SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH

City of Mirrors

Songs of Lālan Sā̃i

Text, Translation, and Commentary by

Carol Salomon

Edited by

Keith E. Cantú
and
Saymon Zakaria

Foreword by

Richard Salomon

Introduction by

Jeanne Openshaw

City of Mirrors

আরশিনগর

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আরশিনগর

লালন সাঁইয়ের গান

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Lālan Sāi, 1774–1890, author. | Salomon, Carol, translator. |
Zakaria, Saymon, editor. | Cantú, Keith, 1988– editor. | Lālan Sāi, 1774–1890.
Songs. Texts. Selections. | Lālan Sāi, 1774–1890.
Songs. Texts. Selections. English.
Title: City of mirrors : Songs of Lālan Sāi / translated by Carol Salomon ;
foreword by Richard Salomon ; introduction by Jeanne Openshaw ;
edited by Saymon Zakaria and Keith E. Cantú.
Description: New York : Oxford University Press, 2017. |
Series: South Asia research |
Includes bibliographical references and index. |
In English and Bengali; translated from Bengali.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017000254 (print) | LCCN 2017027738 (ebook) |
ISBN 9780190680237 (updf) | ISBN 9780190680244 (epub) |
ISBN 9780190680220 (cloth : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Lālan Sāi, 1774–1890—Translations into English. |
Songs, Bengali—Translations into English. | BISAC: RELIGION / Hinduism /
General. | SOCIAL SCIENCE / Anthropology / Cultural. |
MUSIC / Ethnomusicology.
Classification: LCC PK1718.L35 (ebook) | LCC PK1718.L35 A2 2017 (print) |
DDC 891.4/413—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017000254

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

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Foreword | প্রসঙ্গ-কথা



FIG 1 Carol Goldberg Salomon (July 28, 1948–March 13, 2009) in Santiniketan, 1980.

Carol Goldberg Salomon was born into a family of modest means but abundant love on New York's Lower East Side in 1948. Though a small and shy girl in a rough neighborhood, she felt safe and secure in the warmth of her old-fashioned extended family, living with her beloved grandparents and cousins in a tenement building at the corner of Canal Street and East Broadway. Even as a little girl in Hebrew school, Carol was fascinated by the study of language; she was a fanatical perfectionist about it, and naturally excelled in it. Although later in life her interests and experience took her to very different areas, her future success as a scholar of Bengali would come as no surprise to anyone who knew her in her younger days.

After moving to Brooklyn in 1957, Carol graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1966 and went on to study at Harpur College and the City College of New York, where she graduated with a BA in oriental

studies in 1970. Like many others of her generation in New York, she was able to rise from the ghetto to the academy thanks to support from a family that respected and valued education, a social system that provided virtually free higher education to working-class students, and above all her own diligence, dedication, and love of learning.

Carol and I were introduced by her cousin Karen Gutlerner on Thanksgiving Day 1967, and we were together from that day until she died on March 13, 2009. We were married in June 1970 after graduating from college and went on together to graduate studies in the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. In her first year there Carol signed up for a Bengali course and almost immediately became fascinated with Bengali literature and culture. Applying her usual talent and persistence, she rapidly became fluent in Bengali.

In 1971 Carol briefly visited Calcutta for the first time, returning for extended stays there and in Santiniketan in 1974–1975 and 1980–1981. In 1974 she made the first of her many visits to Bangladesh. During her second trip to Calcutta she visited the Bangla Sanskriti Sammelan and there heard Bāul music for the first time. She was immediately inspired with a fascination for the Bāuls and their music, philosophy, and way of life. This experience led her to a lifelong career as a scholar of Bāul tradition, and she became one of the most prominent academic experts on the Bāuls in the Western world.

In 1976, Carol had her first and only child, Jesse. Shortly after his birth, we left Philadelphia, eventually settling permanently in Seattle in 1981. While juggling teaching positions and maternal duties, Carol continued her research and finished her dissertation on Govindadāsa's Kālikāmaṅgal in 1983. In repeated visits to both Bengals over these and the following years she met and gained the confidence of many prominent members of the Bāul tradition, establishing close relationships with them and gathering a unique body of recordings, interviews, and notes. Although Carol was a shy and modest person who shunned the limelight, she eventually became, against her own inclinations, something of a celebrity in West Bengal and especially in Bangladesh. Her impressive command of the Bengali language and her deep knowledge of Bengal's literature and culture brought her respect and renown among both the intellectual elite and the keepers of the rural traditions, and her death was widely reported and lamented in the media in both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Carol had established herself as an admired scholar and Bengali teacher at the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania,

and Cornell University. At the time of her death, she was senior lecturer in Bengali in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature of the University of Washington. She was almost obsessively dedicated to her students, lavishing her attention and concern on every one of them. Her care was reciprocated by her students, who deeply respected and admired her.

At home, Carol was a devoted mother to her only son, a gentle and loving wife to her husband and companion of nearly forty-two years, and a dutiful daughter to her aging parents. While we were happy to spend most of our time together quietly at home, we also enjoyed many adventurous travels together, not only to India and Bangladesh but also to many destinations around the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

On March 11, 2009, Carol was struck by a car while riding her bicycle to work, as she did every day. (A true New Yorker to the end, she had never learned to drive.) She died two days later without regaining consciousness, and her untimely death brought a flood of messages of condolence, literally from around the world. Though much shorter than it should have been, her life was rich in experience and achievement, and above all, full of the love that she both gave and received freely.

But Carol's untimely death left much of her work undone, including her long-awaited translations of Lālan Sā̃ī's songs, to which she had dedicated many years of labor. It is therefore a great pleasure and comfort to me and to everyone who knew and worked with Carol that this posthumous edition of her work on Lālan is at last presented to everyone who values this tradition, whether in Bangladesh, India, or other lands. For this success I am profoundly grateful for their dedicated labors to Saymon Zakaria and Keith E. Cantú, as well as the guidance and contributions of Jeanne Openshaw, without whose efforts this book could not have been published.

RICHARD SALOMON
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Department of Asian Languages and Literature
University of Washington
Seattle, USA
October 2, 2012

প্রসঙ্গ-কথা (বাংলা অনুবাদ)

ক্যারোল গোল্ডবার্গ সলোমন ১৯৪৮ সালে নিউ ইয়র্ক শহরের লোয়ার ইস্ট সাইডের এক মমতাময় নিম্ন মধ্যবিত্ত পরিবারে জন্মেছিলেন। ক্যানেল স্ট্রিট ও ইস্ট ব্রডওয়ের মিলনস্থলে অবস্থিত এক অ্যাপার্টমেন্টে, অপরিশীলিত আচরণের প্রতিবেশীদের মধ্যে ছোট্ট লাজুক স্বভাবের মেয়ে ক্যারোল প্রথাগত যৌথ পরিবারে স্নেহপরায়ণ দাদা-দাদি ও চাচাতো ভাইবোনদের উষ্ণ সান্নিধ্যে নিরাপদেই বেড়ে উঠেছিলেন। শৈশবে হিব্রু স্কুলে পড়ার সময়ে তিনি ভাষাবিদ্যার প্রতি আকর্ষণবোধ করতে শুরু করেছিলেন এবং অভিজ্ঞতা তাঁকে নিয়ে যায় নানান অঞ্চলে। যারা তাঁকে শৈশব থেকে জানতেন তাদের কাছে তাঁর বাংলা ভাষা বিষয়ক পণ্ডিত হয়ে ওঠা মোটেই বিস্ময়কর ছিলো না।

ক্যারোল ১৯৫৭ সালে ব্রুকলিনে যাওয়ার পর আব্রাহাম লিংকন হাইস্কুল থেকে ১৯৬৬ সালে গ্রাজুয়েশন লাভ করেন এবং যথাক্রমে নিউ ইয়র্কের হারপুর কলেজ ও সিটি কলেজে ভর্তি হন। সেখান থেকেই তিনি ১৯৭০ সালে প্রাচ্যবিদ্যায় বি.এ. ডিগ্রি অর্জন করেন। নিউ ইয়র্কে তাঁর প্রজন্মের অনেকের মতোই তিনি একজন প্রতিভাবান, নিবেদিত বিদ্যানুরাগী হিসেবে এমন এক পরিবারের সহায়তালাভ করেন- যে পরিবার শিক্ষাকে মূল্যায়ন করে একটি সামাজিক প্রক্রিয়া হিসেবে এবং পরিবারটি শ্রমিক শ্রেণির পরিবারের সন্তানদের উচ্চশিক্ষায় ধনিক শ্রেণির প্রতিনিধি হিসেবে আর্থিক সহায়তা প্রদান করে, ক্যারোল সে পরিবারকে ধন্যবাদ জানানোর সুযোগ লাভ করেন।

ক্যারোলের কাজিন ক্যারেন গাটলেনার ১৯৬৭ সালে ক্যারোলের সাথে আমার পরিচয় ঘটিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন এবং আমাদের সম্পর্ক তখন থেকে ২০০৯ সালের ১৩ মার্চ তাঁর তিরোধান অবধি অটুট ছিলো। কলেজ গ্রাজুয়েশন শেষ করে ১৯৭০ সালের জুনে আমরা বিয়ে করেছিলাম এবং তারপর একসাথে পেনসিলভানিয়া ইউনিভার্সিটির ওরিয়েন্টাল স্টাডিজ ডিপার্টমেন্টে পড়তে গিয়েছিলাম। সেখানে ক্যারোল প্রথম বর্ষেই বাংলা কোর্স করেন এবং বাংলা সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির প্রেমে পড়ে যান। নিজের প্রতিভা ও অধ্যাবসায়ের ফলে খুব অল্প সময়ের মধ্যেই ক্যারোল বাংলা ভাষায় স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত হয়ে ওঠেন।

ক্যারোল ১৯৭১ সালে প্রথমবারের মতো সংক্ষিপ্ত সফরে কলকাতা যান এবং পরে ১৯৭৪-৭৫ ও ১৯৮০-৮১ সালে দীর্ঘ সময় ধরে শান্তিনিকেতনে অবস্থান করেন। ১৯৭৪ সালে তিনি প্রথমবারের মতো বাংলাদেশ সফরে যান। কলকাতায় দ্বিতীয় সফরের সময় ক্যারোল বাংলা সংস্কৃতি সম্মেলনে যোগ দেন এবং সেখানেই প্রথম তিনি বাউল গান শোনেন। দ্রুতই তিনি বাউল সম্প্রদায়, তাদের গান, দর্শন ও জীবন-পদ্ধতি দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হন। এই অভিজ্ঞতা তাঁকে

বাউল ঐতিহ্য অনুসন্ধানে সারা জীবনের জন্য অনুপ্রাণিত করে এবং এভাবেই পশ্চিমা বিশ্বে বাউল বিষয়ক এক বিখ্যাত একাডেমিক পণ্ডিত হিসেবে তিনি আবির্ভূত হন।

১৯৭৬ সালে ক্যারোলের একমাত্র সন্তান জেসির জন্ম হয়। জেসির জন্মের পরই আমরা ফিলাডেলফিয়াতে চলে যাই এবং ১৯৮১ সাল থেকে সিয়াটলে স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাস শুরু করি। মায়ের দায়িত্ব ও শিক্ষকতা দুইই একসাথে সামলানোর পরও ক্যারোল ১৯৮৩ সালের মধ্যেই গোবিন্দ দাশের *কালিকামঙ্গল*-এর উপর পিএইচডি গবেষণার কাজ সম্পন্ন করেন। এই সময় ও তার পরবর্তী বছরগুলোতে ক্যারোল ঘন ঘন দুই বাংলাতেই গমন করেন এবং আত্মবিশ্বাসের সাথে অনেক বাউল প্রথার অনুসারীদের সাথে ঘনিষ্ঠ হয়ে ওঠেন। তাদের অনেক কাছাকাছি গিয়ে ক্যারোল বাউলদের বাণী, গান ও সাক্ষাৎকারের এক বিশাল ভাণ্ডার অডিও রেকর্ডারে ধারণ ও নোটবুকে সংগ্রহ এবং সংরক্ষণ করেন। একজন স্বল্পভাষী লাজুক স্বভাবের প্রচারবিমুখ মানুষ হয়েও ক্যারোল তাঁর ইচ্ছার বিপরীতে পশ্চিম বাংলা এবং বিশেষ করে বাংলাদেশে একজন সেলিব্রেটি হয়ে ওঠেন। বাংলা ভাষায় তাঁর অসাধারণ দখল এবং বাংলা সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতিতে অগাধ পাণ্ডিত্যের কারণে তিনি বিদ্বৎসমাজ ও গ্রামীণ সংস্কৃতির ধারক-বাহক উভয়েরই নিকট থেকে পরম শ্রদ্ধা লাভ করেন। তাঁর মৃত্যুর সংবাদ বাংলাদেশ ও পশ্চিম বাংলার প্রচার মাধ্যমগুলোয় অত্যন্ত শ্রদ্ধার সাথে গুরুত্ব পায়।

শিকাগো বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, পেনসিলভানিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এবং কর্নেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বাংলার শিক্ষক ও বিশেষজ্ঞ হিসেবে ক্যারোল নিজেকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে পেরেছিলেন। মৃত্যুর সময় তিনি ছিলেন ওয়াশিংটন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের এশিয়ান ভাষা ও সাহিত্য বিভাগের বাংলা বিষয়ের সিনিয়র লেকচারার। তিনি শিক্ষার্থীদের প্রতি ছিলেন অত্যন্ত নিবেদিতপ্রাণ এবং অর্জন করেছিলেন প্রত্যেকের ভক্তিপূর্ণ মনোযোগ। তাঁর যত্নশীল আচরণ শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে সৃষ্টি করেছিলো তাঁর প্রতি অগাধ সম্মানবোধ।

বাড়িতে ক্যারোল ছিলেন একজন সন্তানবৎসল মা, নম্র ও প্রেমময় স্ত্রী এবং স্বামীর প্রায় ৪২ বছরের অকৃত্রিম বন্ধু আর ছিলেন বয়স্ক মা-বাবার একজন দায়িত্বশীল সন্তান। আমরা বাড়িতে যেমন একসাথে অসংখ্য সুখের মূহুর্ত কাটিয়েছি তেমনি উপভোগ করেছি উত্তেজনাকর সব ভ্রমণ, কেবল বাংলাদেশ ও ভারতবর্ষেই নয়, আমেরিকা, ইউরোপ, মধ্যপ্রাচ্য ও এশিয়ার নানা স্থানে।

২০০৯ সালের ১১ মার্চ সাইকেল চালিয়ে কাজে যাওয়ার সময় ক্যারোলকে একটি মোটরগাড়ি ধাক্কা দেয়। (তিনি [ক্যারোল] ছিলেন একজন সত্যিকারের নিউ ইয়র্কার যিনি কোনোদিন ড্রাইভ করতে শেখেননি)। এরপর তাঁর আর জ্ঞান ফেরেনি এবং দুদিন পরে তিনি মারা যান। তাঁর অপরিণত মৃত্যুতে সারাবিশ্ব থেকে আসতে থাকে অজস্র শোকবার্তা। তাঁর জীবন ছিলো ছোট, কিন্তু অভিজ্ঞতা ও অর্জনে সমৃদ্ধ এবং সর্বোপরি ভালোবাসায় ভরা- ভালোবেসেছেন উজাড় করে, পেয়েছেনও অকৃত্রিম ভালোবাসা।

কিন্তু অসময়ে চলে যাওয়ার সময় তিনি অনেক অসমাপ্ত কাজ পেছনে রেখে গেছেন। এর মধ্যে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ একটি হলো, লালন সাঁইয়ের গানের অনুবাদ, যার পেছনে তিনি অনেক বছর ও পরম শ্রম উৎসর্গ করেছিলেন। এটা জেনে আমার এবং যারা ক্যারোলকে চিনতেন ও তাঁর সাথে কাজ করেছেন তাদের প্রত্যেকের কৃতজ্ঞতা ও আনন্দের সীমা নেই যে- সাইমন

জাকারিয়া, কিথ ই. কাল্ভ এবং জিয়ান ওপেনশাও লালনের উপরকৃত ক্যারোলের এই অমূল্য কাজ সেইসব মানুষের হাতে তুলে দিতে পারছেন- যারা বাংলাদেশ, ভারত বা অন্য কোনো দেশে ঐতিহ্যকে মূল্যায়ন করেন।

ড. রিচার্ড সলোমন
অধ্যাপক
এশিয়ার ভাষা ও সাহিত্য বিভাগ
ওয়াসিংটন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
শিয়াটল, আমেরিকা
অক্টোবর ২, ২০১২

Introduction | ভূমিকা

It is a privilege to write an introduction to this posthumous edition of a major work by my esteemed colleague and friend Dr. Carol Salomon.[1] Carol dedicated much of her working life to research on the most renowned composer of Bāul songs, Lālan, who died in 1890. Although a few articles by her on Lālan and other Bāuls have been published (on Lālan, see especially Salomon 1991), her magnum opus was left incomplete at the time of her tragically early death in 2009. Most fortunately for South Asian scholarship, as well as for general readers, her unfinished manuscript is now being published, thanks to the efforts of her husband, Professor Richard Salomon (University of Washington), and the editors of the present volume: Dr. Saymon Zakaria (assistant director, Bangla Academy, Dhaka) and Keith E. Cantú (PhD student, University of California at Santa Barbara).

The name *Bāul* refers to a type of religious minstrel or esoteric practitioner (*sādhak*) of the Bengali-speaking region of South Asia, that is, West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh. Bāuls are primarily known for their beautiful and often enigmatic songs. In theory, people of any religion, class, caste, or gender may be Bāul, but in practice almost all are from poor, rural Hindu or Muslim backgrounds. As such, they are sometimes viewed as unorthodox Vaiṣṇavas and fakirs, respectively. A person usually becomes a Bāul through some kind of initiation in adulthood, or through training or practice, rather than through family inheritance. Technically, they may be householders or renouncers. Beyond these basic facts, there is little agreement on who is to be judged Bāul, either among non-Bāuls, including scholars, or those called Bāul themselves.

1. I am indebted to Brill Publishers for their permission to incorporate into the present work extracts of my entry on Bāuls from *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (2011).

One reason for this difference of opinion is that from the second half of the nineteenth century, Bāul songs—and notions of Bāuls associated with these—became increasingly important to colonized, elite Bengalis in search of their roots, a process in which Rabindranath Tagore and his close associate the scholar K. M. Sen were particularly instrumental. Of such songs, those attributed to Lālan figured above all others. This attention in turn inspired various kinds of research into Bāuls and especially their songs. Thus from a position of near total obscurity relieved only by the odd reference to Bāuls as godless and debased entertainers of the common folk (Bhattacharya 1896), they were transformed into iconic bearers of a venerable indigenous heritage. However, this heritage, and along with it a reified Bāul identity, has been constructed in different and even contradictory ways by writers and scholars (Openshaw 2002, 19–62).

Various histories have been delineated in support of different perceptions of Bāuls. K. M. Sen traced the Bāuls back to the Vedas, partly as a way of conferring on them an encompassing "Hindu" (or even Indian) identity (Sen 1993). Others more plausibly link them with Vaiṣṇava or Buddhist Tantra or "Sahajiyā" (Dasgupta 1969). On the other hand, a Sufi background has been attributed to them (Haq 1975). More recently they have also been identified with traditions of Indian materialism, or Lokāyāta/Cārvāka (Jhā 1999). In general, however, it can be stated that although the use of the name "Bāul" to denote a specific group of initiates is relatively recent, those called "Bāul" are appropriately situated in the context of a long history of South Asian social or religious dissenting movements.

The word *Bāul* popularly means "mad" in either a positive or negative sense, partly in reference to their highly unconventional lifestyle and attitudes. Etymological research on the word *Bāul* has been conducted by several scholars (e.g., Dasgupta 1969; Dimock 1966, Haq 1975, Jhā 1999), drawing on Sanskritic, Arabic, or Persian sources, with predictably varied results. These include Sanskrit *vātula* (affected by wind disease, mad) or *vyākula* (confused, distracted). The word *Bāul* was used in a primarily adjectival sense from the medieval period, especially for renouncers of an antinomian kind. It seems only to have come into use as a proper noun denoting a category of minstrel, mendicant or esoteric practitioner in the nineteenth century. Bāuls themselves etymologize the word in support of different meanings, for example, as *be* (without) + *hul* (restraint), or from *ba* + *hul*, where the triangular Bengali letter *ba* represents the female pubic area and *hul* "antenna" or the penis, to signify man and woman in

union, a reference to their "Tāntrik" practices (Openshaw 2002, 111–113, 78, 100).

Attempts to enumerate Bāuls have foundered on problems of definition, with estimates ranging from under 250,000 to 7,000,000 at different times. Sources generally envisage an expansion in numbers of Bāuls, culminating in the nineteenth century and followed by a decline (Ray 1995, 21–22). These fluctuations depend partly on the visibility or otherwise of "Bāuls" to those whose opinion has entered the historical record. One major factor in the decline of Bāuls was the growth, from the nineteenth century, in orthodox Islamic reform movements, whose adherents took it upon themselves to bring into line and even persecute Bāuls of Muslim origin, sometimes called fakirs (Ahmed 1981). What is certain is that, however one defines "Bāuls," their songs give them an influence far greater than the most generous estimates of their numbers would suggest.

It is worth mentioning that although Lālan is regarded as the iconic Bāul, he seems not to have referred to himself as such (Jhā 2007, 160). In some of his songs (eight of those in the present compilation), he modestly "signs" himself "Lālan Fakir" or "Fakir Lālan." Fakir, an Islamic term for an ascetic or mendicant, has connotations of indigence and renunciation. Although the name of Lālan's guru (Sirāj Sā̃i) is also suggestive of an Islamic cultural ambit—and the title Darbeś (Dervish) is also used—Lālan himself famously refused to entertain questions of his own background, Hindu or Muslim. Along with other Bāuls, Lālan regarded such categories as divisive and man-made. In the present volume, Carol refers to Lālan as "Sā̃i" ("Lord"), as did his followers, who in turn referred to themselves at times as "fakir." Despite Lālan's refusal to discuss his birth identity, both Hindu and Muslim origins have been ascribed to him. What is known about him is that he died at a great age in 1890, in the village in which he had been living, Cheuŕiyā, near Kushtiya, in what is now Bangladesh. Although he was almost certainly nonliterate, by the time he died he was a renowned composer of songs and had numerous disciples throughout Bengal.[2]

The popularity of Bāul songs increased exponentially during the last century, initially through publication of their songs by élite Bengalis, especially Rabindranath Tagore. Bāuls and their songs now figure prominently, within and beyond South Asia, in a variety of media and languages. Apart

2. For more on Lālan's life, see Salomon 1991: 274–276; 1995: 188–189.

from academic theses, books, and articles, more popular works, including fiction and poetry, documentary and feature films, continue to be brought out. Live Bāul performances can be seen throughout the world. In 2005 and 2008, Bāul songs were added to the UNESCO list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritages of Humanity.

Of all the Bāuls of West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh, particular attention has been focused on Lālan, largely because of his poetic genius. This has made him the subject of many written works, especially in Bengali, by authors such as Śakti Nāth Jhā, Sudhīr Cakrabartī, and Ābul Āhāsān Caudhurī. Live performances include a stage play by Sudipto Chatterjee, folk dramas (yātrā) and puppetry. A number of films have been made, recent examples being Tanvir Mokammel's *Lālan* (2004) and Goutam Ghose's *Maner Mānuṣ* (2010), based on a novel of the same name by the Bengali writer Sunīl Gaṅgopādhyāy.

Despite all this attention, much remains to be researched and written. Before this contribution by Carol Salomon, most major works on Lālan were published in Bengali. As a result, this exceptional Bāul poet has been little known outside Bengali-speaking communities. In general, translations of Bāul songs, including those composed by Lālan, into European languages, especially English, have been dependent on edited collections of uncertain provenance and reliability (see Salomon 2002, reprinted in this volume).

Translation of any poetry tends to cover a spectrum, at one extreme remaining shackled to the source text but tending to lose in poetic quality. This is the typical academic approach. At the other end of the spectrum is transcreation, in which the desire for a quality version in the target language may lead to neglect of the original. In the case of Bāul songs, including those by Lālan, many translations do not even cite an original text or source.

In my view, Carol has arrived at the best possible solution to these dilemmas in the present volume. This annotated edition of Lālan songs in Bengali script, romanized transliteration, and English translation is unrivaled in its combination of academic rigor and skilled translation. It thus has an immense amount to contribute to Lālan (and Bāul) scholarship in general, especially in the context of English-language scholarship on Bāuls.

Carol Salomon's expertise was in Bengali language, literature, and culture, subjects she had taught at several prestigious universities in the United States of America. Her research was marked by exemplary dedication and scrupulous care. For example, her comparative work on early

manuscripts of Lālan songs was supplemented by the knowledge she gained of possible Arabic and Persian derivations. But what really gave her an edge in Lālan studies, in addition to her awareness of localized Bengali meanings, was her assiduous pursuit of the readings and esoteric connotations of the songs given by initiated followers of Lālan. In addition to all of this, she even attended creative writing classes in order to wean herself off an overly literal, academic style in translating these songs of Lālan.

As she explains in her 2002 article reprinted in this volume, Salomon's contention is that a "core corpus" of "authentic" Lālan songs can be arrived at through using a combination of oral and manuscript sources (the earliest of the latter containing a date three years after Lālan's death). It is certainly true that, in tension with other Bāul ideas, the notion of preserving the original corpus and text of Lālan songs has a great deal of traction among his followers—at least nowadays. In part, this is a means of claiming or retaining authority over the material, in a situation where there is a proliferation of "Lālan songs" and "followers of Lālan." To approach the issue from the other end, many versions of (and indeed entire) "Lālan songs" are evidently spurious. As Salomon argues, edited transcriptions by non-Bāul collectors, even scholars, may fall into this category. So, at the very least, this volume establishes an older, more authentic corpus of songs and contributes to the elimination of some clearly erroneous versions.

Equally significant is that this volume is the first to provide a reliable, polished, and at times exceptionally beautiful translation of some of the most important songs in the Bāul (and indeed the Bengali) repertoire, one that will not be superseded for decades to come, if ever. It is therefore not only of importance to academic researchers; it will give non-Bengali speaking readers access to Lālan's songs.

Where meanings of Lālan songs are concerned, there is often considerable divergence of views, as with Bāul songs in general. Unlike many respected commentators who continue to search for the "true" (essential) meaning, Carol does not gloss over ambiguities and contradictions, but draws attention to them, in the best tradition of critical scholarship (for example, in her comments to Song no. 9). In view of the creativity of Bāul traditions, it would seem that diversity of meanings rather than uniformity is the default mode. One reason for this is that a tight lineage structure is necessary to establish authoritative meanings. To my knowledge, such lineages scarcely exist in the Bāul-fakir context. And apart from that, there is an established practice of learning from adepts irrespective of lineage (*sādhu saṅga karā*). As Carol remarks, "Inconsistency is more the rule in

Bāul songs than the exception. It is *sādhanā* which is primary, and not any particular theology" (comments to Song no. **33**, n.15). Of course some general principles of interpretation can be established. For example, Bāul fakirs usually privilege meanings related to the body over more conventionally religious or "spiritual" meanings (Openshaw 2002, 68–70), and this aspect is clearly highlighted in the present collection.

When I first saw a draft of this work, I was delighted to find it as complete as it is. The credit for this goes to the editors, Saymon Zakaria and Keith Cantú, whose task has been delicate and onerous. However, Carol was still working on the book when she died, and no one else could or should attempt to fill the gaps she left. For example, in places, annotations are absent. Perhaps she already had the materials but had not yet incorporated them into her text. At least in the version of the text available to the editors, she raises issues that she clearly intended to consider further. For example, at one point, she refers to a section on "strategies of secrecy" (comments to Song no. **33**, n.19), part of an introduction that the editors have been unable to trace.

