

Divine Quest of Sufi Order: Communicating the Realization – A Folkloristic Interpretation

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Abstract

‘Realizing the Real’ – certainly is the goal that a Sufi aspires for. What we know is our ‘knowledge’, but what we realize stands to be ‘Real’. Realizing the ‘Real’ is reality to a Sufi. But, Sufi philosophy hardly ceases journey after personal realization. He who realizes, endeavors to transmit the content of what he realized. Besides personal sharing, the Sufis have created ‘text’ by writing philosophical narratives and by composing very rich music songs. There are many more important things in the entire Sufi Cultural complex.

This paper proposes to throw light on the ‘text’ of devotional songs (containing Sufi elements) with an aim to unearth the multiple stratification of the ‘text’. For this paper, at least three levels of text, say – (a) Language Text (the lexical component), (b) Music Text (the musical component) and (c) Cultural Text (the cultural content) will be critically examined to notice how the ‘text’ as whole, is aligned with the Sufi philosophy and practice. Theoretically, ‘text’ is inseparably linked with the context and the texture. The text emerges ‘from the context’ (psychological context) and ‘for the context’ (social context). The ‘context’ of Sufi songs covers both individual space as well as social space. The Sufi songs, to the best of our understanding, are not mere literary creation, they are indeed the ‘codified texts of realization’, where, loyalty to faith is stronger than logic; dedication is regarded superior to debate; agreement seems to be more powerful than

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argument. This paper will try to explore the underlying mechanism that has facilitated the process of transmission of Sufi ideology. The main paper is designed to appreciate the Sufi songs from the perspective of Folkloristics.

Keywords : Sufi-songs, Levels of Text, Context, Communication, Mechanism, Folkloristic

The Beginning: Communication-Communion

One among the prime aim of art in general, is to *express* idea, emotion or realization. That what we express, have the power of ‘*communication*’. Our realization is psychological; our expression can touch the height of ‘aesthetics’ and the ‘communication’ stands as process that has multiple important *functions* in society.

The devotional Sufi songs impart both ‘*knowledge*’ (*Ilm*) and personal ‘*realization*’. Sufi songs transmit the knowledge and realization by way of *communication*. This is one among the main functions of the Sufi music. We can imagine this ‘communication’ as a *three level flow* (3-level flow) from individual to group (society). The other and the most important aspect is the ‘*communion*’ with Almighty. A seeker is capable of having establishing communion with Almighty by singing Sufi songs. The three levels are:

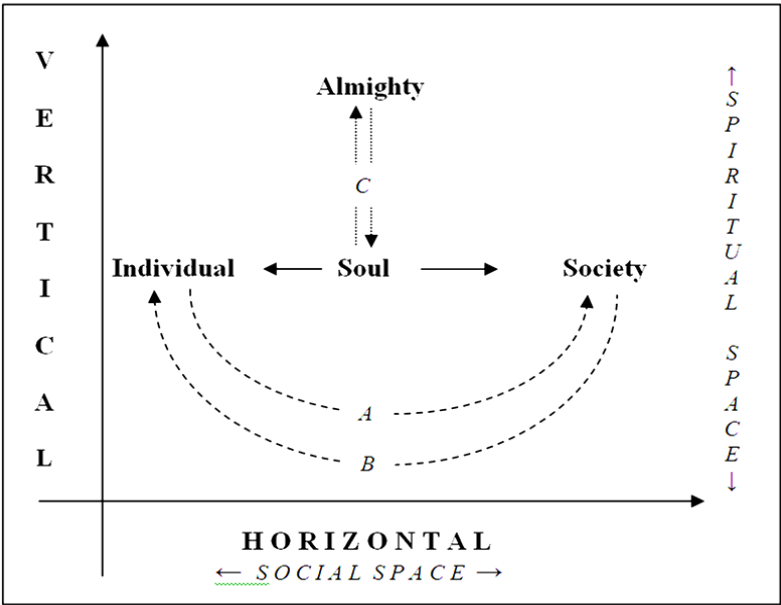
- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| Level-1: | Society/Individual to Individual Communication | - |
| Level-2: | Individual to Society Communication | - |
| Level-3: | Soul to Almighty Communion | - |

Horizontal-Vertical Frame (HV Frame) of Sufi songs

It has been mentioned that Sufi songs facilitates both the process of *communication* (with society) and *communion* (with Almighty). Both the processes can be seen in a Horizontal-Vertical Frame

(Diagram-1). *Communication* is Horizontal (it takes place in *social space*) and *communion* is Vertical in nature (it takes place in *spiritual space*).

