This equivalence is outlined by using nature comparisons. Hence the true *bhagat* is part of the cosmos.

Song 5: this song narrates Bhagat Kanvar Ram's life like a tale: the poor boy becomes the best one. As in a folktale, his life is filled with encounters and ordeals. All evil is reversed and becomes a divine blessing and in the song the refrain resonates: Destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram.

Song 6: composed after Bhagat Kanvar Ram's assassination, the current *bhagats* commemorate the values of sacrifice. Placed at the rank of a martyr, he sacrificed for the harmony between the two religious communities, Hindus and Moslems.

Death is described euphomistically: he left Jarvar - he departed. He is called the lion, the jewel, the joyous, the sweet and the enchanting one, the courageous one and the soft one

We can note a sudden crescendo in the metaphors and comparisons: Liberating his body from birth and death, he sat down with the saints (sanctified: apotheosis) / he departed like the moon amidst the stars (deification at the cosmic level).

We have shown the main influence of Bhagat Kanvar Ram regarding the content and the style of a *bhagat* performance. But the main aspect of his deep influence relates to values of spiritual and mythical dimension.

Values

Social values

- Stay away from bad company: take heed before making friendship (song 2)
- Rise above the caste system: Ram will not ask for your caste (song 2).
- Rise above the religious divergences: Ram will not ask for your caste (song 2); must I become a Hindu… must I become a Moslem (song 3); they wept Hindus and Moslems, eyes drowned in tears - (song 6)

Personal values

- Humility: Without being worthy of you, I am yours (song 3); I am filled with humility – grant your compassion to this slave – he served the lame and the handicapped (Song 4); We are the servants of Your name - this head also is an offering to the ascetics - we are the servants of Your name - Kanvar, this slave, your servant, is here (song 5)
- Generosity: All that was offered to him, he distributed it to the poor – he gave away all – he kept nothing for himself (song 4); All the sadhus ate the chick peas which Kanvar Ram had brought. Your peas decreased by half. So Vishin says: thus he served the people - mom, everything that the saints collect at the end of the *bhagat* sessions, they just distribute it (song 5).
- Sweetness and love: how to cherish you, how to console you? guide me (song 3); Lover - the affectionate one, my Swami Kanvar Ram (song 4); he walked speaking sweet phrases - the saint came out and at once embraced him - what sweet phrases… – listen to this phrase carefully, with devotion - how sweet he is, Kanvar - as soon as Kanvar Ram called, (companions) passing by, Satguru hears this call of gentleness (song 5).

Tenets of life

- Practice meditation: practice meditation with the diligence of a butter churn.
- Remember God: remember to name Ram at dawn, my spirit, remember Ram (song 2); every one, pronounce the name of Ram (song 5).

Symbolic features, mythical characters and the spiritual dimension

A large number of symbolic features and mythical characters in all the *bhagat* songs induce a spiritual interpretation, always present in the audience's mind.

Marui (song 1); Ram, Sahib, Nanik, the Eternal One, the Master, Beloved, Sweet One, (song 2); Ganga, Yamuna, Ranjhan, Beloved One (song 3); Kanvar Ram's cape – the saint amid the saints – *bhagat* amid the *bhagats* – there are *bhagats* amid *bhagats*, but none is like my Swami Kanvar Ram (song 4); chick peas – the hat - Satguru's glance swept across [Kanvar Ram]. If the glance sweeps across, all pain will disappear (song 5); the martyr's robe (song 6).

Divine Grace: all the incidents of Bhagat Kanvar Ram's life, apparently dramatic or negative, turn out to be proofs of the divine grace (suffering the loss from paisas that he could have collected from his chick peas, severe illness and finally death).

Destiny smiled upon Swami Kanvar Ram - the saint came out and at once embraced him - you have sown the seeds of your peas, all life long, you will harvest. Even if all life long you harvest, the pods will not dry up - Kanvar Ram's peas are accepted. Today, Swami Satramdas accompanies the child on the way to Tarachand. Taking Swami Kanvar Ram by the arm, he takes him to Raharki. Today, Satiramdas's grace takes care of Swami Kanvar Ram. (Friends) he teaches how to to perform the *bhagat* - Satramdas says: son Kanvar, here's all I have to say, if you listen to my words, then I also give you my word. Son Kanvar, as long as the sun will remain, the moon and the stars, the world will talk about your virtues - Satguru's glance swept across [Kanvar Ram] – thus Vishin says: you will be immortal, here are my blessings, you shall live and you shall attain self realisation (song 5)

Death leads to immortality. Above rituals, these songs show man's personal relation to God. If there is a sacred teaching in the *bhagat* songs, it is the spiritual dimension.

Moreover, there is also an attempt to mingle Islam and Hinduism during the struggle for Independence. Islam appears through the martyr's character: people have kept a pious memory of amar shahīd, "the eternal martyr" like other Soufi Saints executed beforehand: Mansur, Dara Shikuh (1659), Sarmad (1661) and others. The narrators exalting Bhagat Kanvar Ram's martyrdom thus create a Hindu martyr: He came in this world by the will of God, by the will of heaven – he sat down with the saints – (song 6)

Constantly, and in all *bhagat* songs, God is present under different names besides the fact that a *bhagat* performance always concludes by an evocation of the Indus God (cf. composition).