One issue that exercised both Carol and me, and that we had discussed several times, concerns the marginalization of women and the feminine in non-Bāul understanding of their songs. This tendency is usually exacerbated in English translation, owing to the problem of rendering gender-neutral Bengali pronouns and nouns into gender-specific English-language versions. While a particular gender may be judged likely from the context, more usually the gender is ambiguous. However, the translator into English has to make a decision one way or the other—thus destroying the ambiguity of the original. (Because of Carol's commitment to an elegant translation, she avoids cumbersome periphrastics such as "s/he" or "him/her.")

A famous Lālan song, *Āmi ekdin nā dekhilām tāre*, from which the title of this book is taken, illustrates this dilemma. Carol originally published the translation that features in the present volume in 1995 (Salomon 1995, 199–200). Whereas the gender of the neighbor in the original Bengali is ambiguous and may be variously interpreted by readers and listeners, the translator into English has to settle for one or the other. The 1995 version (no. **16** in the present volume) opts for the conventional masculine option:

I have not seen him even once . . .
my neighbor
who lives in a city of mirrors
near my house

Interestingly, a later (2007) translation of this song by Carol, identical apart from the gender shift, feminizes the neighbor:

I have not seen her even once...
my neighbor
who lives in a city of mirrors
near my house.

Her village is surrounded
by deep boundless water . . .
I long to see her
but how can I reach
her village?

What can I say
about my neighbor?
She has no hands, no feet,
no shoulders, no head.
Sometimes she floats high up in the sky,
sometimes in the water.

. . . She and Lalan are in the same place,
Yet five hundred thousand miles apart.[3]

The choices involved here are invidious for any translator. A commitment either way excludes the other possibility. In Bengali these two versions are in a sense combined. Assuming we have no access to the intention of the composer (which is almost always the case), the interpretation (in terms of male or female referent) is a matter for the descendants by initiation of the composer, and ultimately for the reader or listener. Moreover, descendants by lineage do not always agree with one another and, in any case, may give different meanings depending on the context. Whichever decision is taken by the translator into English inevitably entails an impoverishment of the Bengali source material, with its double, multiple, or shifting meanings.

At the end of the feminized version of this song, Salomon notes: "Bauls hold women in high esteem. They are essential to the male practitioner's

3. "Songs of Lalon Phokir: 1," published December 25, 2007, online at http://www.parabaas.com/translation/database/translations/poems/lalon_carol1.html.

success in *sadhana*. This is one of Lalon's many songs that secretly refer to the *sadhika* (female practitioner) or to the *sahaj manus* (natural person) within her." In other words, whereas many in the audience may understand the neighbor to be male, at least some initiates may realize that it refers to a female.

The crucial word here is "secretly." The translator's quandary is whether to settle for what is commonly understood by non-Bāuls and perhaps even some Bāuls, or alternatively to focus on what in restricted contexts may be presented as the "real" meaning. At times we find an overtly masculine, even conventional discourse in the songs, featuring, for example, Allah, Nabi (the Prophet), or Caitanya, to which completely different (feminized) meanings are attributed in certain contexts (p. 8). Needless to say, there are good reasons for Bāuls to conceal referents that are deeply transgressive in the eyes of conventional Muslims and Hindus. In this way, the female partner or substance can be ignored for public consumption, while being highlighted for those initiates considered fit to receive such glosses.

One question that arises in connection with this is whether shifting the gender in translation involves more than a gender switch. In an informal survey of the alternative versions of Song no. **16**, English-language speakers were asked to estimate how the "neighbor" differed in each version. The general view was that the feminized version definitely indicated a human being, whereas the masculinized version was more likely to connote a supreme being, although a revered human being, especially the guru, was also thought to be a possibility.

So, for the English language reader or listener, these two versions may not simply involve a shift from male to female on the same level (for example, a human male becoming a human female or a divine male becoming a divine female). A masculinized rendering may be more liable to be seen as also spiritualizing or at least hierarchizing.

There is an interesting postscript to this debate. An alternative reading for the third verse of this song is sometimes given by adepts. In the present volume it is translated by Salomon in the usual way—one that is incidentally suggestive of a more "spiritual" interpretation: "She [or he] has no hands, no feet, no shoulders, no head." The alternative treats the negative *nāi* as meaning "navel." The verse thus comes to mean: "S/he has hands, feet, shoulders, head and navel," rendering the neighbor an unambiguously material human being.

One way or another, urban-educated transcribers and interpreters, wittingly or unwittingly, have often neglected the role of the female for Bāuls. For example, as Salomon points out, the last word of Song no. **7** was interpreted as a Muslim male honorific title (and thus "God himself") by an illustrious expert on Bāuls. In fact the word means "woman" in the local dialect, and this is the meaning given to Carol by fakirs themselves. This alters the sense of the whole song (p. 59 and p. 61).

Although she has generally translated *mānuṣ* as "man," in the older, nongendered sense (e.g., in Song nos. **28**, **34**), Carol also mentions that it can equally well be rendered "person" (e.g., Song nos. **28**, n.1, **34**, n.1). In several songs, she has used circumlocutions to avoid committing herself to a specific gender identity, and although the third-person pronouns have often been masculinized in the text, she takes care to point out that the Bengali gender-neutral pronoun can refer to a male or a female. An important song where the gender issue is concerned is Song no. **9**, one of a series of songs concerning the "unknown person" (*acin mānuṣ, ajānā mānuṣ*). In this song, a female identity (or at least association) is clearly indicated by the use of "she" in connection with this "unknown person." Carol comments: "There is a rare consensus among different sources that the 'unknown person' is the Śakti or the woman, or some aspect of her" (p. 66).

Had she been able to complete this volume herself, Carol would undoubtedly have contributed many further insights to this and other aspects of Lālan studies, as well as the wider field of research into Bāuls. What is certain is that, even as it stands, the world of scholarship will be immensely benefited by this publication, as will the general reader.

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March 2016

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Editor's Note | সম্পাদকের কথা

The editors hope that future scholars and practitioners alike may benefit from the inspired scholarship and creative abilities of Dr. Carol Salomon, abilities that truly shine in this posthumously published work on the songs of Lālan. While there was certainly much work to be done by the editors to prepare her work for publication, the annotated translations, fortunately, were found to be already in a highly developed condition; for every translation in this compilation the editors have been able to use a hard copy-manuscript—and in many cases several manuscripts—acquired from Salomon's collection of translations.

The Bengali/Bangla versions of each song that accompany Salomon's translation are for the most part reconstructed using her handwritten manuscripts, the vast majority of which were found filed alongside a typed translation. When citing her individual handwritten document as a source, the name given is "Salomon's MS." In cases where handwritten manuscripts are absent from her files, a version based upon a reliable published source that best matches her translation has usually been supplied. Some minor emendations were made to the Bengali versions by Saymon Zakaria based on his research and interviews in the field, including the updating of archaic Bengali variants of Perso-Arabic terms to their contemporary spellings. The reader is thus invited to compare these emendations with Salomon's own comments and emendations as well as with the published and manuscript sources that are provided at the end of each song's annotation. While it is clear from Salomon's notes that she had intended to cross-check every song with oral versions, many of her MSS are copied directly from published source texts (e.g., LG) that have required further cross-checking and editing to construct a more accurate version of each song. For the convenience of those not versed in Bengali script, Roman transliterations were made by Keith E. Cantú

for each song that will enable scholars of other Indic languages to better compare the lyrical content.

Unless otherwise noted, all additions (aside from grammatical or spelling corrections) by the editors have been placed in [square brackets]. References in the annotations to songs of Lālan that are present in this compilation have also been added and are set in **boldface**; for example, "Madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche" [**93**] refers to the ninety-third song in this compilation. References to songs in other published compilations (such as *Lālan-Gītikā*) are preceded by the appropriate abbreviation, as in this example: "Manre kabe bhabe sūrẏer ẏog hay karo bibecanā" (LG no. 93). See also the section that follows. Keith E. Cantú was responsible for creating both the glossary and the index based on the prevalence of certain concepts in Carol Salomon's translations, annotations, and footnotes.

Transliterations of Bengali/Bangla, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian terms have been italicized throughout, with diacritics given according to the international standardized system used by Salomon in her published works. A few exceptions, however, were deemed necessary to fully communicate the richness of the Bengali alphabet's phonemes and to ensure that there would be no confusion between similar letters, especially in cases where an interpretation of a song could very well hinge on a single letter. These are as follows: *antaḥstha* (য) is always transliterated as *ẏ* to distinguish it from *bargīẏa* (জ), which is transliterated as *j*. The phoneme য় (and *ẏa-phalā*) is always transliterated as *y*, and *ba-phalā* usually as "v." Vocalic ঋ is transliterated as *r̥* to distinguish it from retroflex (*mūrdhanya*) ড়, which is transliterated as *ṛ*. When ত is not followed by an inherent vowel (i.e., "broken" or *khaṇḍa* ৎ), it is transliterated as *t̪*. The inherent vowel *a* is sometimes transliterated as *o* according to vowel strengthening rules in certain verbal forms (e.g., second-person singular present tense), following Salomon's convention. The inherent vowel is also often dropped at the end of a word to reflect Bengali pronunciation. Finally, এ is usually transliterated as *æ* when it is open, according to Bengali grammatical rules and/or common pronunciation (see Ruth Thompson, *Bengali: A Comprehensive Grammar* [New York: Routledge. 2010], 34). The editors are very thankful to

Professor Dwight Reynolds for his assistance in checking Salomon's transliterations of Arabic terms.

Languages
Ar. Arabic
Bng. Bengali / Bangla
Pers. Persian
Skt. Sanskrit

Bengali proper names have whenever possible been transliterated with diacritics to avoid confusion or inconsistent transliterations of a given name between the translations, annotations, and transliterations. The editors also wish to thank Richard Salomon, Jeanne Openshaw, Azim Sai, Cynthia Read, Drew Anderla, Julia Turner, and Ben Sadock for their kind assistance at various stages of the editing and publishing process.

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আমরা আশা করি যে, ভবিষ্যতের গবেষকবৃন্দ ও সমমনা পণ্ডিতেরা লালন সংগীতের উপর ড. ক্যারোল সলোমনের এই মরণোত্তর প্রকাশনায় প্রতিফলিত সত্যিকারের উদ্দীপনাময় জ্ঞান ও সৃষ্টিশীলতা থেকে লাভবান হবেন। তাঁর কাজ গ্রন্থাকারে প্রকাশের জন্য সম্পাদকদের অবশ্যই যথেষ্ট পরিশ্রম করতে হয়েছে; তবে, সৌভাগ্যবশত, ব্যাখ্যা সম্বলিত তাঁর অনুবাদসমূহ পরিমার্জিত অবস্থাতেই হাতে পাওয়া গেছে; সম্পাদকরা প্রতিটি অনুবাদের পাণ্ডুলিপির হার্ড কপি ব্যবহার করতে সক্ষম হয়েছেন- অনেক ক্ষেত্রে একই অনুবাদের কয়েকটি পাণ্ডুলিপি পাওয়া গেছে- সলোমনের অনুবাদ সংগ্রহ থেকে সেগুলো গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে।

সলোমনকৃত প্রতিটি গানের অনুবাদের সাথে সংযুক্ত বাংলা সংস্করণ তাঁর হাতেলেখা পাণ্ডুলিপির ভিত্তিতে পুনর্বিন্যাস করা হয়েছে, যেগুলোর গরিষ্ঠ সংখ্যক তাঁর টাইপ করা অনুবাদের সাথে ফাইল করা অবস্থায় পাওয়া গেছে। হাতেলেখা প্রতিটি নথিকে উৎস হিসেবে উল্লেখ করার সময় নাম দেওয়া হয়েছে, "ক্যারোল সলোমনের পাণ্ডুলিপি"। যেসব ক্ষেত্রে তাঁর হাতেলেখা পাণ্ডুলিপি পাওয়া যায়নি, সেক্ষেত্রে তাঁর অনুবাদের সাথে সবচেয়ে বেশি সাযুজ্যপূর্ণ প্রকাশিত [সাধারণত (LG) *লালন-গীতিকা* অথবা (BBOBG) *বাংলাদেশের বাউল ও বাউল গান*] সংস্করণ ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে। সাইমন জাকারিয়া তার গবেষণা ও মাঠপর্যায়ে নেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারের ভিত্তিতে বাংলা অংশে ছোটোখাটো কিছু সংশোধন করেছেন। একইসঙ্গে ফারসি-আরবি শব্দগুলি বাংলায় লিপিবদ্ধ করার ক্ষেত্রে যে বিভিন্নতা ছিল, সেগুলি সমসাময়িক বাংলা বানানরীতি অনুযায়ী পরিমার্জন করেছেন। পাঠকদের প্রতি আমাদের নিবেদন, তারা চায়লে সলোমনের নিজের মন্তব্য ও সংশোধনের সাথে এই সংশোধনীগুলির তুলনা করে দেখতে পারেন এবং সেইসঙ্গে প্রতিটি গানের শেষে মুদ্রিত টীকা পূর্বপ্রকাশিত [উল্লিখিত] ও হাতেলেখা পাণ্ডুলিপির উৎসসমূহ মিলিয়ে দেখতে পারেন। সলোমনের টীকা অনুযায়ী স্পষ্ট হয়েছেযে, তিনি প্রতিটি গান মৌখিকরূপ, হাতেলেখা পাঠ থেকে প্রকাশিত উৎস [লাগী]-এর সাথে তুলনামূলক পদ্ধতিতে নীরিক্ষার মাধ্যমে সরাসরি প্রামাণ্য পাঠ প্রস্তুত করেছেন। যেগুলি আরও তুলনামূলক নীরিক্ষা ও সম্পাদনা দাবী রাখে যাতে গানের সবচেয়ে সঠিক পাঠ উপস্থাপন করা যায়। বাংলা লিপির সঙ্গে সর্বোচ্চ সাযুজ্য রক্ষার সুবিধার্থে কিথ ই. কান্তু প্রতিটি গানের রোমান লিপ্যন্তর করেছেন। যাতে অন্যভাষার বিশেষজ্ঞগণ মূল বাণীর মর্ম সহজেই উপলব্ধি করতে পারেন।

বিশেষ কোনো ব্যতিক্রম ছাড়া, সব সংস্করণের ক্ষেত্রে (বানান ও ব্যাকরণগত সংশোধন ব্যতিরেকে) সম্পাদকদের সংযোজন তৃতীয় বন্ধনীর মধ্যে রাখা হয়েছে। এই সংকলনে লালনের গানের ব্যাখ্যায় ব্যবহৃত তথ্যনির্দেশ উল্লেখের ক্ষেত্রে মোটাহরফ [**bold face**] প্রয়োগ করা

হয়েছে, উদাহরণস্বরূপ: "মধুর দিল দরিয়ায় ডুবে যেজন ডুবেছে" [৯৩] দ্বারা এই সংকলনের ৯৩ নম্বর গান বোঝানো হয়েছে। হাতেলেখা উৎসের বাইরে প্রকাশিত উৎস (যথা, লালন-গীতিকা) নির্দেশ করতে যথাযথ এব্রিভিয়েশন স [সংক্ষেপণ] ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে, যেমন: "মনরে কবে ভবে সূর্যের যোগ হয় কর বিবেচনা" (লাগী নং. ৯৩)। প্রয়োজনে "এব্রিভিয়েশনস" অধ্যায় দেখুন। সলোমনের পাণ্ডুলিপিতে উল্লিখিত শিরোনাম (প্রতিটি গানের প্রথম পংক্তি) শিরোনাম হিসেবে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে, এমনকি LG-তে (লালন-গীতিকা) বা অন্য কোনো প্রকাশনায় অসমর্থিত বানান থাকলে তাই ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে।

অনুবাদের বাংলা, সংস্কৃত, আরবি ও ফারসি ভাষার টার্মগুলি বাঁকা অক্ষরে ছাপা হয়েছে, সাথে সাথে সলোমন তাঁর প্রকাশিত গ্রন্থে আন্তর্জাতিক মানের পদ্ধতি অনুসারে যেসব বৈশিষ্ট্যসূচক চিহ্ন ব্যবহার করেছেন সেগুলিও দিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। বাংলা বর্ণমালার ধ্বনিসমূহের গুরুত্ব পুরোপুরি প্রকাশ করার স্বার্থে ও একই ধরনের ধ্বনি প্রকাশ করে এমন বর্ণগুলি নিয়ে পাঠকের যাতে বিভ্রান্তি তৈরি না হয় সেজন্য কিছু ক্ষেত্রে, বিশেষ করে যেখানে একটি গানের ব্যাখ্যা স্পষ্ট হতে পারে উচ্চারণভঙ্গির বিশেষত্বের ভেতর দিয়ে, সেখানে প্রযোজ্য যত্ন নেওয়া হয়েছে। ব্যাপারটা এরকম: অন্তস্থ 'য' বোঝাতে *ẏ* ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে, বর্গীয় 'জ' বোঝাতে *j* ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে যাতে এদের মধ্যে পার্থক্য করা যায়। য় (এবং *ẏa-phalā*) *y* দ্বারা ও *ba-phalā* ⱱ দ্বারা প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে। ঋ লেখা হয়েছে *r̥* রূপে যাতে এর উচ্চারণকে তাড়নজাত (*mūrdhanya*) ড়, যা বোঝাতে *ṛ* ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে, এর উচ্চারণ থেকে আলাদা করে বোঝানো যায়। ত যখন খণ্ড ৎ এর মতো উচ্চারণ হয় না তখন *t̲* চিহ্ন ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে। সলোমনের রীতি মোতাবেক নির্দিষ্ট ক্রিয়ার ক্ষেত্রে (যেমন, বর্তমান কালের এক বচন দ্বিতীয় পুরুষের ক্ষেত্রে) স্বরধ্বনি *a* কে *o* দ্বারা প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে। বাংলা উচ্চারণভঙ্গি প্রতিফলিত করতে বিশেষ স্বরধ্বনি কোনো একটি শব্দের শেষে প্রযুক্ত হয়েছে। সবশেষে, বাংলা ব্যাকরণের বা উচ্চারণ ভঙ্গির স্বাভাবিক নিয়ম অনুসারে এ ধ্বনি সাধারণভাবে *æ* দ্বারা প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে বিশেষত যখন এটি মুক্তস্বর। (দেখুন Ruth Thompson, *Bengali: A Comprehensive Grammar* [New York: Routledge. 2010], 34). সম্পাদকদ্বয় অধ্যাপক ডিওয়াইট রিনল্ডস এর প্রাতি অত্যন্ত কৃতজ্ঞ; কেননা, তিনি সলোমনের ব্যবহৃত আরবি শব্দগুলির লিপ্যন্তরে সহায়তা করেছেন।

ভাষাসমূহ

Ar. আরবি
Bng. বেঙ্গলি/বাংলা
Pers. ফারসি
Skt. সংস্কৃত

বাংলা নামবাচক বিশেষ্যের ক্ষেত্রে যতটা সম্ভব সন্দেহ এড়াতে, অথবা এ জাতীয় শব্দের অনুবাদ, ব্যাখ্যা এবং লিপ্যন্তরের বিভিন্নতা এড়াতে ডায়াট্রিকস [বৈশিষ্ট্যসূচক চিহ্ন] ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে। এই বই সম্পাদনা ও প্রকাশনা প্রক্রিয়ার বিভিন্নস্তরে উদার সহায়তা প্রদান করার জন্য রিচার্ড সলোমন, জান ওপেনশা, আজিম সাঁই, সিন্থিয়া রিড, ড্রু অ্যান্দির্লা, জুলিয়া ট্রানার ও বেন স্যাদকের প্রতি সম্পাদকদ্বয় একই সঙ্গে কৃতজ্ঞ।

Abbreviations | সংক্ষেপণ

Published sources

LG: Dāś, Matilāl, and Pīyūṣkānti Mahāpātra, eds. *Lālan-gītikā*. Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1958.

DKES: [Also cited in Salomon's manuscripts as Jhā] Jhā, Śaktināth. *Fakir Lālan Sẽi: Deś kāl evaṅ śilpo*. Calcutta: Saṅbād, 1995.

LPhKK: Mitra, Sanatkumār, ed. *Lālan Phakir Kabi o Kābya*. Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 1979 (1386 BS).

LSOLG: Tālib, Muhammad Ābu, ed. *Lālan Śāh o Lālan Gītikā*. 2 vols. Dhaka: Baṅla Ekāḍemī, 1968 (1375 BS).

BBOBG: Bhaṭṭācārya, Upendranāth. *Bāṅlār Bāul o Bāul gān*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Orient Book Company, 1971 (1378 BS).

LS: *Lālan-saṅgīt*. Edited by Fakir Anoyār Hosen (Manṭu Śāh). 3 vols. 3rd ed. Kushtia: Lālan Mājār Śarīph o Sebā Sadan Kamiṭi, 1998.

Manuscripts

V^1a and b: [Also cited as T^1 or M] Visvabharati University, Rabindra Bhavan, no. 138A, 1 and 2. Collected by Rabindranath Tagore. V^1a contains 126 songs and V^1b, 172 songs. No date. In the same hand as Bh and K, which were both transcribed by Lālan's disciple Maniruddin Sā.

V^2: [Also cited as T^2] Visvabharati University, Rabindra Bhavan, acq. no. 182, manuscript 480. Collected by Tagore. 317 songs by Lālan. Dated 1893. Transcribed by Jagat Biśvās. Lālan's disciple and adopted son, Bholāi Sā, was its first owner. A preliminary study of V^2 and K indicates that they are essentially the same. Further study is needed to determine whether they are both copies of the same exemplar.

Bh: [Also cited as BhS or C] In the possession of Śamsuddin Śāh of Bhultiya, Cuyadanga District, Bangladesh. Contains 236 separate songs in Maniruddin's hand. No date. Includes a table of contents of the songs in the manuscript. Bound together with three short Sufi texts in the colophon of which Maniruddin's Bengali signature appears written according to colloquial pronunciation as Śrīmaniraddi Sā Fakir.

K: In the possession of Manṭu Śāh of Kushtia. Originally contained 328, songs of which 69 have been lost, leaving a total of 259 songs. Includes a table of contents with names of songs arranged in alphabetical order. Transcribed by Maniruddin Sā, whose name appears in roman script written as Moniruddin Shah on pp. 3 and 4 along with the dates 1911 and 1917, respectively. Bound together with the first two Sufi texts contained in Bh. The second is incomplete. See the description of V^2 above.

J: [Also cited as H] Belonged to the late Khodā Baksa Biśvās of Jahārpur, Chuyadanga. Contains 375 songs by Lālan; dated 1921; transcribed by Khodadad Hossain.

Oral versions

KhB: Khodā Bakṣa Biśvās (Khodā Bakṣ) recited the song and discussed it with me at the Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, 1986.

[KSh]: [Abdul Karim Shah, a famous singer of Lālan songs with whom Salomon worked with personally and often cites as an oral source in her MSS.]

LB: Laili Begum sang the song, which I recorded on tape, at a *pāllā gān* (song competition) in Gopinathpur, Magura District, Bangladesh, in 1986.

[MG]: [Oral version sung by Mahendranāth Goswāmī.]

City of Mirrors

আরশিনগর

PART ONE

Previous Publications

থম খ

প্ব কাশন

On Editing the Songs of Lālan Fakir using both Oral and Written Sources

Carol Salomon

[Adapted from a conference paper originally published in: Winand M. Callewaert and Dieter Taillieu, eds., *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research 1997–2000: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Early Literature in New Indo-Aryan Languages, Leuven, 23–26 August 2000* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002), 181–190.]

I AM IN the process of completing an edition and annotated translation of approximately 150 songs by Lālan Fakir, the most famous of the Bāul poets of Bengal. In what follows I will discuss the edition component of my project—in particular my use of both oral and written sources to arrive at a text that is as close as possible to the original one.

Scholars editing Lālan's songs do not face the same problems as do those who edit the poems of earlier Bhakti poets such as Kabīr or Mirā. It is possible to identify a core corpus of about five hundred or so authentic Lālan's songs and to establish a reliable text of them that we can be reasonably certain is close to that composed by Lālan. This is not only because of the comparatively recent date of the tradition—Lālan died in 1890—but also because of the mode of transmission of the songs by Lālan-panthī fakirs and fakirs of other lineages in Kushtia and in surrounding districts in Bangladesh who use Lālan's songs extensively in their repertoires.

Lālan's songs, which are short, usually no longer than three or four rhymed verses, are passed down orally from guru to disciple. Lālan-panthī fakirs clearly have a notion of a fixed authentic text. The fakirs memorize

the songs and attempt to reproduce them as closely as possible to the texts taught by their gurus. They consider it reprehensible to change the words of a song by Lālan (Jhā 1995, 158) and will take a singer to task for placing Lālan's name in the *bhaṇitā* of a song they know to be composed by another poet.

Attention to preserving the songs in writing began during Lālan's lifetime, although the weight of evidence indicates that Lālan himself composed orally. According to an eyewitness account (anonymous *Hitakarī* obituary)[1] he could not read or write. His disciples, however, recorded the songs in notebooks.

Several notebooks written by Lālan's direct disciples have recently come to the attention of scholars. Old notebooks of Lālan's songs are cherished by fakirs. They are handed down from guru to disciple and inscribed with the names of the successive owners. They are consulted when singers forget the words of songs and need to refresh their memories.

One of the earliest of these notebooks that is extant (V^2), containing 317 songs transcribed by Jagat Biśvās, belonged to Bholāi Sā, Lālan's adopted son and one of his closest disciples.[2] Portions of it were copied down in 1893, only three years after Lālan's death. Maniruddin Sā, another of Lālan's close disciples, is said by fakirs to have played the role of scribe for Lālan.[3] I know of three extant manuscripts copied by him. (See the descriptions of V^1a and b, Bh, and K in the appendix.[4])[5]

An interesting feature of K is that it contains a table of contents in Maniruddin's hand with the songs arranged in alphabetical order. A numbered list of Lālan's songs in Maniruddin's neat, unmistakable handwriting, which seems to be a table of contents to a notebook that is no longer extant, has also come to light.[6] It names 520 songs. The songs contained

1. "Mahātmā Lālan fakir," *Hitakarī*, October, 31, 1890, 1:101. The obituary has often been reprinted. See, for example, Ābul Āhsān Caudhurī, *Lālan Śāh,* 2nd ed. (Dhaka: Bāṅlā Ekādemī, 1992), 117–119.

2. The notebook was edited by Śaktināth Jhā (1995). See my review: Salomon 1998.

3. Hosen 1998: 12.

4. [This appendix does not seem to be extant. For the descriptions of these manuscripts please see the abbreviations list.]

5. I am grateful to Ābul Āhsān Caudhurī for providing me with photocopies of Bh and K.

6. The list is in the possession of Ābul Āhsān Caudhurī, who obtained it from a nephew of Ismāil Sāh Fakir, whose guru was Bholāi Sā. I am indebted to Caudhurī for giving me a photocopy of this as well.

in the old manuscripts and named in the unattached table of contents constitute the core of the Lālan corpus. One can be almost certain that they are authentic songs of Lālan. Most of these songs also form a regular part of the repertoire of Lālan-panthī fakirs.