Diagram-1
The Horizontal-Vertical Frame
of *communication* and *communion*



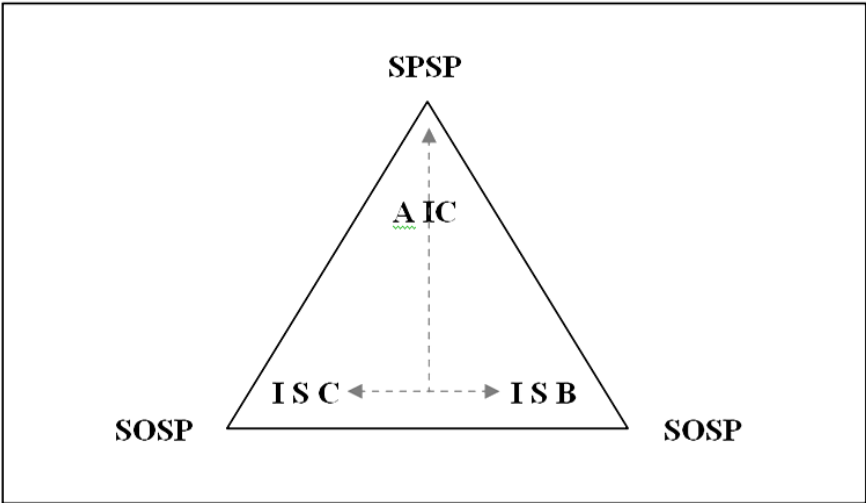
Whatever an individual thinks and realizes are communicated to the society through ‘text’. This is ‘*Individual to Society Communication*’ (ISC; Line-A) on one hand as well as ‘*Society to Individual Communication*’ (SIC; Line-B) on other hand. This is a cyclic process. Both the ISC and SIC results in a very strong ‘*Individual-Society Bond*’ (ISB). This takes place horizontally in *Social Space* (SOSP). This is *horizontal dimension*.

So far as the *vertical dimension* is concern, methods like *singing song* (text), *sadhan-bhajan*, *jikir* (zikr), knowledge, realization, wisdom etc. facilitate the process of *Communion with Almighty* (Absolute; COA). This takes place in *Spiritual Space* (SPSP) in

between *Individual and Absolute* (IAC; Line-C). Here, I wish to present the *concept map* schematically in Diagram-2.

Diagram-2

Schematic Representation of ISC-SIC-AIC Relation



‘REC Model’

The Communication process mentioned above has three different levels that can be codified as ‘Realization-Expression-Communication Model’ (‘REC Model’). Realization, Expression and Communication (REC) – the three important variables are entangled with each other. The ‘*REC Model*’ proposes a cyclic order where individual has an important role which follows at least three steps (Table-1):

Table-1

Three Steps of ‘REC Model’

Step-I	Individual’s soul realizes the ‘Almighty’
Step-II	He / She expresses <i>realization</i> through song and other mode
Step-III	The <i>expressed realization</i> is communicated to individuals or group

Taking these propositions into account, I would like to focus on Sufi songs, giving special emphasis on the ‘text’.

Song: A Composite Creation

Songs in general are considered as *composite performance* where the *literary creation* and the *musical creation* occupy major position. Sufism, itself being an exclusive integrated *spiritual-culture-complex*, has its multiple facts starting from *Sufi philosophy* right up to its *practice* and *research*. Some of such facets, perceived from the angle of Folkloristics are mentioned here:

- a. Sufi Philosophy
- b. *Almighty Consciousness* and *self-consciousness*
- c. *Sadhan Pantha* (mode of practice, way to realization)
- d. Sufi Songs
- e. Sufi Dance
- f. Institutional Forms (Akhra / Khankah/ Darbar)
- g. Master-disciple succession
- h. Initiation (*Diksha*) – Sishya - Murid -
- i. Practice - Abidance -
- j. Teaching, Preaching
- k. Ceremony – Congregation – Cohesion
- l. Social Contact
- m. Textual Treasurer (history, myth, glory, academic output)
- n. Literature (Literary Texts)
- o. Systematizing the Academic sphere
- p. Formulation of Research discourse
- q. Exchange of view (through Seminars, Conferences)
- r. Threats, adversities, challenges etc
- s. Others...

