

## "Not a Believer Inside the Mosque, Am I" by Baba Bulleh Shah.

### Analysis:

Syed Abdullah Shah Qadeer, popularly known as Baba Bulleh Shah, was a Punjabi Muslim and philosopher. He is a shining star of Punjabi Sufi poetry. His poetry appeals, as he has adopted symbols and metaphors from his surroundings. Bulleh Shah has shown extreme bravery while writing against the religious bigotry and tyranny of the rulers of that time. He preached to the masses not to worry about social conventions if they wish to meet God.

(The poem "Not a Believer inside a Mosque, Am I" depicts his love and devotion towards Allah Almighty and his untroubled attitude towards society.

The very first line of the poem indicates loss of self.

**Bulleya to me, I am not known**

He is saying that he doesn't know himself. This line is filled with the element of



Sufism. Sufis typically spend their lives trying to penetrate the meaning of life, and search for the "Self" while per looking for God. Bulleh Shah has articulated this exploration through his poetry. He realizes that he's passing through the crisis of loss of "Self" and identity.

To further explore himself, Bulleh Shah brings his religious beliefs into account, he observes with these immortal verses:

Not a believer inside the mosque, am I  
Nor a pagan disciple of false rites,  
Not the pure amongst the impure  
Neither Moses, nor the Pharaoh.

In the above lines, he gives no quarter to hypocrisy. He has accepted no discipline. He is referring that he is not a person holding religious beliefs. He is not pure either. Moreover, he is explaining that neither he is pious like that of Moses nor he has vices like the Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt.



This breaking of all shackles of country, religion, convention and sect signifies Bulleh Shah's pantheistic conception of Allah Almighty and its superiority. The integrity of universal soul and His omnipresence so deeply convince him that no differences exist for him. He has become one with Him, the Divine, and experienced that cosmopolitan joy which knows no limits and divisions. No intermediate body <sup>can</sup> now obstruct the way between Bulleh Shah and Allah Almighty.

Not in the Holy Vedas, am I  
Not in opium, neither in wine  
Not in the drunkard's intoxicated craze.  
Neither awake, nor in a sleeping daze.

In these lines Bulleh Shah is expressing that he could not be found in any holy books, he is not an addictive drug or some kind of wine to lose control of senses. He isn't awake nor in sleeping daze unable to think or react.

He sets out his own aesthetics of the divine love, guidance, faith, virtues



love, guidance, faith and forgiveness.  
Like all other Sufis, he preaches seeking  
unity with the Divine. Overwhelmed with  
an obsession of spiritual knowledge, like  
wine intoxicates the body and mind  
thus becoming the principal driving force.  
He is always in the state of ecstasy due  
to this spiritual knowledge and love of  
Allah Almighty. This spiritual love of Almighty  
is out of control.

In happiness nor in sorrow, am I  
Neither clean, nor a filthy mix  
Not from water, nor from earth  
Neither fire, nor from air, is my birth.

Here, Bulleh Shah is observing that  
due to this ecstatic love of Almighty, he  
is in a state of trance. He is numb and  
not in happiness of anything neither in  
sorrow of something. He isn't clean  
neither he is smeared with dirt. He does  
not belong to soil or water nor he is born  
from fire, like the devil, or air.



Not an Arab, nor Lahori  
Neither Hindi, nor Nagauri  
Hindu, Turk, nor Peshawari  
Nor do I live in Nadaan.

Here, a state of loss of identity is being felt by Bulleh Shah. He is saying he's not from Arab or Lahore, he's a Hindu or a Nagauri (Hindu Muslim community). He is not a Hindu, Turk, Peshawari rather than even he lives in Nadaan (Town of Himachal Pradesh). He does not belong to any place in the world.

Secrets of religion, I have not known  
From Adam and Eve, I am not born  
I am not the same I assume  
Not in stillness, nor on the move.

In these above verses, he beautifully talks about his quest to understand the religion by not falsely disguising himself in the cosmetic of religious superiority. He is an excellent depiction of the relationship between Man and God. He has contemplated the origins of mankind using his own self as metaphor. In his quest, he questions the emergence of



human beings on Earth. by concluding  
that one can never understand the laws  
of nature and one's place in this Universe

I am the first, I am the last.

None other, have I ever known

I am the wisest of them all.

Bulleh! do I stand alone?

Here, he's stating he is the very first  
and last individual who knows himself  
and understand no other. He believes himself  
to be the wisest to understand and stands  
independently. He becomes liberated after the  
realization. He becomes a part of the Divinity.  
He sees himself in everything around him

Thus, Bulleh Shah's poetry takes a  
person to a slippery slope where, sometimes,  
lyricism, simple vocabulary and use of  
popular folk symbols are so enchanting  
that they do not press the reader into  
exploring their deeper meaning. His poetry  
sets liberal standards with strong  
intonations of religious tolerance and  
communal harmony. Realization of truth  
transformed Bulleh Shah into a true

mystic. He purified his heart with  
the fountain of truth and spiritual  
Love of Allah Almighty gushing deep  
inside his soul.