Versions of Lālan's songs sung today by Lālan-panthī fakirs are very close to those in the oldest extant notebooks, indicating that the songs have been transmitted with little change over the last hundred years and that they do not have different oral and written lines of transmission. Despite this, however, editions of the songs published to date are full of errors. In many places the texts make no sense and are obviously corrupt. In other places, as I learned in the course of my work, the mistakes are not so apparent. For the most part, the editors of these editions collected their songs by copying them either from fakirs' notebooks or directly from performances. However, as I will explain, both these methods yield corrupt texts.

The notebooks are difficult to read for a number of reasons. They are, for the most part, written by semiliterate scribes who not only use nonstandard and inconsistent orthography reflecting Kushtia dialectal pronunciation but also run words together, making them hard to recognize. In addition, the vocabulary of the songs is often difficult, including technical terms, uncommon Persian and Arabic words, which are often garbled in the manuscripts, and words from Kushtia dialect and from the distinctive jargon of sadhus. Moreover, even the oldest notebooks contain scribal errors. Finally, the songs are esoteric and can be difficult to understand even for seasoned scholars of Bāul songs. Common mistakes made by editors include missegmentation of words and confusion of letters that have similar forms such as *k* and *ph, s* and *m*, or *n* and *l*.

The notion that the "performance is the text" does not apply to Lālan's songs, since there is an "ideal text," namely, the text taught by the guru, which may not match the text of the performance. When Lālan-panthī fakirs singing in public forget the words to a song, they will often ask another singer to prompt them. But if help is not available, they are obliged to cover up for lapses of memory as best as they can. Another reason not to collect songs directly from performance is the danger of mishearing words. The songs of Lālan in Muhammad Mansur Uddin's famous folksong collection *Hārāmaṇi* were evidently obtained from singers during performance, since the texts are full of hearing errors.

I found the best way to obtain a reliable text of a song is to use both oral and written sources. The oral tradition serves as a check on the

written tradition and vice versa. When the oldest notebooks are correctly deciphered, in most cases there are few significant variants from the current oral renditions of the songs. For each song I try to have at least one oral version that I have discussed for text and meaning with a singer respected for his or her knowledge of the songs, as well as one or more versions taken from the oldest surviving notebooks. Given the difficulty of the vocabulary, the nonstandard orthography of the notebooks, and dialectal pronunciation of the singers, it is easy to misconstrue what Lālan is saying on the literal level, not to speak of the esoteric level. Even scholars who know the Lālan tradition well sometimes jump to the wrong conclusions. For example, Upendranāth Bhaṭṭācārya, the author of the groundbreaking study *Bāṅlār Bāul o Bāul gān* incorrectly interprets Lālan's song "Āche ādi makkā ei mānab dehe" (The Original Mecca Is in This Human Body). Bhaṭṭācārya (1971, song no. 43), gives the *bhaṇitā* as: *Fakir Lālan bale se ẏe gupta makkā ādi imām se miñe* ("Fakir Lālan says, 'At the hidden Mecca the first imām was *miñe*' "). The correct interpretation of the entire song turns on an understanding of the word *miñe*. Bhaṭṭācārya (1971, 325), taking it to be the Muslim honorific title, standard Bengali *miṅā* (Persian *miyān*), says it means God himself (*svayaṅkhodā*). When I asked the Lālan-panthī fakir Khodā Bakṣ for the words to this song, instead of *miñe* he gave *meẏe* "woman." After spending some time in Kushtia, I realized that *miñe* is actually the word *meẏe* "woman" spelled according to its pronunciation in Kushtia dialect. The song expresses the belief that the woman is supreme (*nārī śreṣṭhā*). This example underscores the importance of not taking anything for granted when working on these songs and of discussing each song word for word with knowledgeable fakirs.

The sample song in the appendix, "Madināy rachul nāme ke elo bhāi," illustrates how I have used oral and written sources in tandem to arrive at the text that is as close as possible to that composed by Lālan. The most significant variants among the versions that I have collected occur in the final verse. These substantially affect the meaning of the song. The first line of that verse as given in K, the manuscript I have chosen as the exemplar, and in V^2 *kāẏār śarik chāẏā dekhi ẏāro nāi sei lāśarikī* ("I see the body's partner is its shadow. So he who casts no shadow has no partner") contains a clever play on words. Two pieces of information are needed to understand it. First, as stated explicitly in the song and in accordance with popular belief (see Schimmel 1985, 35 and 129; Rāzi 1982, 156), Muhammad has a body but no shadow. *Chāẏā* "shadow, shade" is the leitmotif of the song,

repeated in the refrain (the verse given at the beginning of the song) and in all three verses. The song seeks to uncover Muhammad's true identity. Second, *lāśarikī* (< Ar. *lā sharīk*) "without a partner" or "associate"[7] is an epithet of Allah who, the Qur'an states (e.g., 17:111) "begets no son and has no partner."[8] In the pun Lālan equates Muhammad with God by making an association between the lack of a shadow and the lack of a partner. He calls the shadow (*chāyā*) the body's partner (*kāyār śarik*). So if Muhammad has no shadow, it follows that he is *lāśarikī* "without a partner"—that is, he is God.[9] (If A is B then the absence of A is the absence of B.)

Instead of *śarik* in the phrase *kāyār śarik*, the other manuscripts I examined read *śarib* and *śarīr*. The oral version I obtained from Khodā Bākṣa also has *śarīr*. The corruptions seem to have arisen from scribal rather than hearing error, as the letters *k, b*, and *r* have similar forms. *Śarib* is meaningless, and *śarīr* in the phrase *kāyār śarīr* "the body of the body" makes no sense. The oral variant I obtained from Lāilī Begum, *chāyāhīn ẏāro dekhi śarik nāi se lāśarikī* ("That person whom I see is shadowless has no partner. He is *lāśarikī*"), may be a rephrasing by someone who did not understand the original pun or who tried to make sense out of the corruption of the original word *śarik*. However, it is clearly a lectio facilior, for the difficult pun on Muhammad as *lāśarikī* is lost. It would be highly unlikely for this pun to have been gained in transmission.

In the last line of the song, the oral versions I collected transmit intact a phrase that is corrupt in all the old manuscripts I examined. The readings for this phrase as given in the manuscripts are: *tāo ohāri* (K), *tāo uhāri* (V^2), *tāo ohaki* (V^1), *tāhāohaki* (Bh), and *taohaki* (J). None of these readings make any sense. The two oral versions have *tār hakikī* "his true nature" (< Ar. *ḥaqīqī*). *Hakikī* is an uncommon word in Bengali. The readings of the manuscripts are clearly garblings of this phrase.

What I have sought to demonstrate by this example is that neither oral nor written versions alone are sufficient to arrive at the text Lālan can be

7. *Lāśarikī* occurs in the form *lāśarikālā* (both *-i* and *-kālā* are suffixes used in forming nouns with the sense of "possessing") in Lālan's "Kon sukhe sãi karen khelā e bhabe" (Jhā 1995, 15, no. 33) where it describes the *sãi*, "lord," and is glossed as *ekelā* "solitary, alone."

8. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1983), 726.

9. The belief that there is no difference between Muhammad and Allah is held by Bāuls and many Sufi groups in Bengal (see Haq 1975, 94), although, of course, such a belief is a cardinal sin in normative Islam. In other songs Lālan not only identifies Allah and Muhammad but also equates them with the murshid.

presumed to have composed. By comparing versions of both traditions, however, it is possible to obtain a text that one can be reasonably certain is close to that of the original.

Notes

It should not be taken for granted that Allah, Muhammad, or the murshid or guru in Bāul songs are masculine in gender or that they are always considered one and the same. Depending on the context of the song, they can refer to any of the three sexes—the third being the androgyne—in any combination. Moreover, they do not stand for a supreme God or an abstract cosmic principle with no material reality, since Bāuls do not believe in what cannot be perceived by the senses. Rather, they stand for man and woman, for the *mānuṣ* (person) produced from their union, or for their sexual fluids, either separately or in combination.

A further complication is that Bāuls use *śarik* in the special sense of "offspring." Thus *lāśarikī* can also be translated as "without offspring." Bāuls who are successful in *sādhanā*, which involves sexual intercourse without seminal discharge, do not have children, and so they too are *lāśarikī*.

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Sample Text and Translation of a Song by Lālan's "Madināy rachul nāme ke elo bhāi"

1 madināy rachul nāme ke elo bhāi /
2 kāyādhārī haye keno tār chāyā nāi ‖

3 ki dibo tulanā tāre khūje pāi ne e saṅsāre /
4 meghe raito chāyā dhare dhupero samay ‖

5 chāyāhin ẏāhāro kāyā tribhubane tāro chāyā /
6 e kathār marma ẏaoyā abasya cāi ‖

7 kāyār śarik chāyā dekhi ẏāro nāi se lāśarikī /
8 lālan bale <u>tār hakikī</u> balte darāi ‖

Underlining indicates emendation to the exemplar.
Exemplar: K no. 185; other manuscripts: V^2 no. 188 (according to Jhā's edition); V^1a no. 2; Bh no. 9; J no. 252; oral versions: KhB and LB.

3. LB adds *āmi* before *khūje*.
4. For *raito* V^1a, Bh, J, and KhB *ẏāro*, LB *ẏeman*.
5. LB *ẏāro, trijagate*, and *tāri*.
6. LB *kathāri*.
7. V^1a *śarib*, which is probably a scribal error for *śarik*. Bh, J, and KhB *śarīr*, which does not make any sense. For *kāyār . . . nāi* LB *chāyāhīn ẏāro dekhi śarik nāi*. For *ẏāro nāi* KhB *chāyāhīn*.
8. The emendation is based on the oral versions. The readings in all manuscripts I checked are corrupt: K *tāo ohāri*, V2 *tāo uhāri*, V^1a *tāo ohaki*, Bh *tāhāohaki*, and J *tāo haki*.

Brother, who is the man
they call the Messenger
who came to Medina?
He has a body—
so why no shadow?

What can I compare him to?
I can't find anything
in this world that equals him

whom the clouds shade
from the blazing sun.

His body has no shadow,
yet his shadow spreads
over the three worlds.
You've got to understand
what I'm saying.

I see, the body's partner[10]
is its shadow.
So he who casts no shadow
has no partner.
Lālan says: I'm afraid
to tell the truth about him.

Discussion

HAWLEY

How exceptional, even among the Bāuls, is this attention to authenticity?

SALOMON

I think it is exceptional. I do not find this attention to authenticity as much in other Bāul traditions, and I have been thinking about how to explain this. The disciples were very attentive to preserve these songs in writing. Maniruddin was the scribe who copied these manuscripts several times.

BHATTACHARYA

I understand that the Lālan-panthī fakirs are very keen on authenticity. Although the West Bengal Bāuls sing Lālan's songs, they really belong to different traditions. It is clear to me now. Besides, you have explained beautifully all the variations in the actual wording of the songs. It is a very important work. About the word *hakikī*, I was wondering if it could not have been a later change, since there is a continuous process of Islamization that is going on in Bangladesh. Could it be a later substitution in an attempt to Islamize the text?

10. On the special sense in which the Bāuls use *śarik*, translated here as "partner" see note 7 above.

SALOMON

Thank you, that's a good question. There are three reasons why I do not think that is the case here. First, it is scholars rather than fakirs who attempt to Islamize the tradition, portraying it as an orthodox Sufi one. As I have stated, Lālan-panthī fakirs would not deliberately alter the words of a song by Lālan. Second, Lālan uses many Arabic and Persian words in his songs. The context of the song under discussion is Islamic, and two other Arabic words are used in the verse in question. And third, the readings of the manuscripts do not make any sense. The only way to explain them is as garblings of *hakikī,* the variant of the oral versions collected from fakirs.

John Stratton Hawley, professor of religion at Barnard College, Columbia University.

France Bhattacharya, professeur émérite des universités, INALCO.

PART TWO

Songs of Lālan Sā̃i

তীয় খ

ঁইয়ের সান

বাংলা ভাষায় গানের তালিকা
(অ রানু মিক প্রথম চরণ/শিরোনাম)

Song List in Bengali (alphabetical order by first line / title)

First line | প্রথম চরণ

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২. অনেক ভাগ্যের ফলে সে চঁ দ ৩২

৩. অন্তিম কালের কালে ও কি হয় না জানি ৩৬

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৭. আছে আদি মক্কা এই মানবদেহে ৫২

৮. আছে আল্লা আলে রসুল কলে ৬০

৯. আছে দিন দুনিয়ায় অচিন মানুষ একজনা ৬২

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126. Sixteen bandits are turning the city upside down 542

127. Can I reach my Lord, who enjoys pure love 546
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129. When he heard about the unknown man 554
130. Everything rests on fate 556
131. Let's round up the cows and leave early 560
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I

অজান খবর না জানিলে কিসেে ফকিরি

Ajān khabar nā jānile kisero phakiri

অজান খবর না জানিলে কিসেে ফকিরি	ajān khabar nā jānile kisero phakiri
যে নূরে নূর নবি আমার তাহে আরস বারি ॥	ẏe nūre nūr nabi āmār tāhe āras bāri ॥
বলে কি সেই নূরের ধারা	balbo ki sei nūrer dhārā
নূরেতে নূর আছে ঘেরা	nūrete nūr āche gherā
ধরতে গেলে না যায় ধরা	dharte gele nā ẏāy dharā
যৈছে রে বিজরি ॥	ẏaiche re bijari ॥
মূলাধারের মূল সেহি নূর	mūlādhārer mūl sehi nūr
নূরের ভেদ অকূল সমু র	nūrer bhed akūl samuddur
যার হয়েছে মের অঙ্কুর	ẏār hayeche premer aṅkur
ওই নূর ঝলক দি তারি ॥	oi nūr jhalak dicche tāri ॥
সিরাজ সঁ ই বলে রে লালন	sirāj sā̃i bale re lālan
কর গে আপন দেহের বলন	karo ge āpan deher balan
নূরে নরে করে মিলন	nūre nare kare milan
ঐ প থেে রে নেহারি ॥	ai rūp theko re nehāri ॥

What kind of fakir are you[1]
if you don't know about the unknown?
The light my Prophet's light came from
also produced God's throne.[2]

What can I say
about that stream of light?
The light is surrounded by light.
You can never catch it, try as you may.[3]
Like lightning it darts away.[4]

It is the root at the base,
a mystery vast as a shoreless sea.
That light flashes in him
who has made love sprout within.[5]

Sirāj Sẽ̃i says, Hey Lālan,
make your own body strong.[6]
Unite man and light,[7]
Fix your eyes on that beautiful form.[8]

1. *kisero fakiri*: lit. "What kind of fakir worship?" Alt. trans.: "How can you worship the fakir way?"

2. *tāhe āras bāri:* lit. "from it (came) God's throne." An alternate meaning of *āras bāri* is the seat where God resides in the heart (DKES, 117). As is the case in many other Lālan songs, there is also a pun here with the similarity of the words *āras* and *rasa; bāri* can also mean water, emphasizing the fluidic nature of the Prophet's light. [There is also a note in Salomon's manuscript for this song: "*āraser bārī.*"]

3. Alt. trans.: "No matter how you try; though you try and try."

4. Lit. "It's like lightning." Alt. trans.: "It streaks by; it passes you by."

5. [Salomon's manuscript adds the note: "lit. 'in whom love has sprout.' "]

6. *karo ge āpan deher balan.*

7. [Salomon's manuscript notes two variants for this line in published and manuscript versions: LSOLG gives *nūre nūr* and BhS has *nūre nirākore milan.*]

8. [Salomon uses "fix your eyes" for the word *nehāri*, which also connotes a continuous meditative reflection, similar to *dhyāna* or *darśana.*]

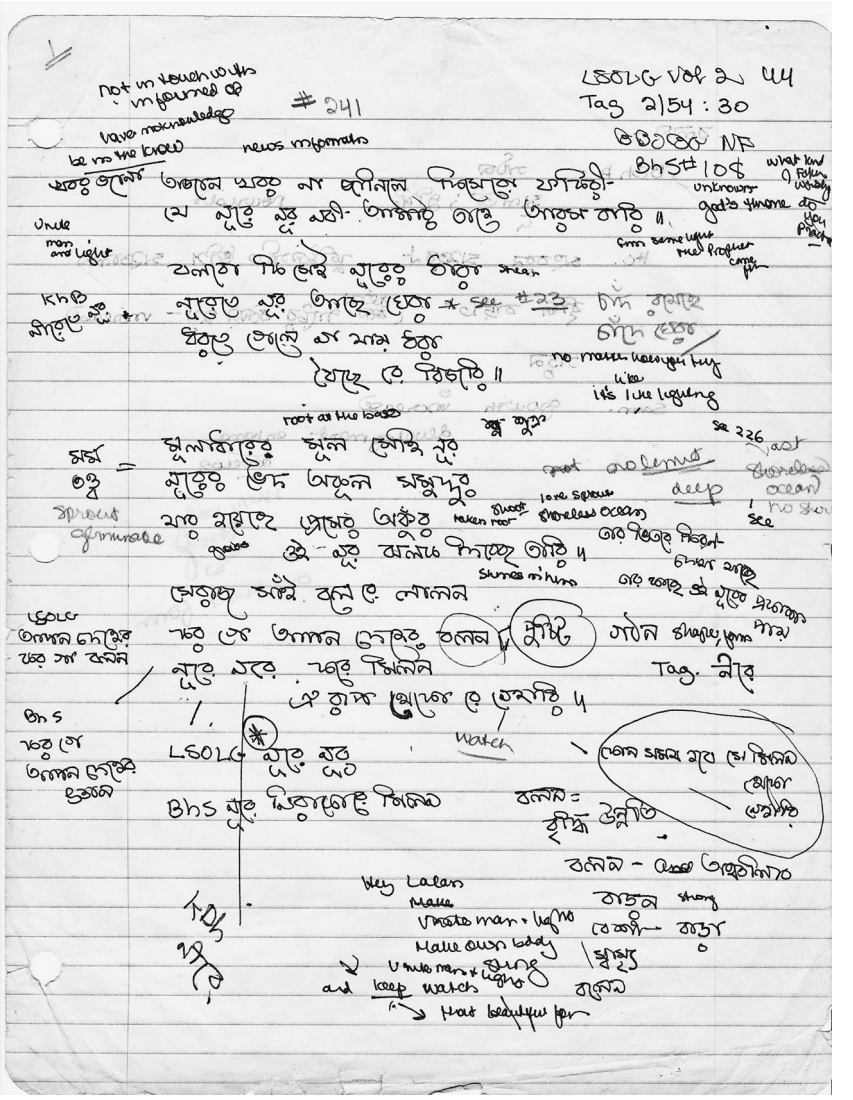
Ajān khabar nā jānile kisero phakiri

According to Islamic cosmogonic theories, Allah created Muhammad's light from his own light. He then divided Muhammad's light, some sources say into four parts while other sources say into ten, and from one of these parts made his throne. By stating that Muhammad's light and the throne came from the same light, Lālan is expressing the belief that Allah's light and Muhammad's light are identical.

When Lālan says that "the light is surrounded by light," he is referring to the Supreme conceived of as primal light (*ādi nūr*), a single substance (*bastu*) but composed of both semen and blood. Lālan further describes the light as the "root at the base" (i.e., the *mūlādhār-cakra*) because it is the source or root of all things and becomes manifest in the woman's *mūlādhār* during her menstrual period.

To "make the body strong" means to prevent the discharge of semen, which leads to bodily decay and ultimately death. Through Bāul *sādhanā* the practitioner is said to conquer death itself. In order to "unite man and light" the male practitioner takes the "light" in the form of menstrual blood from the woman's *mūlādhār* into his own body and makes it ascend together with his semen to the *sahasrār-cakra* in the head. By "Fix your eyes on that beautiful form," Lālan means to watch for the appearance of the light in the *mūlādhār*.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 241; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 42; T^2: 54, no. 30; BhS no. 108.]



Salomon’s MS for “Ajān khabar nā jānile kisero phakiri.”

2

অনেক ভা র ফলে সে চঁ দ

Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d

অনেক ভা র ফলে	anek bhāgyer phale
সে চঁ দ কেউ দেখিতে পায়	se cā̃d keu dekhite pāy
অমাব নাই সে চঁ দে	amābasye nāi se cā̃de
দলে তার কিরণ উদয় ॥	dvidale tār kiraṇ uday ॥
বি মাঝে সি বারি	bindu mājhe sindhubāri
মাঝখানে তার শূ গিরি	mājhkhāne tār śūnyagiri
অধর চঁ দের শূ পুরি	adhar cā̃der śūnyapuri
সেহি যে তিল মাণ জায়গায় ॥	sehi ẏe tilapramāṇ jāygāy ॥
যথা রে সে চ ভুবন	ẏathā re se candrabhuban
দিবা রেতের নাই আলাপন	dibā reter nāi ālāpan
ে চ জিনি কিরণ	koṭi candra jini kiraṇ
বিজলি স রে সদায় ॥	bijali sañcāre sadāy ॥
দরশনে দু খ হরে	daraśane duḥkha hare
পরশনে পরশ করে	paraśane paraśa kare
এমনি সে চঁ দের মহিমা	æmani se cā̃der mahimā
লালন ডুবেও ে বে না তায় ॥	lālan ḍubeo ḍobe nā tāy ॥

Some people are lucky enough
to see that moon.
It doesn't have a new moon phase.
From the two-petaled lotus
it shoots out rays.[1]

In a single drop
the waters of an ocean;
In the center,
the mountain of the void.[2]
The city of void
of the uncatchable moon[3]
is a place the size
of a sesame seed.

In that moon's world
no conversation
between night and day.[4]
Its rays outshine a million moons
and lightning flashes constantly.

The sight of it erases sorrow.
The touch of it turns you to gold.
Such is the moon's magnificence.[5]
Lālan dives in, but not deep enough.[6]

1. Lit. "Its rays radiate from the two-petaled lotus."

2. Alt. trans.: "the void mountain." [KSh and LSOLG read *svarṇagiri* for *sūnyagiri*, and *svarṇapurī* for *sūnyapurī* in the following line. See note 6, "Emendations to published editions," on the next page.]

3. Alt. trans.: "The void city of uncatchable moon."

4. *dibareter* [*dibā reter*] *nāi ālāpan:* alt. trans.: "No repartee between night and day; Night and day don't converse."

5. The past active participle of a verb followed by a negative finite form of the same verb generally indicates something done superficially or incompletely, as in *śune śone nā*, "he/she hears, but it doesn't penetrate." For this reason I have taken the sentence *Lālan ḍube[o] ḍobe nā tāy* to indicate failure. It is also possible, however, for it to have the opposite sense: "Lālan dives in and doesn't drown." Alt. trans.: "Such is the moon's magnificence, Lālan dives in, but doesn't go deep / but doesn't stay down; such is the moon's greatness. Lālan dives in, but stays/remains near the surface / but just breaks the surface."

6. Emendations to published editions: Refrain: LPhKK misreads *nāi se* as *naile*; for BBOBG *bārām* read *kiraṇ*. BBOBG interchanges verse 1 and 2. (For the purpose of noting the

Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d

Lālan says that the "moon" has no "new moon phase" because the Supreme has the form of a moon that is always full. In the thousand-petaled lotus, the *sahasrār*, where the Supreme resides, he remains invisible and cannot be known. In the "two-petaled lotus," the *ājñā-cakra*, situated between the eyebrows, the Supreme's light shines; here the moon "shoots out rays" and can be seen by the Bāul who "has the eyes to see" (LG no. 110 [**2**]).[7] In another song ("Ei mānuṣe sei mānuṣ āche," LG no. 2 [**28**]) Lālan sings: "His house is on an unknown petal, his court in the two-petaled lotus."

The "drop" is the point of origin of the cosmos and represents the primordial totality. On the one hand it is the drop of semen from which the universe evolved; on the other hand, it is comprised of both semen and blood represented by the "uncatchable moon" surrounded by the "waters of an ocean" (see also notes to LG no. 241 ["Ajān khabar nā jānile kisero phakirī," **1**]). The "void mountain" where the "uncatchable moon" lives in a "void city" signifies the cosmic mountain, the center of the universe. (In another song, LG no. 253 ["Ki sādhane pāi go āmi tāre"], [the] Supreme lives on the peak of the void mountain in an isolated cave, which symbolizes the navel of the universe.) Both the mountain and city are described as "void" because the Supreme is *nirākār* ("formless") and *ālek* ("invisible"). (In LG no. 110 ["Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d," **2**] the city itself is described as "invisible.") Another song about the divine city mentions that it has one thousand districts (LG no. 139 ["Gurur dayā ẏāre hay sei jāne," **55**]), which indicates that in the microcosm of the body the city is situated in

variants, I have disregarded the reversed order of these verses.) Verse 1: For *bindu mājhe* BBOBG has *bindunale*. For *śūnyagiri* "void mountain," LSOLG and BBOBG have *svarna giri* golden mountain, probably due to misinterpretation of the word as written in the exemplar. Although T has *sarna*, it is *śūnya*, not *svurna*, that was intended. The *reph* (the marker for an *r* preceding another consonant) does not necessarily indicate an *r* in pronunciation. According to an archaic orthographic convention, it was placed over any geminate regardless of whether it was pronounced. T has *svarnna* in other contexts, too, where *svarna* would make no sense at all, e.g., T2: 27, no. 49 (LPhKK, 211). Moreover, all published editions cited give *śūnya sikhar* "void peak," a phrase analogous to *śūnyagiri*, in their versions of Lālan's song "Āthāro mokāme ekti rūper bāti" [LG no. 231]. For *śūnyapurī* [or *śūnyapuri*] LSOLG has *svurnapurī* and BBOBG has *svarga purī*. For *se to til pramāṇ jāygāy* [or *sehi ẏe tilapramāṇ jāyāy*] BBOBG has *sei to uni pramāṇ jānāy*. Verse 3: All published editions have *sona*, whereas T and Sha [K] have *paras*, which Lālan seems to use in the sense of "gold." See "He who goes to the golden lotus-river" **[112]**, text note 2. BBOBG has *emon mahimā se cā̃der* instead of *emni se cā̃der mahime*. LSOLG gives *mahimā* instead of T *mahime*, which is necessary for the rhyme.

7. [I.e., "Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d," the present song.]

the *sahasrār-cakra*. (See also in this connection LG no. 46 ["Hāy ki kaler gharkhāni bẽdhe"] and LG no.62 ["Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ," **69**].)

Lālan says that in the "moon's world" "not a word is spoken" because the place of the moon emits no sound. Just as it cannot be seen, so too it cannot be heard. As Lālan puts it in another song (LG no. 148 ["Khūje dhan pāi ki mate parer hāte"]), the Supreme lives in "a noisy house" (i.e., the body), but in "a silent cottage."

The "ocean" exists in the body not only in the drop in the *sahasrār*, but also in the woman's *mūlādhār* in the form of menstrual blood. It is into this "ocean" that Lālan hesitates to dive.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 16, no. 27; LPhKK, 205; LG no. 110; LSOLG vol. 2 no. 50; BBOBG no. 51 (corrupt); LS no. 103.]

3

অ ম কালের কালে ও কি হয় না জানি

Antim kāler kāle o ki hay nā jāni

অ ম কালের কালে ও কি হয় না জানি কি মায়া ে রে কাটালাম হারে দিনমণি ॥	antim kāler kāle o ki hay nā jāni ki māyā ghore kāṭālām hāre dinamaṇi ॥
এনেছিলাম বসে খেলাম উপা ন কৈ কি করিলাম নিকাশের বেলা খাটবে না ভোলা এে বাণী ॥	enechilām base khelām upārjan kai ki karilām nikāśer belā khāṭbe nā bholā elo bāṇī ॥
জেনে নে ে না ফেলে মন মজালাম রাঙ পিতলে এ লাজের কথা বলিব কোথা আর এখনি ॥	jene śune sonā phele man majālām rāṅ pitale e lājer kathā balibo kothā ār ækhani ॥
ঠকে গেলাম কাজে কাজে ঘিরিল উ শে লালন বলে মন কি হবে এখন বল রে নি ॥	ṭhake gelām kāje kāje ghirilo unpañcāśe lālan bale man ki habe ækhan bal re śuni ॥

I don't know what will happen
when my time is up.
I spent my life under a deep[1] *spell*
of delusion and lost the jewel of day.[2]

I brought it with me,
but I let it slip away.
Where are my earnings?
What did I do?
The word has come:
When it's time to settle your account,
you won't have enough,[3] *you forgetful man.*

I threw away gold on purpose,
and seduced my mind
with tin and brass.
Where can I tell the story of my shame,
this instant?