This list, though not sufficient, reveals that the entire Sufi discourse has multiple facets and each facet needs to be understood critically from the point of *holistic approach*. Acquiring comprehensive and categorized knowledge (information) about Almighty is not enough. This is not the ultimate goal of a *Sadhak* .

Realizing the Almighty is the prime point where we wish to reach. Acquiring knowledge carries meaning in our *academic life* but realizing almighty carries significance to our *spiritual life*. The first one is ‘knowing’ (we know) and the second one is ‘becoming’ (we become).

‘REC Model’: Explained

‘Expression’, amongst the human, being is the result of a *psycho-somatic process*, is a spontaneous and inevitable phenomenon. ‘Expression’ is equally present amongst the living beings as well as amongst the so called non-living beings too. In material world, *expression* implies changes indicating the *cause-effort process*. But, human being possesses the exclusive capacity to have control over their expression and communicate things to others through it. Man can design or formulate his/her expression for the cause of ‘communication’.

Man or woman’s ‘realization’ (of idea, truth) is the *content* that he/she expresses and communicates to the others. Man can establish *contact* and make network with fellow men by way of expression and communication in social space.

While focusing on the ‘text’ in particular - *the Philosophical Narration* (PHN) obviously comprises an important part. The songs, those carry the philosophy and the message of realization of individual are regarded as the *performative text* (PRT), for, songs are basically *performance*. In case of songs, PHN is transformed into PRT (PHN > PRT).

How It Happens?

How this transformation (PHN > PRT) takes place? The songs (as text) in general, have multiple components or multiple levels, such as:

- a. Language Text (LT)
- b. Music Text (MT)
- c. Cultural Text (CT) (Islam-1: 2008:27)

Let me now explain the three types of texts (LT-MT-CT) along with some of their predominating features.

Language Text (LT)

In *Language Text (LT)*, we find the unique vocabulary of the cultural discourse revealing the identity of the any sect / cultural group. The LT contains:

- a. general vocabulary (elaborated code),
- b. Symbolic words (restricted code)
- c. Culture specific words.

Music Text (MT)

The *Music Text (MT)*, on the other hand may be mentioned as the total musicological symphony found in the *Performative Text (PT)* such as:

- a. Music performance (Folk, Indigenous)
- b. Music Structure (Raag, Classical Music)
- c. The Vocal Music
- d. The *orchestra* produced by all the musical instruments
- e. The Rhythm pattern

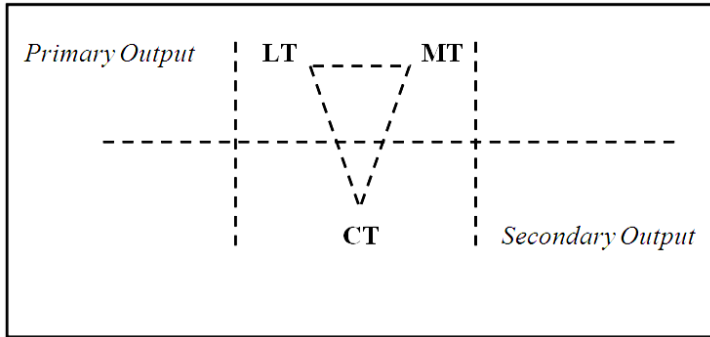
The organized arrangement of LT component within music, the proper placement of syllables, management of stress, pitch and intonation etc are some of the important features of music text (MT).

Cultural Text (CT)

The *Cultural Text (CT)* may be considered as the outcome of the philosophy, belief, norms and values, vision that are crystallized in the 'text' (both in LT and MT). In fact, the essence of the entire *cultural content* is expressed as *cultural text* (CT). CT is the outcome of both LT and MT ($LT+MT > CT$). LT and MT is primary output and CT is the secondary output.

Diagram-3

The outcome of Culture Text (CT)



Music, creating *cultural text*, is a very powerful medium of communication, resulting in strong *cohesion* amongst the group members of any community.