Conclusion

Our oral-literary corpus shows in the *bhagat* tradition, the importance of Kanvar Ram in whose life elements of tragedy and divine grace dominate.

Kanvar Ram sang the **pangs of separation**: Marui is separated from her village folk (Song 1); afflicted man from Ram (song 2); man from the divine (song 3).

Today's narrators remind the **virtues** perpetuated by Bhagat Kanvar Ram (Song 4) and describe the childhood and youth of the main figure (Songs 4 & 5). In song 6, the murdered character is deified after his cruel undeserved death and becomes an "immortal martyr" (amar śahīd) recognized by all the Sindhi religious communities. Hence, he becomes a great **source of inspiration.**

In the performance context, citing Bhagat Kanvar Ram is part of the **appealing strategy.** As regards the performance style, many current narrators still dress like Kanvar Ram (long white dress, turban, anklets) and reproduce his words (say hare Ram, song 4) and gestures. Though a young recent *bhagat* narrator, to assert the notion of tradition itself, he is regarded as the ultimate authority, the father of this fading oral tradition; due to his dramatic death, his aura surpassed the other narrators. Moreover, by citing him, the narrators indirectly point to the common "pool" of Sindhi culture (the common Sindhi cultural background) and thus carry on the performances, their raison d'être today. Far from a ritual context, they have turned into "oral historians".

The *bhagat* performance events merit study because so much of the Sindhi cultural background is concentrated and enacted in them.

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Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *lolī lāl nũ ḏevã*, serial n° N 16317, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3355 et pati prem, serial n° N 16317, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3358.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *moklaun ā'e Dandya*, serial n° N 16318, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3356 et *Bulbule sab roti Aai*, serial n° N 16318, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 4985.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *prīt samay Mohan bhaiyā*, serial n° N 16140, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 4979 et *Rām bisire prabhāt more manu*, serial n° N 16140, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 4981.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *sacco Sā'ĩ Satrām Sant* – Part 1, serial n° N 16321, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3349 et *sacco Sā'ĩ Satrām Sant* – Part 2, serial n° N 16321, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3360.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *sadiqe Dhaṇīya je beṛo tāri muhiñjo*, serial n° N 6749, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3351 et *kīyã rījhāyã tokhe kīyã parcāyã*, serial n° N 6702, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3353.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *sanvlad Girdhārī mose chakkar*, serial n° N 16024, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 4980 et *gaiyyā carāve kahã*, serial n° N 16024, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 4983.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *sindhī bhajan*, LT-29, Mumbai: Life Time Cassettes.

Kanvar Ram (Bhag̱at), *Umar āvanani jo maiyār māre*, serial n° N 6702, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3352 et *āu kāṅgā kari g̱ālhi*, serial n° N 6702, catalogue n° OMF, Matrice 3357.

Lakhmichandra (chant), Gulzar (musique), *sindhī bāgbahār*, Kota: LC Series.

Navani, Bhagwanti, *damādam mast kalandar*, 1986, TC- 1382, Bombay: Tips.

Navani, Bhagwanti, *lāḏā cho na gāyã*, 1988, TC- 1106, Bombay: Tips.

Panjwani, Ram, *āzād sufī*, 1986, LT- 17, Bombay: Life Time Cassettes.

Rohira, Satram, Jethanand, Shahari, Madhu, *calīhevāro Jhūlelāl*, 1997, Bombay: Wings Music Company Silvassa.

Audio corpus

Text	Interpreter	Duration	Page
Rām sumar prabhāt mere manu	Bhagat Kanvar Ram	1'22"	13
kīyã rījhāyã̃, kīyã parcāyã̃ tokhe	Bhagat Kanvar Ram	3'18"	13
kosā kohira khaṇī haliyo	Bhagat Ghansham	26'49"	22
śahīdīya jo pā'e jāmo	Lakhmichandra	5'27"	44

Video corpus

Five Fingers Film, 1992, *nacu nācuarā* (*bhagat* performance, 27, 28 and 29 novembre 1992 with the participation of the following *bhagats*: Hasso, Partap, Arjan, Kallu, Sundar, Manghan, Gurumukhu et Bhagwan Chawla), Gondia (Maharashtra): Jairam Rupani.

Garin, Jyoti, Lejault, François and Iqbal, Zafar, Introducing a *bhagat* performance (compilation, 7'48"), 2002, Aix-en-Provence : École Supérieure d'Art.

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, 2000, Bhagat Arjandas Kuvarani (excerpt: 07/05/2000, 72'29"), Mumbai.

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, 2000, Bhagat Chunnilal (excerpt: 22/01/2000, about one hour), Mumbai.

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, 2000, Bhagat Kamal Mangnani, (excerpt: 30/01/2000, 72'19"), Mumbai.

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, 2000, Bhagat Mohan Jagiasi, (excerpt: 08/10/2000, 71'47"), Mumbai.

Vasanśah jo darḇār, *umāsa jī rāt* (*bhagat* session: 24/01/2001), Ulhasnagar.

Vasanśah jo darḇār, *umāsa jī rāt* (*bhagat* session: 23/04/2001), Ulhasnagar.