I was cheated at everything I did.
The forty-nine have surrounded me.
Lālan says, Mind, what's going to happen now?
Tell me. Let me hear it.[4]

1. Alt. trans.: "heavy."

2. The phrase *diner maṇi* [Salomon's manuscript gives the compound *dinamani*] is ambiguous. The homonym *dīn* means "religion" as well as "poor," "wretched." Thus the phrase could also be translated as "the jewel of religion" and "the jewel of the poor." The word *maṇi* "jewel" is a double entendre as well. The homonym *maṇi* (Ar. *mani*) also means "semen."

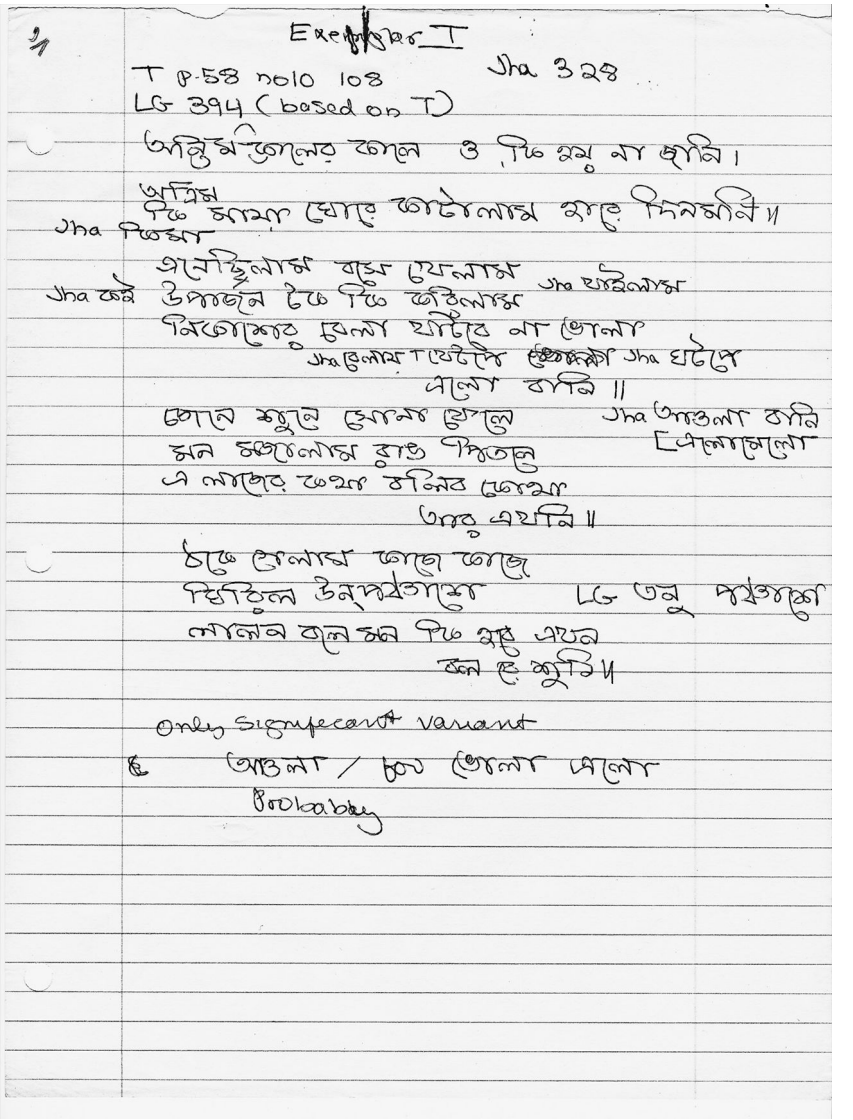
3. *khāṭbe nā*: lit. "it won't do," "it won't suffice," "it won't cover."

4. Alt. trans.: "Let me hear it."

Antim kāler kāle o ki hay nā jāni

Another song about the fatal consequences of failing to prevent the ejaculation of semen, called here "the jewel of day." "Gold" also represents semen and in addition symbolizes true love, that is, sex without seminal emission. "Tin and brass" signify the senses (also whatever or whoever gives purely sensual gratification) and lust, which is to say, sex ending in ejaculation. The meaning of the sentence "The forty-nine have surrounded me" is not entirely clear. Forty-nine is the traditional number of maruts, or wind gods. According to Khodā Bakṣ, they are responsible for stirring up lust. It is also possible that in this context they connote approaching death.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 58, holo. 108; LG no. 394; DKES, 86, no. 328.]



Salomon's MS for "Antim kāler kāle o ki hay nā jāni."

4

অপারের কা র নবিজি আমার

Apārer kāṇḍār nabiji āmār

অপারের কা র নবিজি আমার
ভজন সাধন বৃথা নবি না চিনে
ও সে আউল আখের বাতুন জাহের
নবি কখন কি প ধারণ করে
ে নখানে ॥

apārer kāṇḍār nabiji āmār
bhajan sādhan bṛthā nabi nā cine
o se āul ākher bātun jāher
nabi kakhan kirūp dhāraṇ kare
konkhāne ॥

আসমান জমিন জল আদি পবন
যে নবির নূরে হয় সৃজন
বে কিসে ছিে সে নবির আসন
নবি পু ষ কি কৃতি আকার তখনে ॥

āsamān jamin jal ādi paban
ẏe nabir nūre hay sṛjan
balo kise chilo se nabir āsan
nabi puruṣ ki prakṛti ākār takhane ॥

আ নবি দু অবতার
গাছ বীজ যে প দেখি যে কার
ে মরা সুবু তে কে যে বিচার
ও তার গাছ বড় কি ফল
বড় নেও জেনে ॥

āllā nabi duṭi abatār
gāch bīj ẏerūp dekhi ẏe prakār
tomrā subuddhite karo ẏe bicār
o tār gāch baṛa ki phalṭi
baṛa neo jene ॥

আ -ত ফাজিল যে জনা
জানতে পায় সেই নিগূঢ় কারখানা
হল রাসুল পে কাশ র না
অধীন লালন বলে দরবেশ
সিরাজ সঁ ইর ণে ॥

ātma-tattve phājil ẏe janā
jānte pāy sei nigūṛh kārkhānā
halo rāsul rūpe prakāś rabbānā
adhīn lālan bale darbeś
sirāj sā̃ir guṇe ॥

My Prophet is the pilot
to the other shore.
You worship in vain
if you don't recognize him.
He is first and last,
concealed and clear.
The Prophet can take any form
anytime, anywhere.

From the Prophet's light
came sky and earth,
water and wind.
Tell me, what kind of seat
did he sit on?
Was he male or female then?[1]

Allah and the Prophet
are two avatars,
like seed is to tree—
I think that's the analogy.
Now use your good sense to deduce:
Is the tree greater or the fruit?
Find out!

He who has mastered
the truth of the self
can know about his secret affairs.[2]
Our Lord appeared in the Prophet's form,
through the grace of Dervish Sirāj Sãi,
says poor Lālan.[3]

1. [Salomon's version differs from at least one published version (LS no. 376) in that the first *antarā*, or verse, beginning with "From the Prophet's light," is switched with the second *antarā*, beginning with "Allah and the Prophet."]

2. *niguṛh kārkhānā*. [Salomon's manuscript has in the margin that Karim Shah gives dialectical *āpta-tattve* for *ātma-tattve* and *se to jāne sãijir kārkhānā* for *jānte pāy sei nigūṛh kārkhāna*. See note 3.]

3. [Emendations:] There are only minor variants among the versions I collected, including Karim Shah's oral version as well as the versions listed above. In the refrain J and LSOLG have *kāṇḍāri* for *kāṇḍār*. In verse 1 Karim Shah gives *kothāe* for *kise* and *gāch bīj aṅkur* for *gāch*

Apārer kāṇḍār nabiji āmār

Lālan describes Muhammad as "first" (*āul*, Ar. *awwal*) because Nur Muhammad, the pre-existent essence of Muhammad, is God's first creation, and as "last" (*ākhir*) because Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets." The light of Muhammad manifested itself in all the prophets until it reached its fullest manifestation in the last prophet, Muhammad. He also says that he is "hidden" (*bātun*, Ar. *bāṭin*), since Nur Muhammad can only be known by those who possess secret knowledge. And he says that he is "clear" (*jāher*, Ar. *ẓāhir*, literally "manifest"), for the historical Muhammad lived in Mecca and Medina. As mentioned in the annotations to "Āhāde ahāmad ese nabi nām se jānāle" [LG no. 282; **22**], according to the Bāul poet Gopāl, Muhammad's seat when he created the world was on the heavenly throne next to God. See the annotations to that song for a discussion of Muhammad's role as the active female principle in creation.

In Bengali Sufism, the Prophet is considered an *avatār*, an incarnation of God. However, Lālan calls both the Prophet and Allah *avatār*s. The probable reason for this is that at the beginning of time, God existed only in a potential state. Not until he emerged from the egg did he become the Creator. As Lālan says elsewhere ("Ke bojhe tomār apār līle," "Who Understands Your Incomparable Game?," LG no. 202): "You were a light without form. Then you incarnated in the egg."

The image of the "seed," "tree," and "fruit" is a common one in Muslim Bengali literature to express the interconnection of God, the Prophet, and man. Commenting on the use of this metaphor in *Nūr Jamāl* by the sixteenth-century Bengali poet Haji Muhammad, Roy [1983, 158] says: "He mentioned the cyclic process of creation as exemplified in the seed giving birth to the tree and the tree to the fruit and seeds again. This underlined that 'the one is three and the three is one.' The one is not 'affected' by the other, and the 'death of the fruit is not the end of the tree.' " But whereas Haji Muhammad rejects "a total identity of creator and created," Lālan believes that God, the Prophet, and man are one and the same. Punning on the similarity of the words *khodā* (Pers. *khudā* "god") and *khod* (Pers. *khod* "self"), he sings: "The Prophet, man, the self, or Khodā—these three are never different." Similarly, the Bāul poet Rashid sings (Śarīph 1973, 139, no. 1): "Allah, the Prophet, and Adam—they're three in one light." Since

bīj ẏerūp, probably due to the influence of "Āleph, lām, mimete" **[21]**, which has the same image. In verse 4 for *niguṛh* J has *nigum* and Karim Shah gives *sẽijīr*.

they are all identical, the question that Lālan asks—"Is the tree greater or the fruit?"—has no answer. It is the identity of God and man that Lālan calls the "truth (or doctrine) of the self" (*ātmatattva*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LS 376; T^1:2, no. 4; LPhKK, 231; J^1, 251; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 28; LG no. 269.]

আ

5

আকার কি নিরাকার সঁই র না

Ākār ki nirākār sãi rabbānā

আকার কি নিরাকার সঁই র না	ākār ki nirākār sãi rabbānā
আহাদ আর আহমদ নামের	āhād ār āhamad nāmer
বিচার হলে যায় জানা ॥	bicār hale ẏāy jānā ॥
খুদি বা র দেহে	khudi bāndār dehe
ে দা সে লুকায়ে	khodā se lukāye
আহাদে মিম বসায়ে	āhāde mim basāye
আহামদ নাম হে সে না ॥	āhāmad nām halo se nā ॥
আহামদ নামে দেখি	āhāmad nāme dekhi
মিম হরফ লেখে নবি	mim haraph lekhe nabi
মিম গেলে আহাদ বাকি	mim gele āhād bāki
আহামদ নাম থাকে না ॥	āhāmad nām thāke nā ॥
এই পদের অ ধুড়ে	ei pader artha dhuṛe
কার ন বসবে ধড়ে	kāro jñān basbe dhaṛe
কেউ কবে লালন ভেড়ে	keu kabe lālan bheṛe
ফঁ কড়া বই ে ঝে না ॥	phãkṛāmo bai bojhe nā ॥

Does our Lord have a body,
or doesn't he?
Look closely at the names
Ahmad and Ahad
and you'll find out.

Khodā hides in the bodies
of his own servants.[1]
Put a "mīm" in Ahad,
and the name becomes Ahmad.

But I see,
if you don't write the letter "mīm,"
if you leave it out, Ahad remains.
The name isn't Ahmad anymore.

Some will make sense of this poem.[2]
But others will say, Lālan, the fool,
speaks nothing but gibberish.[3] [4]

1. "Own" translates *khudi*. See the discussion of this word in note 4.

2. *ei pader artha dhuṛe kāro jñān basbe dhaṛe*. More literally, "Some will search for the meaning of the poem and knowledge will take a seat in their bodies." The manuscripts have *kāro* with the final *o-kār* spelled out, indicating that the indefinite pronoun is intended rather than the interrogative *kār*.

3. Lit. "Lālan, the fool, understands nothing but gibberish."

4. Emendations to the exemplar: In the refrain T has *sei* for *sā̃i*. In T and J¹ the problematic word *khudite* opens verse 1. The published editions cited give *khũjite,* which seems to be an interpolation by the editors, who could not make sense of *khudite*. I have tentatively translated the variant of Khodā Bakṣ's oral version, *khudi*, which I have taken to mean "self" (Persian *khwud*). It is also possible that the word is used in the sense of "small" (Sanskrit *kṣudra*). In the last verse T has *phākṛāmo sai,* whereas J¹ has *phākṛā bay.* Here too I have translated Khodā Bakṣ's variant *phā̃kṛāmo bai* (lit. "except nonsense.") This reading makes the best sense and also fits the meter. Other variants in the manuscripts: Verses 1 and 2 are in the reverse order in J¹. (Variants in the manuscripts and published editions are cited according to the verse order of T.) Verse 2: In the last line of the verse T has *nām* whereas J¹ has *ār.* Published editions: In the refrain LSOLG and LG have *āhād ār āhāmader* (LSOLG *āhamader*) instead of *āhāmad* and *āhād nāmer* given in the manuscripts. As in J¹ verses 1 and 2 are interchanged in LG. In verse 1 for LSOLG and LG *khũjite* read *khudi*. LSOLG and LG have the additional word *nām* in the last line of the verse not found in the manuscripts. In verse 2 for LG *nabi* read *naphi*. In verse 3 for LG *pather* read *pader* and for LSOLG *dhare* read *dhuṛe* (*dhūṛe*); for LG *kār bā* read *kār* [*o*], and for LSOLG *phā̃krāme sai* and LG *phākṛā sai* read *phā̃kṛāmo bai*.

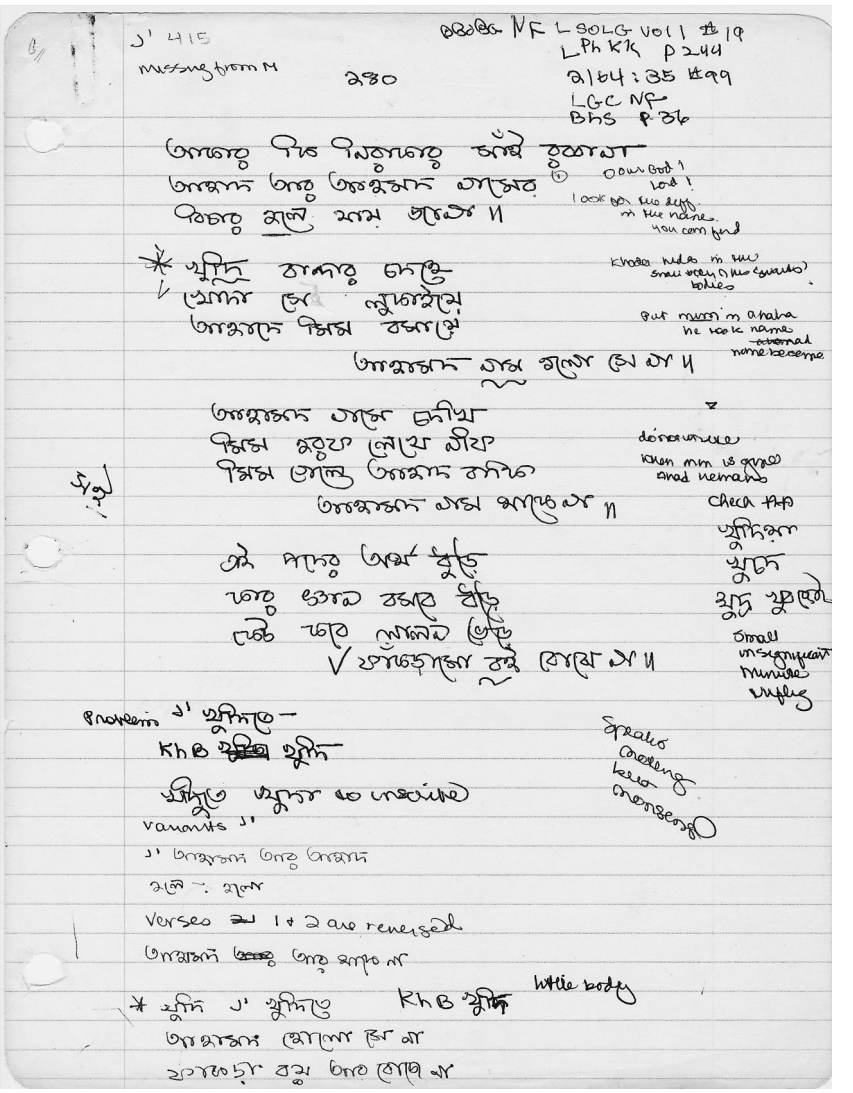
Ākār ki nirākār sẽi rabbānā

Although anthropomorphic terms applied to God in the Qur'an led some Islamic theologians to postulate that he has a body, the orthodox doctrine is that God is incorporeal. The problem of how to explain the paradox that God is incorporeal yet is sometimes described anthropomorphically is one of the common themes in Lālan's songs influenced by Islam. In his song "Æman din ki habe ār" [LG no. 252], Lālan points out the contradiction between the *ḥadīth* "God created Adam in his form" and the notion that God is formless: "God created man in his own image. This is also well known. But here's the great mystery: If he has no body, how can he have an image? Will someone please tell me?"

In the song under discussion he hints that the answer to the puzzle can be found in the *ḥadīth qudsī* (extra-Qur'anic revelation) *anā aḥmad bilā mīm*, "I am Ahmad without the *mīm*." (See the discussion of this *ḥadīth* in the annotations to "Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy" [LG no. 261; **121**].) As I mentioned in those annotations, Lālan holds that Ahad and Ahmad are just the bodiless and bodied aspects of the same being: Ahad is Ahmad and Ahmad is Ahad. The Prophet Muhammad is the manifest form of God. (On the relation of God to the Prophet Muhammad, of the formless Lord to the human form as that of essence to attributes, see the annotations to "O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe," LG no. 240; **36**].)

In the first verse of the song, however, Lālan describes God not as manifest but as hidden "in the bodies of his own servants," and hints that the clue to understanding this enigmatic statement is also found in the similarity of the names Ahad and Ahmad. Here Lālan is not alluding to the physical form of the historical person Muhammad but to his hidden incorporeal form known as the light of Muhammad, which is in the soul of man (see the annotations to "Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy" [LG no. 206; **76**]). In other words, the light of Muhammad is to God as the *jībātmā* (individual soul, < Skt. *jīvātmā*) is to the *paramātmā* (supreme soul) in Hinduism. As Duddu Shah clearly puts it ("Paygambar peye paygambar śeṣer nabi ẏe paroyānāy" in Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 221): "Allah in the self is called the Prophet." Thus man is related to God in both shape and essence.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 35, no. 64; LPhKK, 244; J^1 no. 415; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 19; LG no. 280; DKES no. 17.]



Salomon's MS for "Ākār ki nirākār sāi rabbānā."

6

আগে জান না ও মনুরায়

Āge jāno nā o manurāy

আগে জান না ও মনুরায়
বাজি হারিলে তখন ল য় মরণ
শেষে আর মিছে কা লে কি হয়।
খেল মন খেলা ভাবিয়ে
সামাল সামাল বাজি সামাল স দায় ॥

এ দেশেতে জুয়াচুরি খেলা
ে টকা মেরে ফটকায় ফেলায় রে
  মন ে লা
তাইতে বলি বারে বারে খেলিস
  খুব শিয়ারে
নয়নে নয়ন বা য়ে সদায় ॥

ে রের স নাহি খাটে ধর্মদাঁড়া
হাতের অ কভু করিস নে
  হাত ছাড়া
রাগ অ ধরে দু দমন করে
  দেশেতে গমন কে রে রায় ॥

ে য়ানি বা য়ে খেলে যেই জনা
কাহাে যে সা সেই অ
  দেয় হানা
ফকির লালন বলে আমি তিন তের
  না জানি
বাজি মেরে যাওয়া ভার হলো আমায় ॥

āge jāno nā o manurāy
bāji hārile takhan lajjāy maraṇ
śeṣe ār miche kāndile ki hay।
khelo man khelāru bhābiye śrīguru
sāmāl sāmāl bāji sāmāl sarbadāy ॥

e deśete juyācuri khelā
ṭoṭkā mere phaṭkāy phelāy re
  man bholā
tāite bali bāre bāre khelis
  khub hũśiyāre
nayane nayan bāndhiye sadāy ॥

corer saṅge nāhi khāṭe dharmadā̃ṛā
hāter astra kabhu karis ne
  hāt chāṛā
rāg astra dhare duṣṭu daman kare
svadeśete gaman karo re tvarāy ॥

coyāni bāndhiye khele ẏei janā
kāhāro ẏe sādhya sei aṅge
  dey hānā
phakir lālan bale āmi tin tero
  nā jāni
bāji mere ẏāoya bhār halo āmāy ॥

Didn't you know it before, O king of my mind?
If you lose the game, you'll die in shame.
What's the use of crying when it's over?

O player, my mind, remember the Śrīguru and play.
But stay in control, stay in control of the game![1]
Stay in control all the while!

Swindling is the game[2] in this land.
They give you a quick fix,[3]
make you take risks,[4] O forgetful mind.
That's why I tell you again and again,
"Play carefully. Keep your eyes riveted
the whole time."

Piety cuts no ice with thieves.[5]
Never let your weapon slip out of your hands.
Seize the weapon of love and crush the scoundrels.
Then head straight for home.[6]

Can anyone hurt a man
who plays without losing a cent?[7]
Fakir Lālan says, I don't know thirteen times three.[8]
The game's hard for me to win.

1. "Game": *khelā*. All other occurrences of "game" are translations of *bājī*, here used as a synonym of *khelā*. Cf. Rāmprasād's famous line: *ebār bāji bhor hailo*, "Now the game (of life) has ended." See the commentary for the esoteric significance of the word.

2. Alt. trans.: "Swindling's the name of the game. . . ."

3. "Fix": *ṭoṭkā*, lit. "quack remedy."

4. *Phaṭkā* means "speculation in the share market." *Phaṭkā phelāno* therefore means "to make one speculate," i.e., "to make one take risks."

5. *corer saṅge nāhi khāṭe dharmadāṛā*: lit. "Piety doesn't work on thieves."

6. *svadeśete gaman karo re tvarāy*: lit. "Then quickly go to your native land."

7. Alt. trans.: "without losing a dime; without losing a penny." Published editions such as LG and LSOLG hypercorrect *cau āni*, as the word is spelled in the manuscripts, to the practically homophonous word *coyāni*, "oozing." This obscures the exoteric meaning of this double entendre, which is "four annas," translated loosely as "cent." The translation of the first half of the verse is rather free. It can be literally translated: "Is anyone capable of raiding the organ of a person who ties up his four-anna piece ('who arrests the oozing') and plays?" The translation is highly tentative; alt. trans.: "who plays without losing his wad."

8. "Thirteen times three": According to Khodā Bakṣ, *tin tero* has the figurative sense *hisābnikāś*, "accounting." The line therefore means "I don't know how to figure." (Cf. *tiner tero*,"

Āge jāno nā o manurāy

The key to the esoteric significance of this allegorical song is contained in the word *bājī* [or *bāji*], translated as "game," which is a play on *bīj*, "semen." (See also the line *ebār here bājī kendle ār sāre nā* in Lālan's song "Hīre lālmatir dokāne gele nā" [LG no. 436]. On the equating of ejaculation with dying, see "Ebār ki sādhane śamān jvālā ẏāy" [LG no. 453; **33**].) The *sādhak* must "stay in control" of his semen. He and the *sādhikā*, who is his guru (*śrīguru*, "revered guru," is a pun on *strīguru*, "female guru"), must also keep their "eyes riveted," that is, maintain eye contact, so that he does not lose the concentration necessary for preventing seminal discharge. The "scoundrels" are the six enemies of man (*chay ripu*): lust, anger, greed, infatuation, vanity, and envy. "Home," or more literally "native land," refers to the *ẏoni*, the birthplace and original home of all human beings. (Cf. Freud's "Das Unheimliche," where "Heim" is the female genitals.) As indicated in translation note 7, "cent" freely translates *cau āni* "four annas," which is a pun on *coẏāni* "oozing." According to Khodā Bakṣ, *coẏāni* here signifies the pre-ejaculate. Its discharge indicates that the adept is in danger of spilling his semen.

The translation of the first half of the [third] verse does not make sense on the literal level without knowing its esoteric significance.[9]

[The following questions and notes show Salomon's intended directions of continued research into this song. They are included for reference.]

1. To what does *manorāy* refer (KhB: *ẏe manke paricālanā kare*)?
2. Die in shame: *śukra khṣay phakirer pakṣe lajjār byāpār*?
3. Who is the Śrīguru?
4. Is any particular game being described?
5. Meaning of *ṭoṭkā mere* and *phaṭkāy phele*
6. Who is *cor*?
7. What does the line *corer sange kabhu khāṭe nā dharmadāṛā* mean?

beginning" (BBhA [source unknown, probably the Bangla Academy's *Bāṃlā Bhāṣār Abhidhān*], s.v. *tin*); if the expression is used in this sense, the line then means: "I don't know how to begin"; "I don't know the first thing about it.")

9. [*Coẏāni* also can refer to a traditional alcoholic beverage prepared in rural areas throughout Bengal. This would link the exoteric meaning of *coẏāni* with *juẏācuri khelā* in the first verse, in the sense of drinking and gambling. The drink is also attested in the Buddhist Tantric *Caryāpada* songs as a ritual sacrament, where it is called *bāruṇī*. Cf. Kværne 1977, 81–86.]

8. To what does *hāter astra* refer?
9. Where is *svadeś*?
10. What is *coyāni* (does *bāhyik* mean 4 annas?)
11. What does *tin tero nā jani* mean? Bāṅglā Bhāṣār Abhidhān [likely Shahidullah 1968a] has *tiner tero: ārambha, sucanā*. Also *tintero* = 39.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 429; LPhKK, 123; KhB; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 122; LS no. 476.]