These are some of the theoretical concepts which will help us to understand the Sufi Music and its function. Now it would be descent to analyze the Sufi songs in the light of this theoretical view.

Analysis

This paper aspires to present the theoretical aspect of Sufi songs from the perspective of Folkloristics. In this regard the 4 major points have been clarified, such as:

- i. the 'HV Frame' of Sufi songs
- ii. the 'REC Model'
- iii. The three levels of texts
- iv. The ISC-SIC-AIC relations

Now I shall present some analysis of LT, MT and CT so that the scope and applicability of the theoretical concepts may be appreciated.

Analysis of Language Text

The use of language in songs is obviously unique because some *culture-specific codes* are used. General vocabulary, when are used in language text of songs, carry some unique meaning which is well decoded by the particular community in general. It is often difficult to find those words (codes) in the text of other community. For example, the list of vocabulary that is presented here in List-1 is hardly seen in Vaishnav or Shakta culture (except one or two exceptions).

Vocabulary

I have used Ramesh Shil's Maijbhandari Songs in order to notice the vocabulary (Arabic, Persian, Islamic; List-1) in particular. I have selected 16 songs (from '*Shanti Bhandar*') following '*Random Selection Process*' and picked up 100 words as 'sample' to notice the trend of using the vocabulary. The list (alphabetic order) of 100 words is given below.

List-1:

Vocabulary (Arabic, Persian; Islamic)

- | | | |
|-----|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Adam | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59) |
| 2. | Ahad | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57) |
| 3. | Ahad | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57) |
| 4. | Ahmad | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47) |
| 5. | Akher | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55) |
| 6. | Allah | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61) |
| 7. | Asekin | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51) |
| 8. | Ashekana | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51) |
| 9. | Ashekana | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57) |
| 10. | Awal | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55) |
| 11. | Awalia | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54) |
| 12. | Awalia | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-5:p.48) |
| 13. | Azam | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-13:p.52) |
| 14. | Baitulla | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55) |
| 15. | Baten | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55) |

16.	Behest	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
17.	Chistia	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
18.	Ferista	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
19.	Gaush	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57)
20.	Gaushul	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
21.	Gaushul	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
22.	Gaushul	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-5:p.48)
23.	Hadish	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
24.	Iman	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-15:p.54)
25.	Iman	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
26.	Jabrut	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50)
27.	Jaher	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
28.	Jaheri	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
29.	Jikir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
30.	Kaba	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
31.	Kaba	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
32.	Kaba	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
33.	Kalam	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
34.	Kamel	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
35.	Kamel Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
36.	Khadem	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
37.	Khalek	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
38.	Khidmat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
39.	Khidmat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50)
40.	Khoda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-15:p.54)
41.	Khoda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
42.	Khoda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-18:p.55)
43.	Khoda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
44.	Khoda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
45.	Kibla	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
46.	Kudrati	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
47.	Lahut	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
48.	Lahut	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50)
49.	Mabud	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)

50.	Madina	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
51.	Mahabub	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
52.	Malek	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
53.	Malek	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
54.	Malkut	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50)
55.	Mankir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
56.	Marifat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
57.	Marifat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-5:p.48)
58.	Mawla	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
59.	Mawla	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
60.	Mawla	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50)
61.	Mawlana	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
62.	Mawlana.	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
63.	Mokam	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
64.	Morshed	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
65.	Murid	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
66.	Murshid	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-28:p.62)
67.	Mushalli	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
68.	Mustafa	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
69.	Nabi	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
70.	Nabi	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
71.	Nakir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
72.	Namaz	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
73.	Namaz	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
74.	Napak	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
75.	Nur	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57)
76.	Nur	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
77.	Nurani	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
78.	Nurani	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
79.	Nuri	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-7:p.49)
80.	Nuri	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50)
81.	Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-11:p.51)
82.	Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
83.	Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)

84.	Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-28:p.62)
85.	Pir	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50)
86.	Pulshirat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
87.	Pulshirat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
88.	Quran	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
89.	Quran	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
90.	Rahaman	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
91.	Rahim	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
92.	Rashul	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
93.	Rashullah	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
94.	Sijda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-28:p.62)
95.	Siratul Mustakim	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
96.	Surat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p. 47)
97.	Tauhid	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57)
98.	Tawhid	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)
99.	Twarik.	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p. 47)
100.	Zibril	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61)