7

আছে আদি ম এই মানবদেহে

Āche ādi makkā ei mānab-dehe

আছে আদি ম এই মানবদেহে
দেখ না রে মন ভেয়ে
দেশদেশা র ে ড়ে এবার
মরিস কেন হঁ পিয়ে ॥

করে অতি আজব ভা
গঠেছে সঁ ই মানুষ ম
কুদরতি নূর দিয়ে
ও তার চার রে চার নূরের ইমাম
ম সঁ ই বসিয়ে ॥

তিল পরিমাণ জায়গার ভিতর
বানিয়েছেন সঁ ই ঊ শহর
এই মানুষ ম তে
কত লাখ লাখ হাজি করছে রে হজ
সেই জায়গায় জমিয়ে ॥

মানুষ ম কুদরতি কাজ
উঠছে রে আজ বি আওয়াজ
সাত তালা ভেদিয়ে
আছে সি দরজায় রী একজন
নি গী হয়ে ॥

দশ দুয়ারি মানুষ-ম
পদে ডুবে দেখ গা
ধা সামলায়ে
ফকির লালন বলে (সে যে)
ম
আদি ইমাম সেই মেয়ে ॥

āche ādi makkā ei mānab-dehe
dekh nā re man bheye
deśadeśāntar dauṛe ebār
maris kæna hãpiye ॥

kare ati ājab bhākkā
gaṭheche sãi mānuṣ makkā
kudarati nūr diye
o tār cār dvāre cār nūrer imām
madhye sãi basiye ॥

til parimāṇ jāygār bhitar
bāniyechen sãi ūrdhva śahar
ei mānuṣ makkāte
kata lākh lākh hājī karche re haj
sei jāygāy jamiye ॥

mānuṣ makkā kudarati kāj
uṭhche re ājagubi āoyāj
sāt tālā bhediye
āche siṃ darajāy dvārī ekjan
nidrātyāgī haye ॥

daś duyāri mānuṣ-makkā
guru pade ḍube dekha gā
dhākkā sāmalāye
phakir lālan bale (se ẏe)
gupta makkā
ādi imām sei meye ॥

The primal Mecca[1]
is in this human body.
Mind, won't you take a look?[2]
Why race all over the map,
huffing and puffing
till you're ready to drop?

The Lord,
with most astounding skill,[3]
built this human Mecca
out of divine light.
At its four gates
are four imams of light.
The Lord sits inside within.

In a space
the size of a sesame seed,
the Lord built a city
way up[4] *in this human Mecca.*
Hundreds and thousands[5]*of pilgrims*
just sit there and make the hajj.

The human Mecca's a divine work.
A strange sound bursts out,
penetrating seven stories.
At the lion-gate is a guard
who never sleeps.

1. Alt. trans.: "The original Mecca."

2. *man bheye*: lit. "mind, brother."

3. The word *bhākkā* is obscure. According to *Āncalik Bhāṣār Abhidhān* (Shahidullah 1968a), it is a synonym of *bhān* "pretense, trick" in Rangpur dialect, or a type of *piṭhā* "rice cake." Neither meaning, however, fits the present context. Since Lālan uses *kāriguri* in a similar context (*ālkhānār śahar bhāri tāhe ājab kāriguri* in "Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā" **[68]**), I have tentatively translated it as "skill." Another possibility, suggested by Khondkar Riyazul Haq, is that *bhākkā* means "style" as in *bhākkā gān* "songs of many styles." Alt. trans.: "in an astounding display of skill . . ."

4. *ūrdhva śahar*: lit. "high city," "upper city," perhaps used in the sense of "transcendent city." It is also possible that *ūrdhva* here is used in the sense of "upside down."

5. *lākh lākh*: alt. trans. (lit.): "Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims . . ."

There are ten gates to this human Mecca.
Stand your ground,[6]
focus on your murshid's feet
and you'll see it.
Fakir Lālan says, At the hidden Mecca,
the first imam was a woman.[7]

6. *dhākkā sāmalāye*: lit. "resisting being pushed down."

7. Emendations to the exemplar: J[1]: the manuscript omits the second verse. It is included in Karim Shah's oral rendition, in the version dictated to me by Khodā Bakṣ, and in the texts published in LG and LSOLG (see variant readings for verse 2 given below). The verse is also omitted in BBOBG's version. Oral and published versions: In verse 1 LG has *hakka* instead of *bhākkā*. Verses 2 and 3 are interchanged in LSOLG. (For the purpose of recording the variants, I have disregarded the reversed order of these verses.) In verse 2 Karim Shah sings *dekh nā najar kare* as the third line of the verse instead of *ei mānuṣ makkāye* given in the other versions; Khodā Bakṣ's version has *ulṭa lahar* "upside-down wave" instead of *ūrdhva sahar*, and LSOLG has *giye* for *basiye*. In verse 3 LSOLG and LG have an additional line after the first half of the verse, *śatadal sahasradale āche ānandita haye*, which clearly does not belong in the song as it violates the meter. For *dvārī ekjan* LSOLG has *ek dvārī pāhārā* and LG has *daś-duyārī*; for *nidrātyāgī haye* LSOLG has *carjan nidrātyāgī haye* and LG has *e nām nidra-tyāg haye nūrī*; and for *basiye* LSOLG has *giye*. In verse 4 LG omits the opening words *daś duyārī*; LSOLG has *bhube* for *ḍube*, probably due to a printing error. All published versions cited have *miñe* as the last word of the song. *Miñe* is a Kushtia dialectal pronunciation of *meye*, the reading of J[1]; it is not, as some scholars including Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 325) have taken it, a variant of the Muslim honorific title *miñā* (Persian *miyān*). See Salomon, "On Editing and Translating Lālan's Songs (forthcoming)." [This essay is found in Part One of the present publication.]

Āche ādi makkā ei mānab-dehe

In this *dehatattva* song, as in many others, Lālan says that the ritual of pilgrimage is wasted effort. Since the human body itself is the "primal Mecca," making the hajj is pointless.

The "four gates" represent the four directions. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 508) identifies the "four imams of light" (*cār nūrī imām*) as the founders of the four orthodox law schools, Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik ibn Anas, al-Shāfiʿī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. It is more likely, however, that they refer to the "Rightly Guided" caliphs of Sunni Islam, Abū Bakr, Umar, Uthmān, and Alī. In any case, their connection to any historical figures or to Sunni doctrine is purely nominal. Their significance lies not in who they are but in what they symbolize. The "four imams of light" are anthropomorphizations of the elements earth, air, fire, and water out of which the world was created. They are equivalent to four moons that flash in the room of jewels (*maṇikoṭhāghar*; see Lālan's song "Ceye dekh nā re man dibya najare" [LG no. 180]), to the black, red, yellow, and white lights that surround the Lord's throne in the *lā mokām* (see Pāñja Śāh's song "Ei mānuṣe nabir nūre jhalak dey"), and to the four cups of light *jaharī, jabbarī, sattarī*, and *nūrī*, among other things (for details, see Salomon 1991, 291–292). The "imams of light" seem to be analogous to the angels Gabriel, Michael, Israfel, and Azrael who, in addition to being associated with the above mentioned items, also are said to preside over the *mokām*s (see, for example, Duddu Shah's song "Moner kathā sudhāi kāre" in LSOLG vol. 2, no. 259, and the Bengali Sufi yogic text *Yogakalandar* in Haq 1975, 378–384).

Textual evidence seems to point to the *sahasrār* or *ājñā-cakra* for the location of the "space the size of a sesame seed." In the song under discussion, the "city" that the Lord built in this space is described as an "upper city" (*ūrdhva śahar*). This could be a reference to either of the two *cakras*. Similarly, in "Hāy ki kaler gharkhāni bẽdhe" [LG no. 46], Lālan says that the "Uncatchable One" is at the "top of the void" (*śūnyer upar*) in what is called "a space the size of a sesame seed." But he adds that "there are hundreds and hundreds of rooms in it," which seems to suggest the *sahasrar*. According to another song, "A space the size of a sesame seed—how marvelous!" ["Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay," LG no. 134; **64**], however, any of three locations is possible. In this song, Lālan remarks that "the Shaveling (*nāṛā*) who spreads over the world" holds court in the hundred-petaled lotus, where he "shakes the machine

to motion."[8] (On the problem of the hundred-petaled lotus, see the annotations to the song.) In some songs Lālan places Sā̃i's court (*bārāmkhānā*) in the two-petaled lotus, while in others he locates it in the *mūlādhār* (see the notes to "Ẏekhāne sā̃ir bārāmkhānā" [LG no. 58; **118**]). Thus, it is not clear whether the "space the size of a sesame seed" that the Shaveling occupies is in the *sahasrār, ājñā-cakra*, or even *mūlādhār*.

Other songs, however, clearly refer to the two-petaled lotus. In "Some people are lucky enough to see that moon" ["Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d," LG no. 110; **2**], Lālan says of the uncatchable moon: "It doesn't have a new moon phase. From the two-petaled lotus it shoots out rays." He then goes on to describe the uncatchable moon's "void city," which is presumably in that lotus: "The void city of the uncatchable moon is a place the size of a sesame seed." Pāñja Śāh in "Man tor ghare base mahājan" (Haque 1990, 505, no. 81) unequivocally places "the space" in the *ājñā-cakra*, the two-petaled lotus between the eyebrows:

Mind, the merchant sits in your house.
So why kill yourself searching for him
in pilgrimage places like Bṛndāban?
If you have faith in his true form,
you'll get to see him.

Eighteen mokams and eight rooms, mind—
and in them are the three worlds.
The mountains and the seven oceans (lit. "rivers")
are all in the body.
At the lion-gate in the two-petaled lotus
is the throne of the Dark Lord (Kālā).

His light—a steady bolt of lightning.
With him are the five (holy) people.
Black, white, red, and yellow colors
surround his seat.
and the rays from his body light up
the hearts of his devotees.

8. [The following note was found in the margins of this page of Salomon's manuscript:] Jan Knappert, *Islamic Legends*: "Note also the soul of Muhammad compressed in a space smaller than a grain of seed; Seed of prophet under in [sic] loins of successive generations of men until God awakens light in seed which contains all essential qualities of prophetic knowledge yet is so small that it can be transported in a drop of semen like a pearl in an oyster."

The treasure of a crore of pilgrimages
sits in a place the size of a sesame seed, my mind.
Delight in the company of sadhus,
and you'll find him.
Pāñja says, Learn to recognize
the life (at the root) of all life.[9]

The description in the Buddhist Tantric text *Pañcakrama* (Das Gupta 1974, 166–167) of a mustard seed pictured between the eyebrows bears a striking similarity to the microcosmic space in Pāñja Śāh's song:

> These five kinds of lustre of the five Buddhas are to be thought of in the region between the two brows, i.e., at the starting point of the nose (*nāsāgra*) and they are to be thought of united into the form of a mustard seed (*sarṣapa*); in this mustard seed, however, the whole universe of the static and dynamic should be meditated on,—it is also to be thought of as the place of all wisdom—of all the mysteries of knowledge. This mustard seed, however, represents the Lord himself of the nature of the five wisdoms.

In another song ("Ādhar cā̃d mele murśid ādhār ghucāle," Haq no. 83) Pāñja remarks not only that the moon is in the two-petaled lotus in "the space the size of a sesame seed" but also that the "hall of colors" is located there. Thus he equates the "space" with the "hall of colors," which independent evidence also locates in the *ājñā-cakra* (see the annotations to ["Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye," LG no. 62; **69**]).

The "seven stories" are the seven *cakras* or the seven heavens of Muslim theology, and the "strange sound" is *anāhata dhvani* ("unstruck sound") which arises spontaneously when the yogin has gained control of semen, mind, and breath and closed his senses to the phenomenal world.

In at least one other song, "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors" ("Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy" [LG no. 35; **120**]), Lālan mentions a "lion-gate" watched by an ever-alert "guard." In this song, the thief breaks into the "hall of colors" despite the guard's vigilance. Bhaṭṭācārya [BBOBG] identifies him as Gabriel, the angel who revealed the [Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad]. The "guard" in these songs is also wind or breath. Duddu Shah in "Āge karo hāoyār ṭhikānā" sings of a "guard" (here called *praharī*

9. [Translation by Carol Salomon.]

rather than *dvāri*) who watched "the gates of wind," using the same adjective, *nidrātyāgi* "giving up sleep" (translated here as "who never sleeps"), with which Lālan describes the guard. It is therefore tempting to identify the two figures and to equate the lion-gate with the "gates of wind." Duddu Shah associates the "guard" not just with the power of breath but with the Śakti herself: "At the gates of wind is a guard, the Goddess of yogins, who never sleeps (*nidrātyāgī yogeśvarī*)."

Lālan does not give any clues as to the location of the "lion-gate" in the song under discussion. In "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors," however, he remarks that the thief is able to gain entry into the "hall of colors" and abscond with the "patrimony" (semen) that is stored there by casting a spell over the guard at the gate. While Lutfar Rahman's suggestion (1977, 278) that the "lion-gate" is in the *mūlādhār* cannot be ruled out, the weight of evidence indicates that in this instance too the two-petaled lotus is the likely solution. First, Lālan implies that it stands at the entrance to the "hall of colors," which I have shown to be in the two-petaled lotus (see the annotations to "Ājab āynā mahal mani gabhīre" [LG no. 52; **12**]). Furthermore, in his song quoted above, Pāñja Śāh explicitly places it there: "At the lion-gate in the two-petaled lotus is the throne of the Dark Lord."

This brings us to the problem of the tenth door. According to Indian tradition, the body is conceived of as having nine or ten doors. While in some songs Lālan mentions only nine doors (e.g., "Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi" [LG no. 67; **137**]), and in one song he even refers to nine and a half doors ("Dhanya dhanya bali ẏāre" [**71**]), in others, as in the song under discussion, he sings of ten. The tenth door is interpreted differently by different traditions. For example, in the Nāth tradition it is the curved duct known as the *śankinī*, which extends from the moon below the *sahasrār* to the hollow in the palatal region and through which nectar (*amṛta*) flows. In contrast, several Tantric sects described by Akṣaykumār Datta in *Bhāratbarṣīya Upāsak Sampradāy* (1976, 162) call the opening in the penis through which semen is ejaculated the "tenth door."

Lutfar Rahman is of the opinion that in Bāul songs it refers to the *ẏoni* (1977, 69), and Duddu Shah in his song "Sīd darjāy pāhārā ẏe jan dey" (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 238) seems to also suggest that the tenth door is in the region of the sexual organs. He says that the body has nine doors and that the "thief's entry way" (*sīd darjā*), which is presumably the tenth door, is in the south, that is, the lower part of the body. Upendranāth Bhaṭṭācārya argues (BBOBG, 1055) that by the tenth door Lālan means the *ājñā-cakra*.

If this is the case, then the tenth door and the lion-gate may be synonymous expressions. However, no consensus exists as to the meaning in the Bāul tradition.

Imam, "leader," is a technical term in Islamic theology for the supreme leader of the Muslim community, who is always male. (On the mistaken interpretation of *miñe*, Kushtia dialectal pronunciation of *meẏe* "woman," for *miñā*, the Muslim honorific title, see the last note in the Emendations to the Exemplar above.) Sunni traditions recognize Abu Bakr as the first imam and Shii traditions, Ali, the husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima. As surprising as Lālan's statement that "the first imam was a woman" may seem at first, it is an expression of his reverence for the Śakti, who, according to Muslim Bāul belief, is Fatima. She is the active principle, the manifestation of God's creative power; it is to her, Lālan says, that God "entrusted religion and the world" ("If you worship Mother. . ." ["Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā," LG no. 115; **104**]). Only through the Śakti, of whom all women are incarnations, can the Sā̃i be reached. As Haure Gosai puts it ("Keno pārbi ẏete," BBOBG no. 564): "In this land woman is king."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 245; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 25; LS vol. 2, no. 513.]

8

আছে আ আলে রসুল কলে

Āche āllā āle rasul kale

আছে আ আলে রসুল কলে	āche āllā āle rasul kale
তলের উল হ না।	taler ul halo nā।
অজান এক মানুষের করণ	ajān ek mānuṣer karaṇ
তলে আনা না ॥	tale ānāgonā ॥
আ আ দিনী দুই প নিলে	āllā āhlādinī duirūp nile
নি করেন তুকে রে	nitya karen kautuke re
দুই প মাঝার প ম হর	dui rūp mājhār rūp manohar
সে প কেউ বলে না ॥	se rūp keu bale nā ॥
নারী পু ষ নপু সক নয়	nārī puruṣ napuṃsak nay
তার তুলনা তারই হয়	tār tulanā tār-i hay
(রে) সে প অ ষণ জানে যেহি জন	(re) se rūp anveṣaṇ jāne ẏehi jan
শ উপাসনা ॥	śakti upāsanā ॥
শ হারা ভাবুক যে রে	śaktihārā bhābuk ẏe re
কপট ভাবের উদাসিনী সে রে	kapaṭ bhāber udāsinī se re
লালন বলে তার ন চ ু আ র	lālan bale tār jñān-cakṣu āndār
রাগের পথ চেনে না ॥	rāger path cene nā ॥

Allah is in the original place,[1]
Muhammad is in the machine,[2]
but no one's searched below.[3]
An unknown man's hard at work there.[4]
Down below he comes and goes.

Allah always plays
in the shape of Ahlādinī Śakti.[5]
The shape in between the two—
it's lovely, that shape,
but no one talks about it.

Not female, nor male, nor neuter,
it can only be compared to itself.
The man who worships Śakti
knows where to find it.[6]

A lover who has no devotion[7]
is a false-hearted lover.
Lālan says, He is mind-blind
who doesn't recognize the path of love.

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 245; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 25; LS vol. 2, no. 513; J1, no. 124.]

1. *āle*.

2. "machine" (*kal*): "body."

3. "below" (*tal*) = *mūlādhār cakra*: alt. trans.: "the ground, the bottom."

4. *ajān ek mānuṣer karaṇ*.

5. The Śakti of God's blissful aspect. Rādhā is the *hlādinīśakti* of Kṛṣṇa.

6. *se rūp anveṣaṇ jāne*.

7. *śaktihārā bhābuk ẏe kapaṭ bhāber bhābuk se re:* Translated according to tentative emendation of *śakti*, which does not seem to make sense in the context, to *bhakti*. The emendation is based on a similar line in LG no. 63 ["Ki kari bhebe mari man-mājhi ṭhāor dekhine"]: *śaktipade bhaktihārā kapaṭ bhāber bhābuk tārā*, "Those who have no devotion for the Śakti's feet are false lovers." [From the manuscript, it is unclear whether Salomon preferred *udāsinī* or *bhābuk*, as found in some Bangla sources.]

9

আছে দিন দুনিয়ায় অচিন মানুষ একজনা

Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā

আছে দিন দুনিয়ায় অচিন মানুষ
একজনা।
কাজের বেলায় পরশমণি
আর সময় কেউ চেনে না ॥

নবি আলি এই দুইজনে
কলেমা দাতা কুল আরফিনে
বেকলেমায় সে অচিন জনে
পিরের পির হয় জানো না ॥

যে দিনে সঁই নরেকারে
ভাসলেন একা একে রে
সেই অচিন মানুষ তারে
ে সর (হলো) তৎ ণা ॥

কেউ তারে জেনেছে দড়
ে দার ে ট নবির বড়
লালন বলে নড়চড়
সেই নইলে কুল পাবা না ॥

āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ
ekjanā।
kājer belāy paraś-maṇi
ār samay keu cene nā ॥

nabi āli ei duijane
kalemā dātā kul āraphine
bekalemāy se acin jane
pirer pir hay jāno na ॥

ẏe dine sāi narekāre
bhāslen ekā ekeśvare
sei acin mānuṣ tāre
dosar (halo) taṯkṣaṇā ॥

keu tāre jeneche daṛa
khodār choṭa nabir baṛa
lālan bale naṛacaṛa
sei naile kul pābā nā ॥

There's an unknown person
in religion and the world.
When it comes time for work,
she's[1] *a touchstone.*[2]
Other times she's a total unknown.[3]

The Prophet and Ali—
these two gave God's word[4]
to all wise men.
But the unknown person
even without God's word[5]
is the saint of saints[6]
and you don't know it.[7]

On the day the Lord
the one and only God
floated alone in the void,[8]
this unknown person
kept him company.[9]

1. In the Bengali text the gender of the figure is ambiguous.

2. This is a literal translation of the Bangla *paraś-maṇi*, which actually means "philosopher's stone."

3. Lit. "No one knows her."

4. *kalemā dātā kul ārfine. Kalemā* (Ar. *kalima*, "word") usually means the profession of faith, but here it seems to have the broader sense of the Qur'an revealed by the Prophet and esoteric knowledge transmitted by Ali, who received it from the Prophet. In another song ("Bhajo re jene śune" **[90]**) Lālan uses *kalemā* in the sense of the Qur'an. He says that the Prophet gave the *kalemā* and Ali the cloak, i.e., the cloak of spiritual succession. The Bāuls consider Ali as the transmitter of secret knowledge, symbolized by the cloak of spiritual succession *(ʿirqah-ĭ-ilāfat)*, which he himself received from Muhammad.

5. *bekalemāy*: alt. trans.: "But without God's word the unknown man is . . ."

6. *pirer pir*.

7. Alt. trans.: "And you don't know him."

8. The line refers to the cosmogonic myth of the *hiraṇyagarbha*.

9. *dosar (halo) tatkṣaṇā*: alt. trans.: "Became/was his companion"; "became his friend."

There are some
who truly know her.
She's not as great as Khodā,
yet she's greater than the Prophet.[10]
Lālan says, Get a move on,[11]
or you'll never reach the shore.[12]

10. Alt. trans.: "She's inferior to Khoda yet superior to the Prophet; She's greater than the Prophet but not as great as Khodā."

11. Alt. trans.: "Get a move on"; "Get going . . ."

12. Emendations to the exemplar: Manuscripts: In the refrain T has *duniyā*, which may be an error for *duniyāy* given in KSh and KhB's oral versions and in LSOLG and BBOBG. J has *duniyāi*. J also has *tār* for *keu* and *ceno* for *cene*. In verse 1, J reverses the order of *nabi ālī* [*nabi āli*]. T appears to read *dal* for *kul* (Ar. *kull* "all") given in J and in the oral versions, but the letter may just have been carelessly written; *da* and *ku* have similar forms in Bengali manuscripts. J gives *bemurid* for *bekalemāy*, and omits *hay*. In verse 2, J gives *ekdine* for *ẏe dine, sei dine sei acin janer* for *se acin mānuṣ tāre*, and *dosar chilen tatkṣaṇā* for *dosar tatksaṇā*. In verse 3 J has *ẏe* instead of *keu*. Published editions: In the refrain LG has *duniyār* for *duniyā*, BBOBG has *samay* for *belāy*, and LSOLG has *asamaye tāre ceno nā* for *ār samay keu cene nā*. Karim Shah in one of his repetitions of the refrain also gives *asamay* for *ār samay*. In verse 1, LSOLG, like J, reverses the order of *nabi* and *ālī*. BBOBG gives *ali* instead of *ālī*. LG and BBOBG read *dal* for *kul*. LG has *ẏe* for *se* and LSOLG has *cene* for *jane*. LG reads *ceno* for *jāno*. In verse 2, LSOLG, like J, has *ekdin* for *ẏe din* and *bhesechilen* for *bhāslen*. It omits *ekā* and has *bemurid acin tāre* for *sei acin mānuṣ tāre*. LG gives *tatakhānā* for *tatkṣaṇā*. In verse 3, LSOLG, like J, has *ẏe* for *keu*. The additional word *śuni* precedes *khodār*. BBOBG gives *dal* instead of *kul* in this verse too. LSOLG has *pābo* for *pābā*.

[The following notes to this song refer to its position in a set of seven songs compiled by Salomon that treat the subject of the *acin* or *ajān mānuṣ*, "unknown person" (cf. song no. **111**). The other songs referenced are listed alphabetically by their first lines and can also be located using the song list.]

This and the following six songs comprise a set of identity riddles that describe an enigmatic figure Lālan calls the "unknown person." Although the last two songs in this group do not mention the "unknown person" specifically by name, common imagery connect them to the first five songs so that there can be no doubt that they allude to the same mysterious person. In addition, Lālan's song "Murśid dhani guṇamani gopane rale" (DKES no. 373; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 61) also describes a figure who, like the *acin mānuṣ*, remains hidden and unrecognized. The imagery of the *acin mānuṣ* songs is predominantly Islamic. Only "Śune ajānā ek mānuṣer kathā" (LSOLG vol. 2, no. 158 [LG no. 314; **129**]) is on an entirely Vaiṣṇava theme.

The "unknown person" sometimes refers to the primal Śakti (*ādyāśakti*), whom fakirs also refer to simply as *mā* ("mother") or Fatima, among other names, or to woman who is an incarnation of the Śakti. Other times, however, it seems to refer to a substance possessed by the woman but not necessarily female in gender. In "Ẏāre dhyāne pāy nā mahāmuni" (DKES no. 339 [LG no. 117; **111**]) Lālan depicts it as a "fish," which according to one song, "Mīn rūpe sā̃i khele," (DKES no. 120–121 [LG no. 138]) seems to be male in gender[13] but which, according to another, "Kāraṇ nadīr jale ekṭā ẏugal mīn kheliche nīre" (LSOLG vol. 1, no. 269), seems to be androgynous. According to the fakirs I interviewed, the "fish" represents the procreative element, the maternal substance (*mātṛ bastu*) or maternal seed (*māẏer bīj*), that appears in menstrual blood and that is white in color.[14] (Lālan also calls it *adhar mānuṣ*, "uncatchable person"; *sahaj*

13. In "Mīn rūpe sā̃i khele" Lālan equates the *svarūp śakti* with the ocean of love (*prema sindhu*) and the fish *avatār* with *dīnabandhu*, i.e., Viṣṇu. Since the "ocean of love" is clearly feminine, the fish *avatār* identified with Viṣṇu must be masculine.

14. For a discussion of female semen, see Openshaw [2002, 216–224] and O'Flaherty (1973). The belief that a woman has semen seems to have also been held in the Middle East as well as on the Indian Subcontinent. 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. Kathīr (d. 1372–1373 CE) in his commentary on the Qur'an, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* al-'aẓīm, says in his exegesis of Q 3:93 that when the Jews asked the Prophet to tell them how a woman produces both males and females, he replied, "The two semens meet. When the semen of the man is predominant [over] the semen of the woman, then it is a boy. When the semen of the woman is predominant then it is a girl" (Wheeler 1998, 10).

mānuṣ, "natural person"; or Nirañjan.)[15] In "Ache āllā āle rasul kale" [LG no. 245; **8**], "the unknown person" is clearly androgynous; it is described as a "lovely figure in between the two figures Allah and Āhlādinī,"[16] and as "neither male nor female." It is likely that it and the fish refer to the same substance. No matter what gender is attributed to the substance, it is considered by the fakirs with whom I discussed the songs to be a part of the woman (*prakṛtir aṅśa*) and to become manifest within her (*prakṛtir bhitar diye acin mānuṣ prakāś pāy*).

There is rare consensus among different sources that the "unknown person" is the Śakti or the woman, or some aspect of her. This was the answer I received from fakirs I interviewed, including Abdul Karim Shah, Khodā Bakṣ, and Nizamuddin Shah. The fakir Mohin Shah, in *Achin Pākhi* (The unknown bard [*sic*]), a documentary about Lālan by Tanvir Mokammel made in 1995, states that when Lālan says ("Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā"[LG no. 90; **9**]) "There's an unknown person in religion and the world" who "ranks below Khodā and above the Prophet," he is talking about *mā* (*māke lakṣya kare sãiji balche*). Lālan's disciple Duddu Shah in his song "Nīre nūrī gupta bārī rākhilen tāre" (Jāhāṅgīr no. 63) explicitly equates the "unknown person" with *ādyāśakti*. In other songs, although Duddu does not mention the "unknown person" by name, he uses some of the same words to depict the Śakti that Lālan does to describe the "unknown person" (see, for example, Jāhāṅgīr [1964], songs no. 23, 179, 234, and 303). In addition, recent scholarship on the Bāuls (see Openshaw [2002, 216–224], Jhā [1995], and Cakrabartī [1992]) confirms the solution Śakti.

Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā

In verse 1 of this song Lālan hints that the Śakti or woman is called the "unknown person" because she does not receive adequate recognition "in religion and the world"—that is, society—for the roles she plays. Bāul songs frequently mention that she does the crucial work of creating, nurturing and

15. In "Boli re mānuṣ ei jagote" (Jhā no. 133) Lālan identifies Nirañjan with the substance from which the four elements came. (The manuscript has *nirañjanā*, which Jhā takes as a feminine form, but which is probably a contraction of *nirañjan nā*. Of course, it is entirely possible that Lālan was making a pun.) According to Bāul belief the elements were produced from the churning of the flower that is the female principle.

16. [See song no. **8**, text note 5.] *Ahlādinī* is interpreted as the feminine of *Āllā*; the first syllables of both words are homophonous, as is indicated by the orthography of the manuscripts. J has *āllā* and *āllādini*, and Bh has *ālyā* and *ālyādini* (the y *phalā* doubles the l).

liberating. In the song "Ek din pārer kathā bhābli nā re" [LG no. 422; **29**] it is Fatima who on the Day of Judgement takes her followers safely across the bridge Ṣirāṭ that spans hell, an act that in *dehatattva* terms symbolizes the *sādhikā*'s crucial role in helping the *sādhak* to control his semen during sexual intercourse, thereby enabling him to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth.[17] In song after song the Bāuls allude to the female as both creator and savior, as the figure who brings people to this shore and who takes them across to the other but who is not appreciated for these important roles. For example, Lālan's song "Bhajo murśider kadam ei belā" [LG no. 228] has the following lines: "Who brought you to this shore and who will take you to the other? Lālan says, 'You forget her and you neglect her' " (*E pāre ke ānilo se pāre ke nebe balo. Lālan sāi bale tare bholo, karo re abahelā*).[18]

"Work" (*kāj* in the song under discussion, but also its synonym *karma*) is a metaphor for sexual intercourse. Thus one possible interpretation of the lines "When it's time for work she's a touchstone. Other times she's a total unknown" is that only when it is time for sex is the woman payed any attention.[19] In Bāul songs the "touchstone" is a metaphor for the transformative power of woman. Through intercourse with the *sādhikā* the *sādhak* gains a "perfected body" (*siddha deha*) that remains strong and healthy in old age and is compared to gold.[20] Duddu Shah sings (Jāhāṅgīr [1964], no. 90): "Prakṛti is the source of creation. The male reaches perfection through Prakṛti. That's why I worship her, the life of creation. 'Prakṛti is a touchstone,' said Lālan Śā̃i."

17. This reflects the same attitudes toward the *sādhikā* as is attested in Vaiṣṇava and Śākta traditions. In his case studies of Vaiṣṇava *sādhikās* and Śākta Bhairavīs Bholānāth Bhattacharya (1977, 293) quotes a woman who relates how she employed a certain technique she called *jimbhrit* when the *sādhak* was about to lose control of his semen: "Afterward, the grateful *sādhak* remarked: 'Ratipriya, you have saved me or else I was just on the brink of disaster.' "

18. See the introduction for a discussion of songs in which the murshid signifies the *sādhikā*. [This introduction has not been found among Salomon's manuscripts.] Cf. the following line from a Kartābhajā song by Lālśaśī: "Brother, nobody worships her—but she who created (you) worships everyone" (*keu to bhāi bhaje nā tāre, ẏe kareche sṛjan seito bhaje sabhāre*).

19. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 509–511) gives another, though related, interpretation. In his opinion the "unknown person" is the internal *sahaj mānuṣ*, which, according to his view, is the male aspect in a woman and has the form of semen. He implies that the line refers to the time during a woman's menstrual period when the *sahaj mānuṣ* becomes manifest. At other times of the month the *sahaj mānuṣ* remains in a passive and unknowable form.

20. See Openshaw [2002, 158–160; 212–213]. Semen is made immovable through intercourse with the *sādhikā* and becomes more like woman's seed. The *sādhak* ingests menstrual blood and draws it into his penis. As the *sādhak* is transformed into woman he is even said to develop a menstrual period.

In verse 2, Lālan contrasts the "unknown person" to the Prophet and Ali. In his song "Bhajo re jene śune"[LG no. 246; **90**] he similarly mentions the Prophet and Ali along with a third figure explicitly identified as Fatima, who is depicted as the Śakti.[21] In the song under discussion, the "unknown person" is called *bekalemā*, whereas the Prophet and Ali are described as *kalemā dātā* (givers of the *kalemā*, see text note 4).[22] According to Karim Shah this is because a woman, unlike a man, does not recite the profession of faith during a marriage ceremony. To put it in more general terms, Lālan is saying that the "unknown person" is excluded from canonical religion. In "Ẏe jan sādhaker mūlgoṛā" (LSOLG no. 85 [LG no. 234; **113**]) the term *bed-chāṛā* (excluded from the Vedas) expresses the same idea as does the belief stated in "Ai ek ajān mānuṣ" [LG no. 233; **34**] that the "unknown person" is reachable only through *ma'rifa* (the mystic path of Islam) and not *sharī'a* (Islamic law).

Lālan describes the "unknown person" as the highest guru, calling her the "saint of saints" (*pirer pir*), a phrase which recurs in "Ẏe jan sadhaker mūlgoṛā," or as he also puts it in that song "the murshid of murshids" (*murśider murśid*). This is because, as is typical of *bartamān-panthī*[23] traditions in particular and Tantrism in general, the *sādhikā* is her partner's guru and may also be the guru of others as well. Moreover, *bartamān-panthīs* often give her primacy over other gurus (Openshaw [2002, 146–148]), referring to her by such terms as *ādi-guru* (original guru), *cetan-guru* (guru who gives consciousness), and *śrī-guru* (a double entendre meaning both "venerable guru" and "beautiful guru"). According to Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts, Kṛṣṇa is the *dīkṣā-guru* who gives initiation, but Rādhā, of whom all women are manifestations, is the more important *śikṣā-guru* who instructs in *sādhanā* (Dimock 1966, 101). For example, the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā poet Caṇḍīdās says of his lover, the washerwoman Rāmī (translated in Dimock

21. The song describes Fatima as *ābimbadhāri*, the one who carried the *ābimba* (also *abimba* "not a drop"), the original unborn form of the Śā̃i from which came the *bimba* "drop" followed by the cosmic *ḍimba* "egg." She is also called *yogeśvarī* (Goddess of *yogīs*) who lives throughout the ages, as well as the creator (*sṛṣṭikartā*). Fatima, particularly as conceived of in Shii sources, has some features in common with the *śakti* that facilitated identification with her. For example, one of her epithets is "creator" (*fāṭir*), and another is "mother of her father" (*umm abīhā*).

22. In "Bhajo re jene śune" [**90**] Ali is associated with the cloak (*hāl*) that a saint gives to his successor and that symbolizes the transmission of esoteric knowledge. On Ali as the inheritor of esoteric knowledge from Muhammad, see Schimmel (1975, 27) and Haq (1975, 38).

23. [For a description of the terms *bartamān* and *bartamān-panthī* as applied in recent scholarship on Bāul and related traditions, see Openshaw (2002, 5; 113–117).]

1966, 102): "The washerwoman of that country is the queen of the blissful state; in her heart is the true form of Rādhā. You, O Rāmī are my guru in *sādhanā*, you are the wishing-tree of bliss, and I am your slave." Duddu Shah (Jāhāṅgīr, no. 303), echoing Lālan but in even more hyperbolic language, refers to the *sādhikā* whom he calls "the goddess incarnate" (*sakṣāt bhagavatī*) as the "saint of the saint of saints" (*pirer pir tasya pir*, lit. "the saint of saints—his saint") as well as *ādi-guru*, "primal guru," and *ādi mātā*, "primal mother."[24]

Verse 3 of the song under discussion refers to the story of creation from the cosmic egg, one of the many cosmogonic myths that figure prominently in Bāul songs, since they are the rationale for *sādhanā*, which is believed to reenact and reverse the original cosmogonic act. (Through *sādhanā* the adept is able to escape the endless cycle of death and rebirth and return to the primal state of unity that existed before the universe came into being.) This verse gives the answer to the question "On the day the Lord floated in an egg who was the Lord's companion?" asked in the song "Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sẽ̄i" [LG no. 102; **114**], albeit in the enigmatic persona of the unknown person. Lālan asks a related question in "Mayere bhajile pāi se bāper ṭhikānā": "Who was in the egg? When he came out whom did he see?" According to Bāul belief, the egg was formed during the stage of creation termed *nirākār* "formless," which is the fourth of eleven *kār*s (see Salomon [1991], 300n46.) *Ādyāśakti* was the support, receptacle, or shelter (*ādhār āśray*) for the egg containing the Śẽ̄i (also called Nirañjan, Brahmā, and Khodā), although sometimes she is identified with the egg itself.[25] When the egg broke and the Śẽ̄i was born, he is said to have shouted "ma" three times. Duddu Shah, alluding to this belief, asks (Jāhāṅgīr no. 179, "Ẏakhan sẽ̄i chilo śūnyākārete"): "The form of the egg wasn't in anyone's womb. Then in the formless state who gave

24.

Nobody recognizes the feet
of the one they call
the Goddess incarnate.
She is the Primal Guru,
the Primal Mother.
. . .
She is the saint
of the saint of saints (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 303).

25. See for example, Śarīph ([1973], 81, no. 30).

it shelter (*āśray*)? Whom did the Lord call 'ma?'" (*ḍimbur ākār kāro garbhe nay, nirākāre bhāslen kāhār āśray, mā bol bale kāre ḍāklen sẽi*).[26]

According to Khodā Bakṣ, Lālan says that the "unknown person" ranks below Khodā because she was created by him.[27] She is the manifestation of Khodā's creative power. As Duddu explains ("Nīre nūre gupta bāri rākhilen tāre," Jāhāṅgīr, no. 63): "When the sole Lord was alone in the void by the strength of his infinite power (*śakti*), he brought his Śakti out of his own power (*śakti*)." She ranks above the Prophet because Fatima, as Muslim Bāuls call the Śakti, was Khodā's first creation and it was from her, often conceived of in the form of a flower or of light termed *jaharā-nūr*, that the Prophet came. As Duddu Shah says in "Nīre nūre gupta bāri rākhilen tāre" (Jāhāṅgīr, no. 63): "She is the Primal Śakti, the beloved one, from whose body the Prophet was born."[28] Thus, although not stated in so many words, Fatima is the mother of her father, which interestingly is one of her Arabic epithets (*Umm Abīhā*).

Duddu's song "Śamane bhay ki re tār śrīrūp guru ẏār sahāy" (Jāhāṅgīr, no. 234) contains the same unusual enigma "ranks below Khodā but above the Prophet" (*khodār choṭa nabir baṛa*) that Lālan uses in the last verse of the song under discussion and in "Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sẽi." It therefore seems likely that Duddu's song was composed in response to these riddles by Lālan. Duddu applies the enigma to the *śrīrūp*, which is a code word for the Śakti.[29]

There are three possible solutions to the identity of the "unknown man" (*acin mānuṣ*) in this song, no single one of which satisfactorily resolves all of the enigmas. As in the previous two songs in the cycle, the Unknown Man here may be the *sahaj mānuṣ*. This is the interpretation accepted by

26. For a discussion of the cosmic egg in Indian mythology, see Roy (1983, 126–127) and Salomon (1991, 284).

27. Though the Lord at the beginning of creation is androgynous, it is often equated with the male. Thus Lālan sings ("Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā" [**104**]): "There was a woman in the body of the man, our protector." Sometimes, however, it is depicted as female, as in this song about Fatima (Śarīph [1973], 113 no. 28): "At the beginning of creation there was light which was *mā*. On her right side was a man, you say, and on her left a woman."

28. On the microcosmic *dehatattva* level the Prophet is said to be born each month from menstrual blood (S. Cakrabartī [1992]) and to come floating in the menstrual flow (Openshaw [2002, 181n27]).

29. See, for example, Lālan's song "Aṭalo rūper sarabar śrīrūp se ghāṭer gheṭela" (Jhā 1995, no. 198) where the term is equated with *mā* (mother); also BBOBG, songs no. 326 and 441, which use the phrase *śrīrūp nadī* to signify the river of the menstrual flow. *Śrīrūp* is also used in Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā literature in the sense of the Śakti, as in Basu (1932), song no. 59.

Bhaṭṭācārya. The figure, however, may also be the Śakti, which is the solution offered by the fakirs I interviewed, or even Muhammad's light.

Here is an interpretation of the clues if the solution is taken to be the *sahaj mānuṣ*, as Bhaṭṭācārya does [BBOBG]: "When it is time for work" refers to the three or four days when a woman menstruates, or when the *sahaj mānuṣ* appears at the *triveṇī* in the woman's *mūlādhār* and the Bāuls perform their *sādhanā* to catch him. At this time, he is a "touchstone," that is, an invaluable treasure, since he is manifest and can be experienced as bliss by the Bāul adept. At other times, however, the *sahaj mānuṣ* is the *aṭal īśvar*, the passive form of the Supreme who resides in the *sahasrār*. This form of the Supreme "can't be known." The *sahaj mānuṣ* is called "without God's word" or "*bekalemāy*" since he is not mentioned in the Qur'an. Yet he is the "saint of all saints" because, as Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 511) explains, he instructs in matters outside of Islam or any other established religion. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 511) also states that he is "lesser than Khodā" because he appears only for a few days a month, but he does not say why he is "greater than the Prophet." One possible explanation is that the *sahaj mānuṣ* has a subtle form, whereas the Prophet Muhammad has a form that everyone can see.

It is, however, difficult to explain why the *sahaj mānuṣ* is described as having kept the Lord company when he "floated alone in the void" at the beginning of creation. Bhaṭṭācārya [BBOBG] merely states it as a fact: the *sahaj mānuṣ* was the Lord's companion when he existed in unmanifest form. But I have found no song to confirm this assumption. In the one reference I found to the *sahaj mānuṣ* at the beginning of creation, he seems to be equated with the Lord rather than any companion (see Pāñja Śāh's song "Age karo rāger anveṣaṇ" (Haque [1990], song no. 133). The solution *sahaj mānuṣ* also does not explain the use of Islamic terminology in the songs. Although some clues given in other songs in the *acin mānuṣ* cycle, such as the depiction of the Unknown Man as a fish or as the form between that of Allah and the Śakti, cannot be explained as referring to the Śakti, a good case can be made for the solution Śakti in the song under discussion. Menstrual blood containing the Śakti is a "touchstone" because, according to Bāul belief, it has miraculous powers. In fact, Lālan uses the word "touchstone" (*paraś*) when describing the river of the menstrual flow. He sings ("He who goes to the golden lotus-river . . ." ["Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy," LG no. 48; **112**]):

This river has miraculous water.
It yields all kinds of jewels and pearls.

How can I describe its power?
One touch and you turn to gold.

Menstrual blood only appears for the three or four days "when it is time for work," and the rest of the month "it can't be known." The Śakti is "without God's word" since the Qur'an does not say anything about her. Yet she is the "saint of all saints" (*pirer pir*), for she is the primal mother who gave birth to the world. Furthermore, it is only with her help that the male adept can be successful in "catching the uncatchable." In fact, Duddu Shah in his song "Sākṣāt bhagabatī jāre kay" (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 303) applies a phrase almost identical to *pirer pir* directly to the Śakti: "On the day the Lord, the one and only God, floated alone in the void," the Śakti "kept him company," for she was the receptacle for the cosmic egg containing the Lord. She was the cosmic waters on which the egg floated. As the Bāul poet Rāmjān (Śarīph 1973, 66, no. 5) sings: "My Lord floated on Mother Śaktī's chest." The solution Fatima, the Śakti, can also account for the use of Arabic terminology.

Nur Muhammad, the preexistent light of Muhammad, is the least convincing of the three possible solutions. To be sure, some clues can be interpreted as applying to Nur Muhammad. For example, when Lālan says that the Unknown Man kept the Lord company when he "floated alone in the void," he could be referring to the preexistent essence of Muhammad, who, according to at least some Bāul songs, was Allah's first creation. For example, Ramjān (personal collection) sings: "When Our Lord Allah was alone and had no companion, by the order (*kun* "be"), he created the Prophet." But as with the Śakti, evidence from another song in the Acin Mānuṣ cycle, "The one who's the goal of the devotee" ("Ẏe jan sādhaker mūl goṛā" [**113**]), contradicts the solution Nur Muhammad. In this song, Lālan contrasts the Unknown Man (not specifically named) with the Prophet's Light, saying that the mysterious unknown figure "was created from a hidden light and travels the world undercover, but the light Muhammad's light came from is known by people all over." Whereas the solution Śakti, despite seemingly contradictory clues, is supported by evidence from songs by other Bāul poets and by the interpretation of the fakirs I interviewed, the solution Nur Muhammad is not backed up by external testimony.

An analysis of this solution is complicated by the fact that it is sometimes identified with the *sahaj mānuṣ* and sometimes with the Śakti. For the purpose of this discussion, these associations will not be taken into consideration.

Since Nur Muhammad was created by God, it can also be described as "lesser than Khodā." But it is "greater than the Prophet" because Nur Muhammad existed pre-eternally and manifested itself in all the prophets until it reached its full manifestation in the last prophet, Muhammad. Other clues do not seem to apply to the Prophet. For instance, it is difficult to explain how "without God's word" could characterize Nur Muhammad. Even speculations about Muhammad's light are based on interpretations of the Qur'an.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V^2: 71, no. 133; LPhKK, 165; J no. 413; LG no. 90; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 70; BBOBG no. 138; KSh; KhB.]

10

আছে মায়ের ওতে জগৎপিতা

Āche māyer ote jagaṯpitā

আছে মায়ের ওতে জগৎপিতা
ভেবে দেখ না।
হেলা কে না বেলা মে না ॥

কোরানে তার ইশারা দেয়
আলেফ যেমন লামে লুকায়
তেমনি আকারে সাকার ঝাপা রয়
সামা কি যায় জানা ॥

নি মী নি কার হয়ে
দাঁড়াও মায়ের শরণ লয়ে
ব মানে দেখ চেয়ে
পে প নিশানা ॥

কেমন পিতা কেমন মা সে
চিরকাল সাগরে ভাসে
লালন বলে কে দিশে
ঘরের মাঝে ঘরখানা ॥

āche māyer ote jagaṯpitā
bhebe dekho nā।
helā karo nā belā mero nā ॥

korāne tār iśārā dey
āleph ẏæman lāme lukāy
tæmani ākāre sākār jhāpā ray
sāmānye ki ẏāy jānā ॥

niṣkāmī nirbikār haye
dāṛāo māyer śaraṇ laye
bartamāne dekho ceye
svarūpe rūp niśānā ॥

kæmon pitā kæmon mā se
cirakāl sāgare bhāse
lālan bale karo diśe
gharer mājhe gharkhānā ॥

The mother screens
the father of the world from view.
Don't forget it.[1] *Don't waste time.*

The Qur'an holds the clue:
As lām conceals alif,
so the body hides His subtle form.
You think this is easy to understand?[2]

Dispassionate, detached,
take refuge in the mother.
Look right here.[3]
Your true form[4]
is His form's banner.[5]

How does the father look
and how the mother?[6]
They always float on the sea.
Lālan says, Search!
One house is inside the other.

1. *helā karo nā*: lit. "Don't ignore it"; "Don't shrug it off."

2. Alt. trans.: "You think this is easy to grasp?"

3. *bartamāne:* alt. trans. (more literal): "Look at what's right here."

4. *svarūpe:* alt. trans.: "The true form"; "your true nature." In other songs I have translated *svarūp* as "true nature." Here, however, I wanted to convey in the translation the play on the words *svarūp* and *rūp*.

5. *svarūpe rūp niśānā*: alt. trans.: "Is his sign"; "Is his form's sign, emblem"; "Your true form is the emblem of His"; "Your true nature is the emblem of God's form." See LG no. 193 ["Mare ḍubte pārle hay," **101**]: *svarūp rūp āśray* (cf. [the seventeenth-century English poet John] Donne: "In what torn ship soever I embark / That ship shall be my emblem of thy ark," [i.e.,] as an embodiment).

6. *kæman pitā kæman mā se*: lit. "What sort of father and what sort of mother?" Alt. trans.: "How does the father look and how does the mother?"

Āche māyer ote jagaṯpitā

Another song referring to the cosmogonic theory of the Śakti as the receptacle for the *ādi bindu* (see notes to LG no. 153 ["Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā," **68**]). The joint letter *lām āleph* [Ar. "lām alif"] in this song is compared to the Śakti and Allah, as well as to man (the "body," *ākār*) and God (the "subtle form," *sākār*). Just as *āleph* is contained in *lām*, so is Allah within the Śakti, and God within man (see also LG no. 374, "Ḍube dekho dekhi man kirūp līlemay"). (On the symbolism of *lām āleph* in the Islamic tradition, see Schimmel 1975, 419. On the significance of the individual letters *lām* and *āleph* in Lālan's songs, see notes to LG no. 278 ["Āleph lām mimete," **21**].)

The "mother" is both the original Śakti and women in general, considered as incarnations of the Śakti. "Here" (*bartamān*, lit. "present") refers to the human body. The "true form" (*svarūp*) is the subtle divine essence which pervades the body and can be realized when lust is transformed into pure love and the *sādhak* becomes "dispassionate" (*niṣkām*) and "detached" (*nirbikār*). By "your true form is His form's banner" Lālan means that the *svarūp* testifies to the existence of God's form (*rūp*); it is through the union of the *svarūp*s of male and female that the *sādhak* can realize God's true steady (*aṭal*) nature. The Bāul Rejo Kṣepā sings: "In the human form is the true form and in the true form lives the man of love" (BBOBG no. 526).

"One house is inside the other" refers to the microcosmic universe in the human body.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 80; BBOBG no. 175.]



Salomon's MS for "Āche māyer ote jagaṭpitā."

11

আছে যার মনের মানুষ মনে

Āche ẏār maner mānuṣ mane

আছে যার মনের মানুষ মনে
সে কি জপে মালা।
অতি নি নে সে বসে বসে
দেখছে খেলা ॥

কাছে রয়ে ডাকে তারে উ রে
ে ন পাগলা
ওরে যে যা ে ঝে তাই সে বুঝে
থাক রে ে লা ॥

যথা যার থা নেহাৎ সেইখানে
হাত ডলা মলা
ওমনি জে মনের মানুষ
মনে ে লা ॥

যে জনা দেখে সে প করিয়ে চুপ
রয় নিরালা
ও সে লালন ভেড়ের লোক
জানা হরি বলা ॥

āche ẏār maner mānuṣ mane
se ki jape mālā।
ati nirjane se base base
dekhche khelā ॥

kāche raye ḍāke tāre uccaśvare
kon pāglā
ore ẏe ẏā bojhe tāi se bujhe
thāk re bholā ॥

ẏathā ẏār byathā nehāṯ seikhāne
hāt ḍalā malā
omani jeno maner mānuṣ
mane tolā ॥

ẏe janā dekhe se rūp kariye cup
ray nirālā
o se lālan bheṛer lok
jānāno hari balā ॥

Does a person tell beads[1]
who has found the Man of the Heart?
He sits in solitude
and watches the game.

Only a madman shouts
for someone nearby.
But let people believe what they want,[2]
forgetful mind.

Just as the hand massages the place
where pain is,
one should remember the Man of the Heart.

Whoever has seen him is silent
and reclusive.[3]
But Lālan just follows the crowd,
bleating "Hari!" "Hari!"

1. [*jape mālā* refers to the traditional South Asian practice of reciting prayers or *mantra* using a necklace of beads, similar to a rosary.]

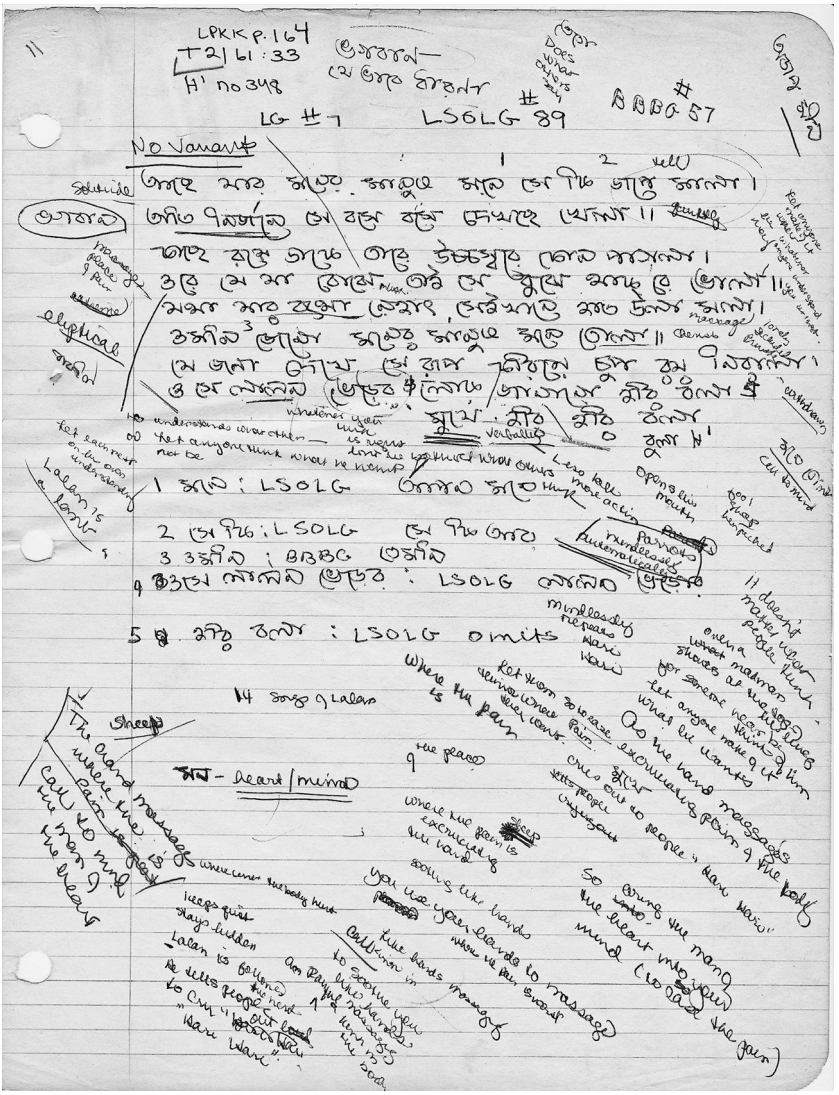
2. *ore ẏe ẏā bojhe tāi se bujhe thāk re bholā*: lit. "Let each person understand what he understands, forgetful mind."

3. Alt. trans.: "stops talking and keeps to himself."

Āche ẏār maner mānuṣ mane

This is one of the few songs that Lālan composed describing someone who has attained *siddhi* (perfection). See also "Rūper tulanā rūpe" [LG no. 17], "Ẏe jan dekheche aṭal rūper bihār" [LG no. 19] and "Lāglo dhūm premer thānāte" [BBOBG no. 611], a song celebrating the *rasik*'s capture of the "thief."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 7; V^2, 61, no. 33; LPhKK, 164; H no. 348; LSOLG no. 89; BBOBG no. 57.]



Salomon's MS for "Āche ẏār maner mānuṣ mane."