List-2: Vocabulary (Sanskrit, Bengali; Sanatan)

Apart from Islamic vocabulary (Arabic, Persian), Ramesh Shil has made use of Sanskrit words while composing Maijbhandari songs. A list of 25 words is presented in List-2:

Vocabulary (Sanskrit, Bengali; Sanatan)

1.	Bahutwa	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57)
2.	Bairagya	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46)
3.	Bandhua	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-14:p.53)
4.	Banshidhari	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57)
5.	Banshir Sur	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-6:p.49)
6.	Bicched	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-14:p.53)
7.	Biraha	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-14:p.53)
8.	Birahini Man	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57)
9.	Brahma	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46)
10.	Brahmanda	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46)
11.	Ekeswar	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-4:p.48)

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 12. | Gopika | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57) |
| 13. | Jamuna | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57) |
| 14. | Kadamba Mul | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57) |
| 15. | Kalakal | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46) |
| 16. | Karta | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50) |
| 17. | Mantra | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46) |
| 18. | Mohan Banshi | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-4:p.48) |
| 19. | Nirananda | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50) |
| 20. | Nityananda | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50) |
| 21. | Prem | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-14:p.53) |
| 22. | Sanatan | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46) |
| 23. | Stuti | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46) |
| 24. | Stuti | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.57) |
| 25. | Tantra | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46) |

Analysis of Music Text (Taal)

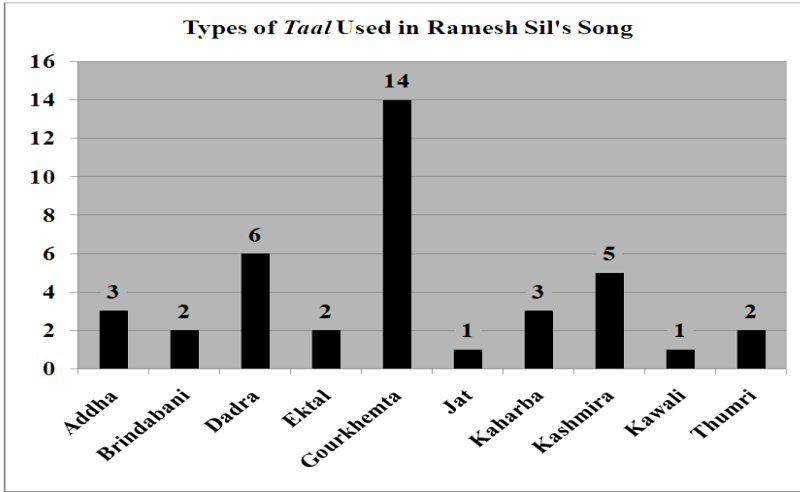
In order to look into the Music Text of Ramesh Shil's song, I have consulted his collection 'Shanti Bhandar'. In this book he has mentioned total 10 'Taal' (but not all) which are presented here in Alphabetic order.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Addha | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-30:p.63) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-34:p.65) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-38:p.67) |
| Brindabani | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-12:p.52) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-36:p.66) |
| Dadra | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p.47) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-5:p.48) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-9:p.50) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-15:p.54) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-19:p.56) |
| | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-22:p.57) |
| Ektaal | (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-27:p.61) |

	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-31:p.63)
Gour Khemta	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-3:p.47)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-4:p.48)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-6:p.49)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-11:p.51)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-14:p.53)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-18:p.55)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-21:p.57)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-23:p.58)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-25:p.60)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-28:p.62)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-32:p.64)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-33:p.64)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-35:p.65)
Jat	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46)
Kaharba	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-7:p.49)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-24:p.59)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-39:p.67)
Kashmira	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-10:p.51)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-13:p.52)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-17:p.55)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-29:p.62)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-20:p.56)
Kawali	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-16:p.54)
Thumri	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-26:p.60)
	(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-37:p.66)

A numeric account of frequency of using different *Taal* in 34 songs is shown in Graph-1 here:

Graph -1



Analysis of Cultural Text

Studying the '*Cultural Text*' is important in contemporary Folkloristics. Whatever *cultural expressions* or *cultural configurations* are found in society (literary, performative, visual, material culture etc) provide us a wide scope to study the '*cultural text*' of a territory, society, community or of any *religio-cultural order*.