12

আজব আয়নামহল মণি গভীরে

Ājab āynāmahal maṇi gabhīre

আজব আয়নামহল মণি গভীরে
সেথা সতত বিরাজে
সঁ ইজি মেরে ॥

পূ দিকে রতন বেদী
তার উপরে খেলছে জে তি
তারে যে দেখেছে ভা গতি
সে জনে সচেতন সব খবরে ॥

জলের ভিতরে কে জমি
আঠার ে কামে তাই কায়েমি
নি শ শ র উদগামী
সে ে কামের খবর জান গে যা রে ॥

মণিপুরের হাটে মে হারী কল
তেহাটা বেণী তাহে বঁ কা নাল
মাকড়ার আশে ব সে জল
লালন বলে স বুঝবে কে রে ॥

ājab āynāmahal maṇi gabhīre
sethā satata birāje
sā̃iji mere ॥

pūrbadike ratan bedī
tār upare khelche jyoti
tāre ẏe dekheche bhāgyagati
se jane sacetan sab khabare ॥

jaler bhitare śukno jami
āṭhāra mokāme tāi kāyemi
niḥśabde śabder udgāmī
se mokāmer khabar jān ge ẏā re ॥

maṇipurer hāṭe manohārī kal
tehāṭā tribeṇī tāhe bā̃kā nāl
mākaṛār āśe bandī se jal
lālan bale sandhi bujhbe ke re ॥

In a marvelous hall[1] of mirrors,
inlaid with gems,[2] my Lord
reigns forever.[3]

To the east is a jeweled altar.
Above it lights are playing.
Whoever is lucky enough to see it[4]
knows about everything.[5]

Dry land within water.
On it eighteen stations,
made to last.[6]
From silence comes sound.
Go find out about these stations,
go now!

In the market of Maṇipur,
city of gems,
is a fascinating machine.[7]
There's a crooked tube
at the Triveṇī,
confluence of three streams.[8]
Water is imprisoned[9]
by spider threads.
Lālan asks, Who can solve the mystery?[10]

1. *mahal:* Alt. trans.: "palace"; "mansion"; "chamber"; "room."

2. *maṇi gabhīre*: "gems, deep within."

3. Alt. trans. (lit.): "(There's) a marvelous hall of mirrors, / inlaid with gems. / That's where my lord reigns forever."

4. Could also be translated as "him."

5. *se jan[e] sacetan sab khabare*: alt. trans.: "is conscious of everything"; (more literal): "is aware of everything"; "knows everything there is to know."

6. *kāyemī*: "firm," "permanent."

7. *kal*: "device," "mechanism."

8. *tehāṭā tribeṇī*: the meaning of *-hāṭā* is obscure, but it is clear that the word *tehāṭā* means "tripartite" (*te-* = "three"). The line literally translates: "The tripartite Triveṇī ('three strands'; the confluence of the Gaṅgā, Yamunā, and Sarasvatī, or the juncture of the *iṛā, piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā*), and at/in it is a crooked tube."

9. *bandī*: alt. trans.: is arrested; is blocked.

10. Lit. "Who will understand the mystery?" "Mystery" (*sandhi*) can also be translated "secret."

Ājab āynāmahal maṇi gabhīre

The interpretation of this well-known *dehatattva* song is somewhat problematic. The "hall of mirrors," which also occurs in other songs by Lālan (LG no. 299, "Khā̃cār bhitar acin pākhi kæmane āse ẏāy" and LG no. 62, "Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye" [**69**]), and its variant "city of mirrors" ("Āmi ekdin nā dekhilām tāre," LG no. 18 [**16**]) are among the images that typify Lālan's poetry. They are probably metaphors for the *ājñā-cakra* in the forehead, although they may also refer to the *sahasrār* at the top of the head, as both *cakra*s are considered the abode of the Absolute. According to Khodā Bakṣ, the "east" where the "jewel altar" is located represents the front of the body, possibly the forehead. Another song (LG no. 390 ["Sādhya ki re āmār se rūp cinite," **133**]) mentions that the Absolute is in [the] "northeast corner of the room." The "northeast," Khodā Bakṣ says, signifies the front left side of the body, where the heart is located. It is therefore possible that by "east" Lālan actually means "northeast" here too—that is, the heart. Both the heart and the *ājñā-cakra* are described as places of incredible effulgence.

"Dry land within water" perhaps refers to the organs (or heart) and the circulatory system. The "eighteen stations" (*āṭhāra mokām*) are eighteen parts of the body and are unrelated to the four *mokām*s (or five *mokām*s in Pāñja Śāh's view [1898,] 18–19) mentioned by Lālan and other Bāul poets. Although Lālan does not identify the "stations" in any of his songs, a number of Bengali Sufi, Vaiṣṇava, and Bāul texts do enumerate them. These lists, however, vary widely according to the text. Khodā Bakṣ quoted one list that, like an *āgama*, is placed in the mouth of Śiva, who is instructing Pārvatī. It also includes the names of the deities presiding over each body part, most of which reflect Vaiṣṇava influence. The "eighteen stations" as given in this text are as follows: (1) top of the head, (2) forehead, (3) eyes, (4) nose, (5) ears, (6) tongue, (7) uvula, (8) neck, (9) arms, (10) back, (11) chest, (12) navel, (13) penis, (14) vagina, (15) anus, (16) thighs, (17) knees, and (18) feet. Pāñja Śāh's enumeration of the "stations" in *Chahi Iski Chādekī Gaohor* [1898, 18] is much less straightforward. Some of the body parts are not actually named but only vaguely described. They allude to places peculiar to Bāul mystic physiology. Pāñja neither uses the framework of an *āgama* nor mentions presiding deities other than Allah in the tenth station. For example, he says that the first station is the seat of water (*nīr*), the second station is the place of wind (*paban*), the third is the *ghāṭ* of the *triveṇī*, the fourth is the tongue, and the fifth is the teeth, etc. A third

and entirely different list is given by Haq (1975, 418). According to the texts he examined, the eighteen *mokāms* "are a set of eighteen necessary things for the constitution of a man" rather than places in the body. The eighteen stations as given by Haq are as follows: (1) semen, (2) nerves, (3) bones, (4) brain, (5) blood, (6) flesh, (7) skin, (8) hair,(9) life, (10) death, (11) subsistence, (12) wealth, (13) happiness, (14) misery, (15) wisdom, (16) love, (17) bravery, and (18) thoughtfulness.

The "sound" that "rises soundlessly" probably refers to the *anāhata dhvani* "unstruck sound" (also called *śabdabrahman* "supreme reality in the form of sound"). This sound arises spontaneously when the *sādhak* has drawn his senses inward and has gained control over breath, semen, and mind (see Das Gupta 1969, 57–58n7).

The *maṇipur* is the *cakra* near the navel. According to Buddhist texts, it is in this *cakra* that semen should be arrested (Das Gupta 1974, 143). Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts locate the *kulakuṇḍalinī śakti* in the navel, and Bāul songs refer to the entire region below the navel, including the *svādhiṣṭhan* and *mūlādhār*, as the place of sexual functions. It therefore can be surmised that the "market of Manipur," which seems to include the *triveṇī* generally located in the *mūlādhār*, refers to the area extending from the *maṇipur* to the *mūlādhār*.

In Bhaṭṭācārya's view (BBOBG, 345), the "crooked tube" (*bā̃kānal*) signifies the *suṣumnā* rather than the *baṅkā nala* of the Nāths, the curved duct, known in yogic physiology as the *śamkhinī*, that extends from the moon below the *sahasrār* to the hollow in the palatal region (see Das Gupta 1969, 239–240).

The enigma "water is confined by spider threads" signifies the difficulty of Bāul *sādhanā*, particularly the practice of seminal retention. As Lālan explains in another song (BBOBG no. 41 ["Madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche," a variant version of **93**]): "Tying an elephant with spider threads . . . what impossible tasks these are! Only someone who has dived knows (how to do them)."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG, vol 2, no. 46; LG no. 52; LPhKK no. 2.]

13

আজব রং ফকিরি সাদা ে হাগিনী সঁ ই

Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sā̃i

আজব রং ফকিরি সাদা ে হাগিনী সঁ ই।
ও তার চুড়ি শাড়ি ফকিরি ভেক
কে বুঝিবে তাই ॥

স কেশী মুখে দাড়ি
পরনে তার চুড়ি শাড়ি
ে থা হইতে এে সিঁড়ি
জানা উচিত চাই ॥

ফকিরি ে ে র মাঝার
দে হে করিয়ে বিচার
ও সে সাদা ে হাগিনী সবার
আধ ঘর নতে পাই ॥

সাদা ে হাগিনীর ভাবে
কৃতি হইতে হবে
সঁ ই লালন কয় মন পাবি তবে
ভাব সুমু থাই ॥

ājab raṃ phakiri sādā sohāginī sā̃i।
o tār cuṛi śāṛi phakiri bhek
ke bujhibe tāi ॥

sarbakeśī mukhe dāṛi
parane tār cuṛi śāṛi
kothā haite elo sīṛi
jānā ucit cāi ॥

phakiri goror mājhār
dekho he kariye bicār
o se sādā sohāginī sabār
ādh ghar śunte pāi ॥

sādā sohāginīr bhābe
prakṛti haite habe
sā̃i lālan kay man pābi tabe
bhāb sumudre thāi ॥

It's a strange show—
the fakir ways of the Sādā Sohāgī saints.
Their fakir garb:
bangles and saris.
Who can understand?

Long hair, bearded faces,
bangles and saris—
Where did this lineage[1] come from?
You've got to find out.

Take a close look
at this fakir band.[2]
I've heard the Sādā Sohāgīs
are everyone's original clan.[3]

You have to become a woman
like the Sādā Sohāgīs.
Sā̃i Lālan says, Mind,
then you'll reach the bottom
of the ocean of love.

1. Alt. trans.: "path"; "line." "Lineage" translates *sīṛi*, "steps" which is used by fakirs in the sense of "chain of descent" and is synonymous with *silsilā* and *sijrānāmā*. When a Lālan-panthī fakir is described as *tin sīṛi*, "step three," for example, it means that his guru's guru was a direct disciple of Lālan.

2. "Band" translates *goro* "group" (Persian *guroh*), which has the technical meaning of "lineage" or "suborder," i.e., *cistiyā khāndān nizāmiyā goro*, "the Nizāmiyah suborder of the Chishti Sufi order."

3. "Everyone's original clan" translates *sabār ād[h] ghar. Ād[h]* can mean either "half" (< Skt. *ardha*) or "original" (< *ādi*). In this context, according to Karim Shah, it is used in the latter sense, and *ghar* in the sense of "lineage." (See the annotations for an interpretation of the meaning of the phrase.) It is also possible, however, that the phrase is a double entendre. If *ād[h]* is taken to mean "half" here, then *ghar* would be a metaphor for the body. Taken in this way, the phrase could be loosely translated "the other half of every man." Lālan then would be saying that the Sādā Sohāgīs symbolizing Prakṛti are the other half of every male. This would refer to the Tantric and yogic belief that the human body is hermaphroditic, containing both Puruṣa and Prakṛti, male and female aspects.

Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sãi

Sufi lineages trace back to Muhammad. Lālan-panthī fakirs also produce genealogies that go back to the Prophet in an attempt to give their tradition legitimacy (see the *sijranāmā* in Dās and Biśvās 1986, 96). However, according to Muslim Bāuls, it is actually Fatima who is the first link in the chain of descent, for she is Prakṛti or Ādyā Śakti, from whom even the Prophet came into being. (See the annotations to "Āche din duniyāy" [LG no. 90; **9**] and "Bhajo re jene śune" [LG no. 246; **90**].) Thus, the answer to the question in verse 1, "Where did this lineage come from?" is Fatima. When Lālan says in verse 2 that "the Sādā Sohāgīs are everyone's original clan," he is also referring to the belief that Prakṛti is the origin of all creation.

Unlike the Sādā Sohāgīs and Sakhībhāvaks, Lālan-panthī fakirs do not cross-dress and do not conceive of God as husband or as the sole male in the universe. For a Bāul *sādhak* "becoming a woman" is a mental exercise to gain control over the senses and is also a goal of *sādhanā*—namely, to absorb his partner's femaleness. This is believed to physically transform the *sādhak*, turning him into an androgyne, thereby reintegrating him into a primordial whole that was split when the world was created.

According to Bāul belief, if the *sādhak* considers himself a woman when he has sex with his female partner, he will be able to prevent ejaculation, have intercourse lasting several hours, and make his semen flow up to his head. This *ārop sādhanā* (*sādhanā* of ascription) is alluded to in many Bāul songs and sayings as well as Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts.[4] As the Bāul poet Svarūp puts it:

My mind, play the role of a woman.
Adopt the nature of a woman
and then worship.
The love in your body[5] *will ascend.*[6]

4. See BBOBG pp. 363–364. See the discussion of "becoming a woman" as treated in Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts in Dimock (1966, 157–164).

5. *rati*: "love," "sexual intercourse." As in this song, *rati* is often a code word for semen.

6.
Āmār man sājo prakṛti
prakṛtir svabhāb dharo, sādhan karo, ūrdhva habe deher rati | (quoted in BBOBG, 363)

Here is a *guru-bāṇī* ("guru's saying") recited to me by Khodā Bakṣ:

Become a woman
to unite with a woman.
Day by day the waves of love will swell.
But if you don't become a woman
and have intercourse with one
know for certain you'll both go to hell.[7]

"Going to hell" means ejaculation. Bāuls hold that women too ejaculate when they have an orgasm. Not only the *sādhak* but also the *sādhikā* is enjoined to prevent ejaculation. Related to the practice of "becoming a woman" is the notion that both male and female should give up their respective natures. "As long as you keep your male and female natures, can you be called connoisseurs of love?" Lālan asks in "Jāni man premer premī kāje pele" [LG no. 173].[8] By transcending distinctions based on gender and not thinking of each other in terms of male and female, the *sādhak* and *sādhikā* are able to remain calm during sex and maintain control over their emissions. In this connection, Karim Shah quoted the Kartābhajā[9] saying, "The woman should be a *hijṛā*, the man a eunuch, and then they will be Kartābhajās."[10] The *hijṛā* (in this context, a woman without a vagina) and eunuch symbolize the absence of desire for the satisfaction of one's own senses.[11]

7.
prakṛti haiyā kare prakṛti saṅga
dine dine bāṛe tār premer taraṅga
prakṛti nā haye ẏe kare prakṛti sambhāṣan
niścay jānibe dohe narake gaman |

8. *Puruṣ prakṛti svabhāb thākte ki prem rasik bale.* See also the following lines in Lālan's song "O gaurer prem rākhite sāmānye ki pārbi torā" [LG no. 322]: *puruṣ nārīr bhāb thākite pārbi nā se bhāb rākhite* ("As long as you think in terms of man and woman, you won't be able to hold onto your love").

9. The Kartābhajās are one of a number of groups including Balarāmīs, Sāhebdhanīs, and of course, Lālan-panthīs that appeared in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in undivided Nadīyā and that are syncretistic, reject caste, draw their followers from both lower-class Hindus and Muslims, and have a *sādhanā* centered on the human body. According to legend the Kartābhajā *sampradāy* was founded by Āulcand (ca. 1686–1779).

10. *meye habe hijṛā, puru sīṛi habe khojā, tabe habe kartā bhajā*. The last clause could also be translated "then they will worship the Creator."

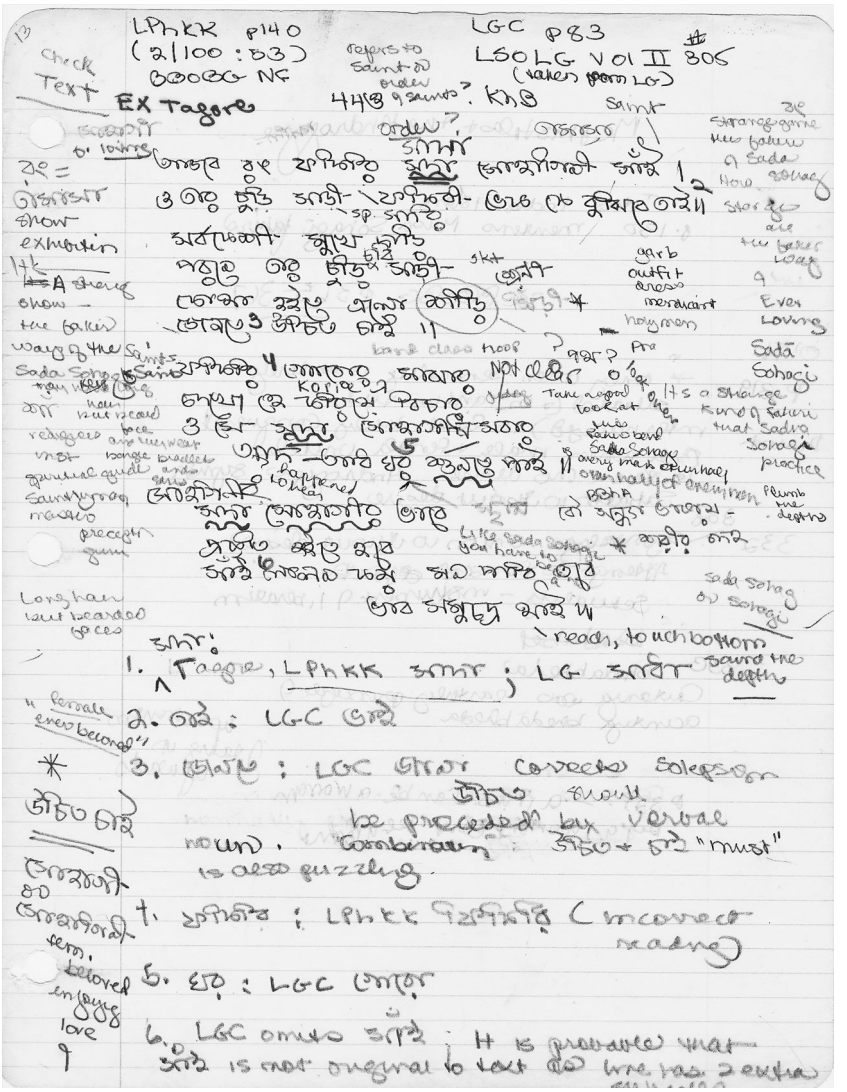
11. See the discussion of this saying in Cakrabartī ([1992], 82) by a Kartābhajā who gives the same interpretation as Karim Shah. See Openshaw (2002, 182) for a different interpretation.

Through devotion to his female partner and through sexual practices, a *sādhak* is believed to acquire certain physical characteristics of a woman. Among the practices that contribute to the feminization of the *sādhak*'s body are seminal retention and sex in the inverse position (*biparīt rati* < Skt. *viparīta rati*) with the female on top, especially during the *sādhikā*'s menstrual period. At this time, as Openshaw (2002, 220) explains, the woman loses fluids like a man, allowing her partner to take them into his body as she normally would do. By engaging in *biparīt rati*, the *sādhak* is able to absorb his partner's fluids that flow down onto him and to draw into his body through his penis a few drops of her blood. As a result of these practices, the *sādhak*'s semen is said to become clear like a woman's secretions, and he is said to develop a menstrual period, albeit one that is subtle, with little discharge, and that is less frequent than a woman's. The *sādhak*, however, can detect it by examining his *ḍor kaupin*, the loincloth symbolizing his femaleness and his ability to control ejaculation, that a fakir who has undergone the *khilāphat* (< Ar. *khilāfa*, "succession") ceremony habitually wears over his genitals. Secondary sex characteristics too are thought to become more womanlike. Openshaw reports (2002, 230) that one *sādhak* "boasted of his increasingly female body (specifically his swollen belly, somewhat pendulous breasts and decrease in body hair)."

In her study of Hindu myths concerning the androgyne, O'Flaherty (1980, 331) finds that Indian androgynes are primarily male and concludes that this "reflects a feeling of imbalance, a male's need to correct his own incompleteness by assimilating to himself the form of the female." The Bāul androgyne fits this general pattern. The *sādhanā* is done primarily for the sake of the man. The female is viewed as complete and self-perfected (*svayam-siddhā*), and the male can attain perfection only with her help through absorbing her femaleness and catching the *adhar mānuṣ* that only she possesses.[12]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; LG no. 443; LPhKK, 140; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 305 (taken from LG).]

12. For a detailed discussion of the completeness of the female, see Openshaw (2002, 223–224).



Salomon's MS for "Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sāi."

14

আমার আপন খবর আপনার হয় না

Āmār āpan khabar āpnār hay nā

আমার আপন খবর আপনার হয় না ।
(একবার) আপনারে চিনলে পরে
যায় অচেনারে চেনা ॥

সঁই নিকট থেকে দূরে দেখায়
যেমন কেশের আড়ে পাহাড় লুকায়
দেখ না
আমি ঢাকা দি হাতড়ে ফিরি
আমার ে লের ে র ে যায় না ॥

আ পে ক হরি
মনে নি হলে মিলবে তারি ঠিকানা
বেদ বেদা পড়বি যত
বেড়বে তত লখনা ॥

আমি আমি কে বলে মন
যে জানে তার চরণ শরণ লও না
সঁই লালন বলে মনের ে রে
হলাম ে খ থাকিতে কানা ॥

āmār āpan khabar āpnār hay nā ।
(ekbār) āpnāre cinle pare
ẏāy acenāre cenā ॥

sãi nikaṭ theke dūre dekhāy
ẏæman keśer āṛe pāhāṛ lukāy
dekh nā
āmi ḍhākā dilli hātaṛe phiri
āmār koler ghor to ẏāy nā ॥

ātmarūpe kartā hari
mane niṣṭhā hale milbe tāri ṭhikānā
bed bedānta paṛbi ẏata
beṛbe tata lakhnā ॥

āmi āmi ke bale man
ẏe jāne tār caraṇ śaraṇ lao nā
sãi lālan bale maner ghore
halām cokh thākite kānā ॥

I'm out of touch with myself.
If only I could know myself,
I would know the one who is unknown.

Sā̃i is near, yet seems far away.
Don't you see, he's hidden from us
like a mountain by the strands of hair
in front of our eyes.
I grope my way around Dhaka and Delhi.
The darkness before me never lifts.

Lord Hari has the form of the self.
If you have faith, you'll find out his address.
But the more Veda and Vedānta you read,
the more false impressions you'll get.[1]

The mind asks, "Who am I?"
Take refuge at the feet
of someone who knows.
Lālan is under the spell of scriptures.[2]
He's blind despite his eyes.[3]

1. "False impressions" is a free translation of *lakhnā* (Skt. *lakṣaṇā*), which generally means "the figurative sense of a word." Lālan, however, gives it the pejorative connotation of a definition that obscures the *abhidhā*, the primary meaning of a word. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 1053) correctly attributes Lālan's unusual use of the term to the influence of Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj's biography of Caitanya, the Caitanya Caritāmṛta (CC). In *ādi līlā*, chapter 7, a group of *sannyāsī*s (renunciates) asks Caitanya why he doesn't listen to the Brahmāsūtras (referred to as Vedāntasūtra and Vedasūtra). Caitanya replies that although the Brahmasūtras are the word of God, the commentator Śaṅkarācārya gives them a secondary or figurative interpretation that is misleading because it covers up their true sense: "The Vedasūtras are concerned with the primary meaning of Kṛṣṇa, but (Śaṅkara) neglected the primary meaning and explained only the figurative sense (*lakṣaṇā*)." Just as the CC says that Śaṅkara's commentary on the Vedāntic Brahmasūtras explains the "figurative sense" (*lakṣaṇā*) of the work and that this has the effect of hiding the true nature of Kṛṣṇa, so Lālan says that one gets the "figurative sense" (*lakhnā*) from reading Veda and Vedānta and that this results in misconceptions that lead one away from Hari (i.e., Kṛṣṇa) rather than toward him. In Lālan's view only a guru is capable of revealing the truth, not a text.

2. *phakir lālan bhule beder gole*. [The Bengali version chosen for this publication has the alternate signature line *sā̃i lālan bale maner ghore halām cokh thakite kānā*, which could be translated as "Lālan Sā̃i says I am blind despite my eyes in the darkness of my mind." See the Emendations below.]

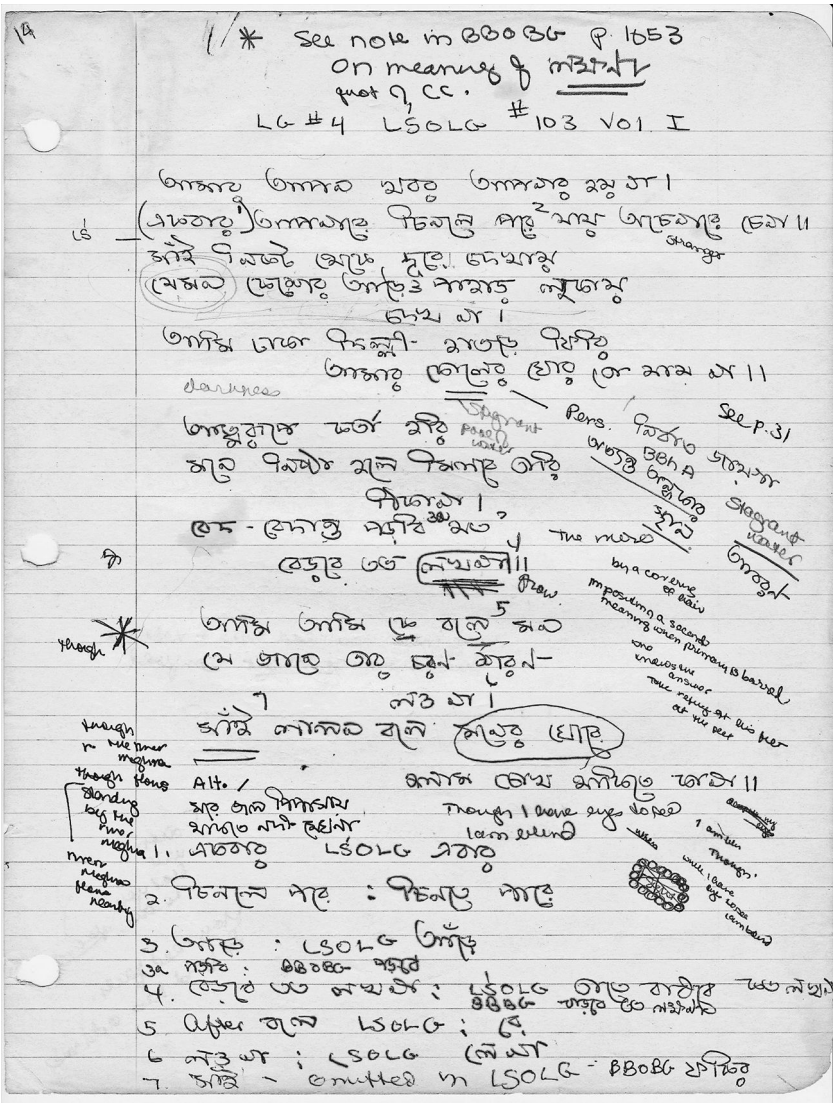
3. Emendations to the exemplar: The first half of the signature line differs in each of the versions cited. C, on which the translation is based, has: *phakir lālan bhule beder gole hale*

Āmār āpan khabar āpnār hay nā

This song, one of Lālan's most popular, is about the futility of searching outside for Sāi, who is within man, and of learning about him (or oneself) secondhand through reading scriptures, such as the Vedas and Vedāntic texts (the Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtras), when it is possible to "catch" him—that is, to experience him firsthand. It is reminiscent of Upaniṣadic passages, for example Muṇḍaka 3.1.7c–d (translated in Hume 1931, 375): "It is farther than the far, yet here near at hand. Set down in the secret place (of the heart), even here among those who behold (It)." (See annotations to "O tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man" [LG no. 398; **37**].)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; C; LG no. 4; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 103; BBOBG, 1053, no. 82.]

cakṣu thakte kānā; LG has: *sāi lālan bale maner ghore halām*; and BBOBG has: *phakir lālan bale maner ghore halām*. The last verse in an oral version sung by Abdul Karim Shah is entirely different: (*jeman*) *amṛta sāgare sudhā, pān karile ār kṣudhā tṛṣṇā ray nā / phakir lālan malo jal pipāsāy, kāche thākte nadi meghnā* // "There's nectar in the sea of immortality. If you drink it, you never feel hungry or thirsty again. Fakir Lālan is dying of thirst, though the River Meghna is a stone's throw away." Another song by Lālan [LS vol. 2, 194] opens with a line which contains a similar metaphor: "Though she was by the riverside, the female rainbird died of thirst" (*samudrer kināre theke jal bine cātakī malo*), raising the possibility that the verse in Karim Shah's oral variant traces back to Lālan himself, who may have sung the song both ways. [Salomon's typescript has the following handwritten note:] I remember seeing another song by Lālan with the same oral *bhaṇitā*; it may have come from another song.