Note on Ramesh Shil's Maijbhandari Songs

Ramesh Shil's songs reveal that he has made use of both Islamic and Sanatan elements in his songs. Both the *Language Text* and '*Music Text*' of his songs reveal a strong Hindu-Islam cultural combination. The vocabulary that Ramesh Shil has used, were taken from both *Islamic sphere* and *Sanatan sphere*. A quantitative account, on the basis of my limited sampling, it is noticed that the ratio of use of *Arabic-Persian* and Sanskrit-Bengali comes to 100:25 (= 4:1). This quantitative observation however reveals a *cultural trend*. Depending on huge sampling the figures may change but the *cultural trend* will remain almost same in this case, the Maijbhandari songs in particular.

In case of *Music Text* (Rhythm), Ramesh Shil has used the *Gour Khanta Taal* which was borrowed from *Vaishnava Culture* (Kirtan). Ramesh Shil's songs, though based on Sufi Philosophy and follows the *Maijbhabdari Order*, reveals *cultural syncretism*. The Sufis and Bauls of Bengal have incorporated diverse elements from local or indigenous culture. Such *acceptance, inclusiveness* and *harmonious coexistence* are noticed in Ramesh Shil's *Maijhandari songs*. This *syncretic trend* is the *underlying message* of the 'Cultural Text'.

Sociology of Maijbhandari Song

Music, when presented / performed in the *social context*, becomes a subject to be understood from the perspective of Sociology. One can perceive it to explore its cultural dimensions. *Communication* needs a *social space* which involves both individual and group. Why and how Maijbhandari songs come into existence, is a major sociological question. It is also important to take the *transcendental knowledge* (the philosophy of Maijbhandari songs) into our account, taking the 'Maijbhandari' as a distinct *religious-cultural order*. In this regard how the *Maijbhandaris* (as a cultural group) construct their independent *cultural identity* is another point of observation. Knowing, in what capacity, the Maijbhandari songs have stimulated the vision and mission of *Maijbhandari cultural movemen*, is also a sociological task.

Cognitive Appreciation of Maijbhandari Song

Understanding the entire intellectual effort that have been employed to create (or construct) the 'text' levels of Maijbhandari songs, as well as the *cultural identity* of the Maijbhandaris, is of importance in Folkloristic inquiry.

The 'Language Text' of songs reveals how the composer has appreciated the *doctrinal content* (philosophy) of Maijbhandari order on one hand, as well as how has formulated the *musical construct* (music text) to express their philosophy and realization

on other hand. The music, being the combination of both LT and MT, bears out the cultural treasure of Maijbhandari Order.

Philosophical Content

The essence of *Cultural Text* is its *philosophical content*. Some of the major philosophical thought that are present in Ramesh Shil's song are mentioned here (8 examples):

1. Ye are 'singular' in number.
 "Tumi Tumi tumi tumi Ramesh bale ekbachan"
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-1:p.46)
2. Ye are Ahamad in Arab and ---
 Ye have descended in Maijbhandar.
 *"Arabe Ahad hole –
 Maijbhandare udale nishan"*
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-2:p.47)
3. Please go and see the *Maijbhandar darbar* on time ..
 "Samay thakte dhekhe ay re Maijbhandari darbar"
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-5:p.48)
4. He who has got shelter in thy feet,
 Needs no further clarification of heaven and hell.
 *"Ramesh bale charan tale ja peyeche thikana
 Nurir charan mathay diye dozokh behest chinena"*
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-8:p.50)
5. Ye are perceived in the peerless abode of Maijbhandar
 "Maijbhandar la mokame tomar thikana"
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-11:p.51)
6. Whereever I look, I see only the Maijbhandari
 "Ami je dikete dristi kari tomay heri Maijbhandari"
 (Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-13:p.52)

7. You can ‘see’ it when the ‘secret’ will come into existence.
“(Tor) gupta jinis byakta hobe dekhbi nayane”
(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-15:p.54)
8. Give me the realization of ‘Non-dual’ by eradicating the
‘duality’
“Dvaita bhabti niye kere, advaita bhab deo amare”
(Shil:Shanti Bhandar:Song-21:p.57)

Some *key words* which will help us to get access to the *Philosophical Content* hidden in the songs of Ramesh Shil are mentioned here:

Ahad

Singular in number

Ahamed

Appeared in Maijbhandar

Go to Maijbhandar

Get shelter in his feet

The Maijbhandaris are seen everywhere

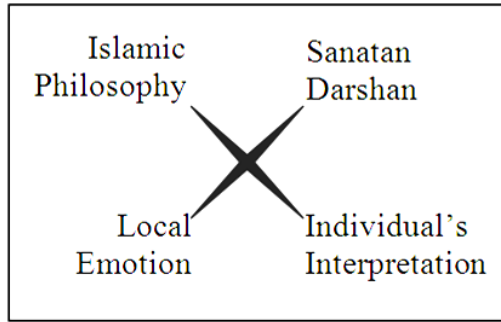
Secret will be disclosed (truth will be uncovered)

Realization of ‘Non-duality’ (*Advaita*)

It is also evident that the *Maijbhandar Order* has unique philosophical structure declaring own *cultural identity*. The philosophy that is found present in *Maijbhandari songs* is based on Islamic Philosophy (Sufi), *Sanatan Darshan*, local emotion and individual’s interpretation. The four dimensions of *Maijbhandari song* is shown in Diagram-4:

Diagram-4

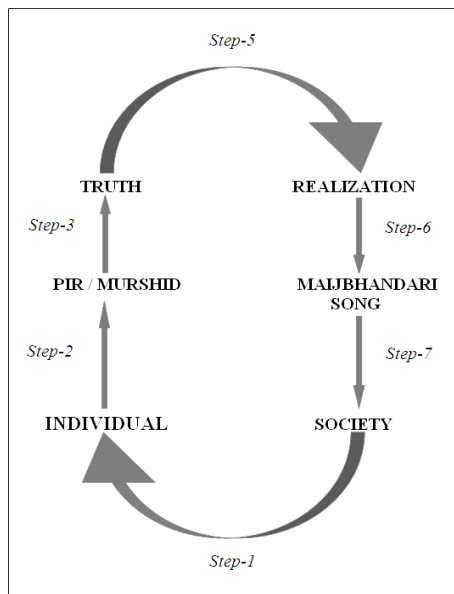
Four dimensions of *Maijbhandari song*



The Cognitive level of the entire process, starting from individual to society through realization of the Truth, is shown in Diagram-5:

Diagram-5

The Cognitive Mapping



This diagram shows the conceptual mapping of the cognitive level of the famous *Maijbhandari Songs* of Bangladesh in a *socio-psycho-transcendental* space. An individual receives its impulse for transcendental quest from the society (social space). Subject to getting the blessing of Murshid he / she gets to know the way of ‘Truth’ and if he/she realizes the Ultimate, he wishes to express the same in

multiple ways of which song is one. This song is a devotional song, facilitates others to get absorbed in knowing the 'Truth'. The entire process is called 'communication' (in social space) and communion (in spiritual space). What the songs communicate is devotion for quest. After listening to the songs, the taste of *personal realization* helps the listeners to plunge into the path of realizing the *Ultimate* to walk in the path of 'Devotional Quest'.

Conclusion

Maijbhandari songs are not made for cheap entertainment or frivolous amusement. The seekers sing the songs and the listeners listen to the songs out of *divine quest*. Qualities like *divinity*, *spirituality*, *transcendentalism* and *quest* for Truth are the main points for which *Maijbhandari songs* stand exceptional. Sufi Songs in general and *Maijbhandari Songs* of Bangladesh in particular are created –

- (1) For having *communion* with the *Absolute* by way of being absorbed in singing songs.
- (2) For expressing or sharing one's personal realization.
- (3) For conveying the philosophy and vision of the *Maijbhandar Order*.
- (4) For imparting the idea that the *Ultimate*, the bliss of realizing *Almighty* can be achieved by way of *Murshid's* (Pir's) blessings.
- (5) For singing the glory of *Murshid* (Spiritual Master) and the *Almighty*.
- (6) For *socializing* and *indoctrinating* the followers into the fold of *Maijbhandari Order*.
- (7) For *creating general awareness* about the path of *Maijbhandar Order*.

This paper is a theoretical understanding of the 'text' with reference to *Realization* and *Communication* both social space and spiritual space. And no doubt, more things remained untold about the *Maijbhandari Order*, which may be pointed out as the *technical limitation* of this paper.

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