Salomon's MS for "Āmār āpan khabar āpnār hay nā."

15

আমার ঘরের চাবি পরের হাতে

Āmār gharer cābi parer hāte

আমার ঘরের চাবি পরের হাতে
কেমনে খুলিয়ে সে ধন
দেখবে চ তে ॥

আপন ঘরে বোঝাই সোনা
পরে করে লেনাদেনা
আমি হলাম জন্মকানা
না পাই দেখিতে ॥

রাজি হলে দারোয়ানি
দ্বার ছাড়িয়ে দিবেন তিনি
তারে বা কৈ চিনি শুনি
বেড়াই কুপথে ॥

এই মানুষে আছে রে মন
যারে বলে মানুষ রতন
লালন বলে পেয়ে সে ধন
পারলাম না গো চিনিতে ॥

āmār gharer cābi parer hāte
kæmane khuliye se dhan
dekhbo cakṣete ॥

āpan ghare bojhāi sonā
pare kare lenadenā
āmi halām janmakānā
nā pāi dekhite ॥

rāji hale dāraoyāni
dvār chāṛiye diben tini
tāre bā kai cini śuni
beṛāi kupathe ॥

ei mānuṣe āche re man
ẏāre bale mānuṣ ratan
lālan bale peye se dhan
pārlām nā go cinite ॥

A stranger[1]
has the keys to my house.
So how can I unlock the door
and see with my own eyes
the treasures inside?

It's my house that's full of gold.
But the stranger[2] *makes all the deals.*[3]
I was born blind and can't see
what's going on.[4]

Perhaps the doorkeeper will agree
to let me in.[5]
But tell me, how will I find[6] *this doorkeeper?*
I travel the wrong road.

O mind, the one they call the man-jewel[7]
is in this person.[8]
Lālan says, That treasure is mine,
but I don't know it.[9]

1. *par*: alt. trans.: "Someone; another."

2. Alt. trans.: "someone else."

3. *pare kare lenādenā*: lit. "Another does the trading." Alt. trans.: "The stranger wheels and deals."

4. Verse 1: for LG *karmakānā* read *janmakānā*.

5. *rājī* [or *rāji*] *hale dāraoyāni dvār chāṛiye diben tini*: lit. "If the doorkeeper agrees, he or she will let me in." In order to maintain the ambiguity of the Bengali, which does not mark pronouns for gender, I have avoided using pronouns in the translation of this song.

6. Lit. "recognize" (*cini*). Alt. trans.: "How will I know this doorkeeper?" The verb *cenā* also occurs in the last verse. As the translation stands I use a different English verb in each case.

7. Lit. "person-jewel."

8. *ei mānuṣe āche re man ẏāre bale mānuṣ ratan*. Alt. trans.: "The one they call the man-jewel is in me."

9. See note 6. More literally: "I wasn't able to recognize it."

Āmār gharer cābi parer hāte

I

In this identity riddle the mysterious figure is described as *par* "stranger," "other." In his songs "Āmār e gharkhānāy ke birāj kare," (LG no. 77) and "Āpnār āpni re man nā jāno ṭhikānā" [LG no. 6], Lālan explicitly equates *par* with *parameśvar,* "the Supreme" within the body, punning on the syllable *par* contained in both words. In the song under discussion, however, *par* has a different referent. At least two other songs by Lālan in addition to this one have the same image of a "stranger" who is in possession of the "keys" to a "house" that is locked up and inaccessible to its owner. The first song opens: "How can I find the treasure when a stranger holds the keys to the house?" (*khũje dhan pāi ki mate parer hāte gharer kalakāṭhi*) [LG no. 148]. Lālan says at the outset of the second song on this motif [LG no. 146]: "Though I live in the house, I know nothing about it. The rooms have been locked up for four ages and a stranger has the keys" (*ghare bās kari se gharer khabar nāi / cār ẏuger ghar cābi ãṭā choṛān parer ṭhāi*). The "keys" provide a clue to the stranger's identity in these songs, for in Bengal the woman of the house is in charge of the keys, wearing them tied to the edge of her sari. The "stranger" holding the "keys" is Śakti, the female partner whose help is essential to the male adept's success in *sādhanā*. "Guṇe pare sārli daphā" [**54**] is another example of a song by Lālan in which *par* refers to the female, although in this case no keys are mentioned. See the annotations to this song. Openshaw notes (2002, 207) that *paratattva*, "the doctrine of the other," refers to knowledge of the female body.

The "gatekeeper" (*dāraoyāni* [in some versions spelled *dāraoyāni*, with a short *i*]) and the "stranger" with the "keys" are one and the same person. Lālan ingeniously hints at the gender of the gatekeeper by adding an *ī* to *dāraoyān*, inventing a feminine form. (On Lālan's invention of feminine forms of words, see Jhā [2005], 132, no. 406.) This interpretation is supported by evidence from other songs by Lālan. For example, "Ẏe rūpe sãi āche mānuṣe" (LG no. 222 [**116**]) has the following line: "A light shines in a nonexistent place. This story can't be told. Lālan doorkeeper there—she's the mother of the world." In "Rūper bihāre" [LG no. 455] Lālan combines the images of the doorkeeper and the keyholder into one: "At the door to your (true) form (*rūp*) is Mr. Śrīrūp, the venerable form (*śrīrūp mahāśay*), who holds the key to the lock on the house." Whereas in "A Stranger Has the Keys to My House" Lālan gives a clue to the gender of the "gatekeeper"

by adding a feminine affix to *dāraoyān*, in this case he composes a gender bender, actually disguising the gender of the "venerable form" by using *mahāśay* (lit. "high-minded"), an honorific term affixed to a man's name, equivalent to "Mr.," rather than the feminine form *mahāśayā*, "Madam." This leads both S. B. Das Gupta (1969, 184–185) and U. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 363) to wrongly interpret *śrīrūp mahāśay* as referring to the "human form" or the "physical body" in general. *Śrīrūp*, however, is a code word for the Śakti. (See the discussion of this term in the annotations to "Āche dīn duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā," LG no. 90 [**9**]).

In the songs containing the image of the keys quoted thus far, it is the *sādhikā* who possesses them. The person holding the keys and Lālan are clearly different individuals. In his song "Hāoyār ghare dam āṭkā paṛeche" [LG no. 218] Lālan explicitly states: *ghare kalkāṭhi ẏār hāte bāhire se janā*, "The person with the keys is outside the house" (i.e., the body). Yet in another song by Lālan ("Ẏe jan hāoyār ghare phā̃d peteche," LG no. 156) the possessor of the keys, while still the Śakti, is identified with the internal *kuṇḍalinīśakti*, the female energy in the form of a serpent. In the line "The keys are at the door of Brahmā," the "door of Brahmā" (*brahmadvār*) is the opening to the *suṣumnā nāṛī* in the *mūlādhār,* which is blocked by the sleeping *kuṇḍalinīśakti*. Lālan no doubt is alluding to her when he says that the keys are at this door, because it is only by awakening her that access to the crucial *ṣusumnā* can be gained and *ulṭa sādhanā* effected.

The referent of *ei mānuṣe* (lit. "in this person") in the last verse is not clear. It may be interpreted as referring to the woman, to human beings in general, or to Lālan in specific. The *mānuṣ-ratan* ("man-jewel") is the divine element within the human body and could signify either the *sahaj* or *adhar mānuṣ* possessed by the woman or the *sā̃i* in semen. (The most likely interpretation, however, is that *ei mānuṣe* refers to Lālan and *mānuṣ-ratan* to the *sā̃i* within him.) In "O tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man" (LG no. 398 [**37**]) Lālan seems to equate the *mānuṣ-ratan* with semen. At least he says that it is not possible to know the *mānuṣ-ratan* if the adept cannot control his semen (see the annotations to this song). Moreover, Lālan says in the last line of the song under discussion that he is in possession of the "treasure" which presumably is the *mānuṣ-ratan*. Similarly, in his song "Ghare bās kari se gharer khabar nāi" [LG no. 146] he says that though the jewel is in his own house, he is poor and asks where he can find the person who will place it in his hand. According to Bāul belief, the *sā̃i* exists in the male body in an unknowable passive form. Only through sexual *sādhanā*

with his female partner can the male adept realize it in its manifest knowable form. As Lālan puts it in another song ("Sarobare āsan kare rayeche ānandamay" [Jhā 2005, 132]): *parer mukhe mukh lāgāle tabe mānuṣ kathā kay*, "When he puts his mouth on the mouth of the stranger, only then does the person (*mānuṣ*) speak."[10] (On "mouth" as a term referring to the sexual organs, see the annotations to "Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye," LG no. 42 [72].)

II

Abu Rushd in his translation of the song under discussion (1991, 76, no. 35) identifies the "keyholder" and the *mānuṣ-ratan*: "Oh mind this keyholder is the jewel of a man." That they are two different figures and that the former is the means for the male adept to experience the latter is, however, clear from this line of Lālan's song (LG no. 146) "Ghare bās kari se gharer khabar nāi": *dey se ratan hāte dhare tāre kothāy pāi*, "Where can I find the one who will take me by the hand and give me the jewel?"

Further on in the song Lālan sings: "The stranger does business (*kārbār*) from my house. Yet I never get to see the stranger's house." Lālan calls the female or Śakti "*par*" perhaps because a wife is referred to by her husband's family as *parer meye*, "another's daughter." (See Lālan's song "Ke āj kopīn parālo tore," LG no. 320 [46], which uses this phrase, and also Openshaw 2002, 161–162.) The *sādhak* must draw her as well as breath, semen, and menstrual blood through his "house" up to the head in order to effect *ulṭa sādhāna*.

The solution to the song under discussion seems to be the Śakti or female partner, and all the clues neatly point in this direction. However, lest one get complacent and think that the combination of *par* with the keys always indicates the same solution, it must be pointed out that there is another possible identity and a third explanation of the meaning of *par* in Lālan's songs. In the song quoted above ("Khuje dhan pāi ki mate" [LG no. 148]), *par* may have two simultaneous identities. Thus far, *par* has been taken to be singular. However, since Bengali does not distinguish between singular and plural, the interpretation must be placed in the context of the song. For example, the *par* does not always equal the female.

10. [Jhā's version gives a variant line "*mukh diye se parer mukhe marmer kathā kay*," which could be translated as "When he puts his mouth on the mouth of the stranger, only then does does (the person) speak of the meaning." It is unclear whether Salomon obtained her variant from another published source or directly from fakirs.]

In Lālan's song "Khuje dhan pāi ki mate" and some others, two solutions are possible.

The "house" in Bāul songs usually signifies the body. Here, however, it seems to allude to the "room inside a room" (*gharer mājhe gharkhānā*, which can also be translated "house inside a house") that Lālan describes in "Kæna kācher mānuṣ . . ." (LG no. 5 [**49**]) and is a person's *svarūp*, "true inner self." As Lālan says in his song "Hāoyār ghare dam āṭkā paṛeche" (LG no. 218): "The person holding the keys to the house is outside."

The symbolic significance of the first verse is that the male adept can only unlock the treasures within his body—that is, succeed in *sādhanā*—with the help of his female partner.

Exemplar:[11] M 105; oral version KhB

āmār gharer cābi parer hāte |
kemane khulie se dhan[12] dekhbo cakṣete ||

āpan ghare bojhāi sonā, pare kare lenādenā |
āmi holām janmakānā, nā pāi dekhite ||

rājī hale daraoyānī, dvār chāṛiye diben tini |
tāre ba kai cini śuni, beṛāi kupathe ||

ei mānuṣe āche re man, yāre bale mānuṣ ratan |
lālan bale peye se dhan pārlām nā go cinite[13] ||

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; M1; LS vol. 2, no. 539; BBOBG no. 78; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 95; LG no. 147.]

11. [This exemplar, found typed among Salomon's manuscripts, differs slightly from the handwritten manuscript for this song. Based upon her preference for *janmakhāna* instead of *karmakhāna* in the first verse (see note 4 to her translation), it appears that M was the preferred source. It also indicates that, whenever possible, she preferred to utilize variants based on manuscripts and trusted oral sources (i.e., KhB, LB, and Karim Shah) to formulate her translations. See the essay "On Editing the Songs of Lālan Fakir Using both Oral and Written Sources" at the beginning of this publication.]

12. Too faint to see in M.

13. Too faint to see in M.

16

আমি একদিনও না দেখিলাম তারে

Āmi ekdin-o nā dekhilām tāre

আমি একদিনও না দেখিলাম তারে
বাড়ির কাছে আরশিনগর
সেথায় এক পড়শি বসত করে ॥

সেই ম বেড়ে অগাধ পানি
নাই কিনারা নাই তরণি পারে
বা করি দেখব তারে
কেমনে সে গঁ য় যাই রে ॥

বলব কি সেই পড়শির কথা
তার হ পদ মাথা নাই রে
ও সে ণেক থাকে শূ র উপর
আবার ণেক ভাসে নীরে ॥

পড়শি যদি আমায় ছুঁতো
যম যাতনা সকল যে দূরে
সে আর লালন একখানে রয়
ল ে জন ফঁ ক রে ॥

āmi ekdin-o nā dekhilām tāre
bāṛir kāche āraśinagar
sethāy ek paṛaśi basat kare ॥

sei grām beṛe agādh pāni
nāi kinārā nāi taraṇi pāre
bañchā kari dekhbo tāre
kæmane se gẽy ẏāi re ॥

balbo ki sei paṛaśir kathā
tār hasta pada skandha māthā nāi re
o se kṣaṇek thāke śūnyer upar
ābār kṣaṇek bhāse nīre ॥

paṛaśi ẏadi āmāy chūto
ẏam ẏātanā sakal ẏeto dūre
se ār lālan ek-khāne ray
lakṣa ẏojan phãk re ॥

I have not seen him even once—
my neighbor
who lives in a city of mirrors
near my house.

His village is surrounded
by deep boundless waters,
and I have neither boat nor shore
to cross over.
I long to see him,
but how can I reach
his village?

What can I say
about my neighbor?
He has no hands, no feet,
no shoulders, no head.
Sometimes he floats high up in the sky,
sometimes floats in the water.

If my neighbor just touched me,
I wouldn't feel the pain of death.
He and Lālan are in the same place,
yet five hundred thousand miles apart.

[Salomon's manuscript and annotations for this popular song by Lālan are both missing. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 18; LS vol. 2, no. 54.]

17

আমি কি ে ষ দিব কারে রে

Āmi ki doṣ dibo kāre re

আমি কি ে ষ দিব কারে রে ।
আমার মনের ে ষে আমি পলাম ফেরে রে ॥

সুবু সু ভাব গে
কাকের ভাব মনের হ
জিয়ে অমৃত ফল
মাকাল ফলে মন মজিল রে ॥

যে আশায় এই ভবে আসা
তাতে হলো ভ দশা
ঘ ল রে কি দু শা
(আমার) ঠাকুর গড়তে বানর
হলো রে ॥

ব চিনলি নে মন
অসময়ে কি করবি তখন
বিনয় করে বলছে লালন
(আমার) য র ঘৃত কু য় খে রে ॥

āmi ki doṣ dibo kāre re ।
āmār maner doṣe āmi palām
phere re ॥

subuddhi susvabhāb gelo
kāker svabhāb maner halo
tyājiye amṛta phala
mākāl phale man majilo re ॥

ẏe āśāy ei bhabe āsā
tāte halo bhagnadaśā
ghaṭilo re ki durdaśā
(āmār) ṭhākur gaṛte bānar
halo re ॥

gurubastu cinli ne man
asamaye ki karbi takhan
binay kare balche lālan
(āmār) ẏajñer ghṛta kuttāy
khelo re ॥

Who else can I blame?
My[1] *mind,*[2] *it's all your fault*
I'm[3] *in this predicament.*[4]

Your good sense is gone
and your good intentions too.[5]
You act like a crow,
passing up mangoes
for bitter apples.

All the hopes
I came here with
are shattered.[6] *What a mess!*
I tried to make an image of god,
but made a monkey[7] *instead.*

You didn't recognize
the essence of the guru.
What will you do
when the going gets rough?
Lālan says, with humility,[8]
A dog ate up the butter
for the sacrifice!

1. [Salomon's manuscript has a footnote giving the emendation "*āmār:* LG *pāthāntar*; BBOBG, LPhKK, LSOLG *āpan*."]

2. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote "*maner*: BBOBG *svabhāber*."]

3. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote "*āmi*: omitted from BBOBG, LPhKK, LSOLG."]

4. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote "*palām*: LSOLG *pelām*."]

5. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote: "*maner*: LSOLG *mane*."]

6. LG: The second line of verse 2 reads *tāte halo bhagna daśā* instead of *bhāñgilo re āśār bāsā* given in T. [A similar reading to LG (*tāte halo bhagnadaśā*) was preferred for the Bengali version of this publication, which could be translated as "From this it is in a broken state." Salomon's translation of the line however follows the version in T.]

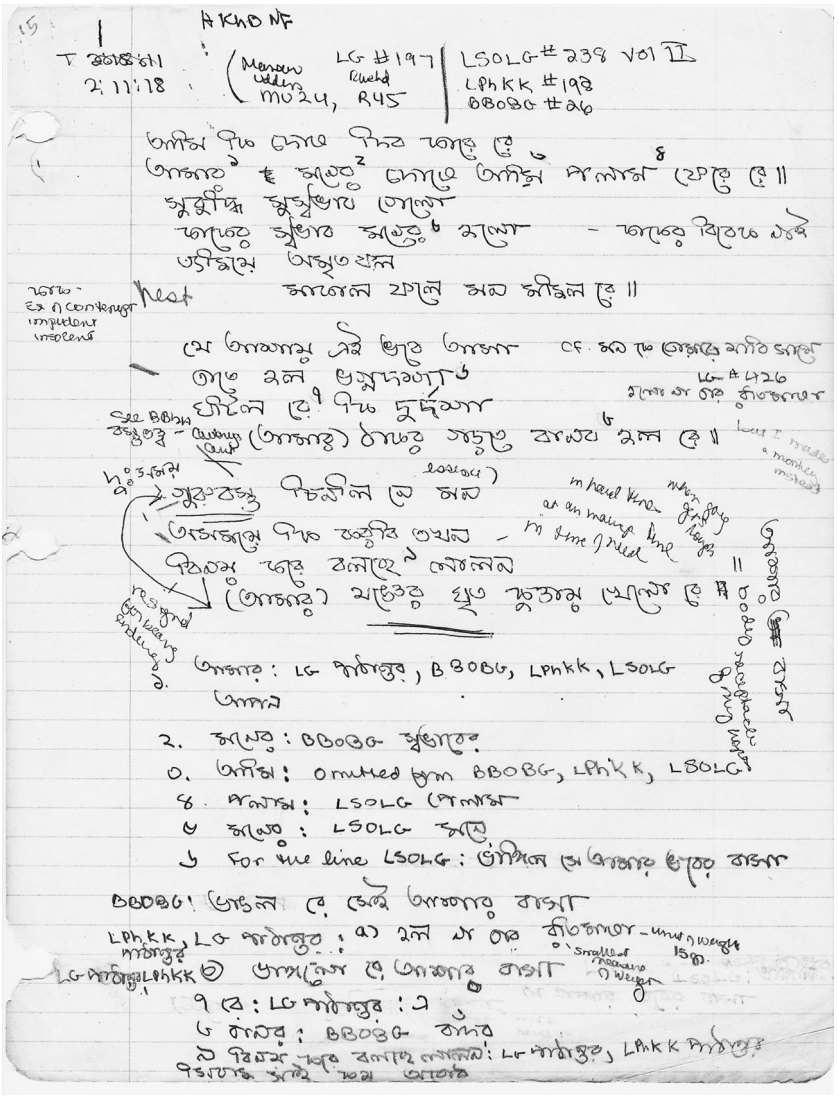
7. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote: "*bānar*: BBOBG *bā̃dar*."]

8. [Salomon's manuscript has footnote: "*binay kare balche lālan*: LG *pāthāntar*."]

Āmi ki doṣ dibo kāre re

In this song Lālan compares his mind to a crow, a bird with no sense of discrimination. *Amṛta phal(a)*, translated "mangoes," puns on its literal meaning of "fruit of immortality." The implication is that just as a crow "passes up mangoes for bitter apples," a fruit that is bright red and looks delicious from the outside but is really bitter and offensive smelling inside, so man passes up immortality for the material world. The "essence of the guru" and the "butter for the sacrifice" signify semen. (On butter as a metaphor for semen, see O'Flaherty 1980, 22.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V²:11, no. 18; LPhKK 198; LG no. 197; DKES no. 294.]



Salomon's MS for "Āmi ki doṣ dibo kāre re."

18

আয় গো যাই নবির দীনে

Āy go ẏāi nabir dīne

আয় গো যাই নবির দীনে
নবির ডংকা বাজে সদায়
ম মদিনে ॥

তরিক দি নবি জাহের বাতুনে
যথাযোগ্য লায়েক জেনে
রোজা আর নামাজ এহি কাজ
গুপ্ত পথ মেলে ভক্তির সন্ধানে ॥

অমূল্য দোকান খুলেছেন নবি
যে ধন চাবি সে ধন পাবি
বিনে কড়ির ধন সেধে দেয় এখন
না লইলে আখেরে পস্তাবি মনে ॥

নবির সঙ্গে ছিল ইয়ার চারিজন
নূর নবি চারকে দিলেন চার যাজন
ও সে নবি বিনে পথে গোল হলো
চার মতে
লালন বলে যেন গোলে পড়িস নে ॥

āy go ẏāi nabir dīne
nabir daṃkā bāje sadāy
makkā madine ॥

tarika dicche nabi jāher bātune
ẏathāẏogya lāyek jene
rojā ār nāmāj byakta ehi kāj
gupta path mele bhaktir sandhāne ॥

amūlya dokān khulechen nabi
ẏe dhan cābi se dhan pābi
bine kaṛir dhan sedhe dey ækhan
nā laile ākhere pastābi mane ॥

nabir saṅge chilo iyār cārijan
nūr nabi cārke dilen cār ẏājan
o se nabi bine pathe gol halo
cār mate
lālan bale ẏæna gole paṛis ne ॥

Come on! Let's follow the Prophet's faith.[1]
The drum of his faith is beaten round the clock[2]
in Mecca and Medina.

The Prophet teaches two ways:
one is hidden, the other manifest.
He knows which one suits you best.[3]
Fasting and prayer are public acts.
But through devotion you reach the secret path.

The Prophet opened a priceless store.[4]
You get whatever you ask him for.
He offers you treasures free of charge.
If you refuse, you'll regret it afterward.[5]

Four friends accompanied the Prophet.
The Prophet's light gave them four paths of worship.[6]
But without the Prophet to lead the way,
they went in four different directions.
Lālan says, See that you don't go astray.

1. Alt. trans.: "Let's join the Prophet's faith."

2. Alt. trans.: "All the time."

3. Alt. trans.: "One's manifest, the other's hidden. He knows which way is right for you."

4. *amūlya dokan* is a pun. It means a store where everything is free, as well as a store with precious merchandise.

5. Lit. "He offers you treasures. You don't have to pay. If you refuse them, you'll regret it someday." [Another version of Salomon's manuscripts has "Judgment day" translating *ākhere* [< Ar. *al-ākhira*, "the Hereafter"].]

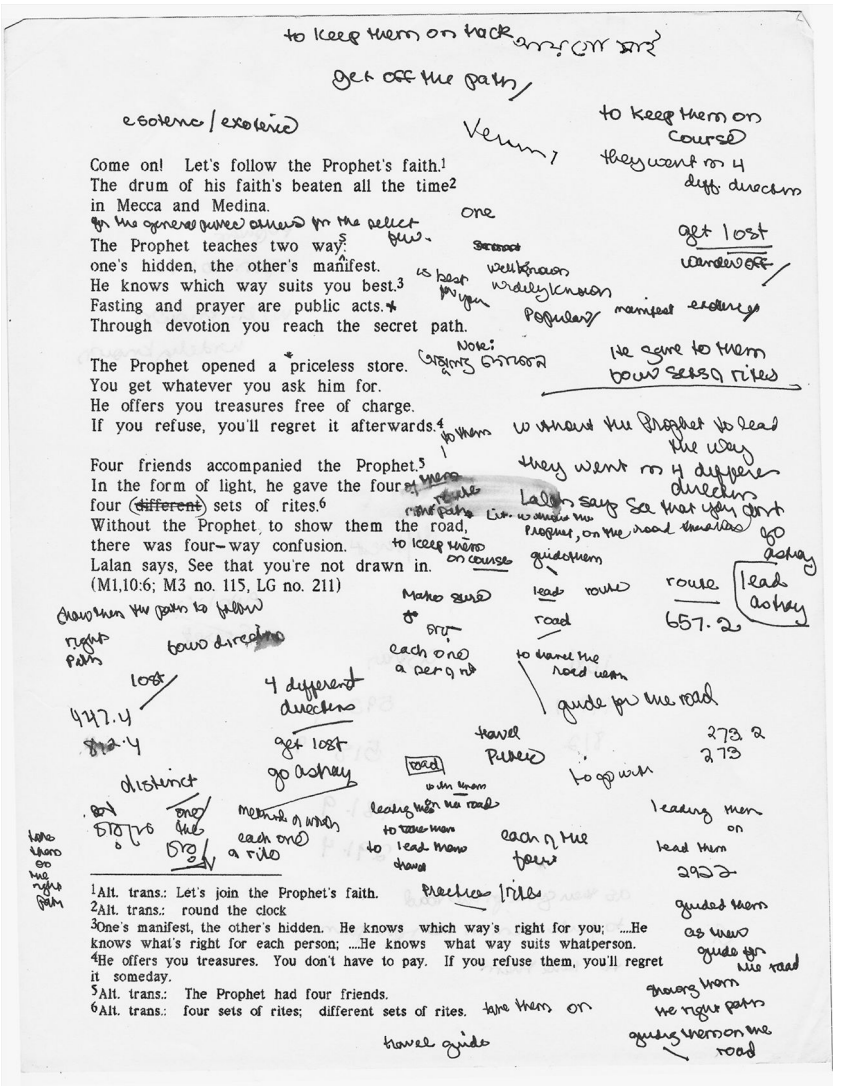
6. *nūr nabi*: alt. trans.: "Muhammad's light"; "His light."

Āy go ẏāi nabir dīne

The "four friends" (*cār iyār*, Per. *chār yār*) are the first four caliphs according to the Sunnis: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. In the opinion of Khodā Bakṣ, the "four paths of worship" (*cār ẏājan*) are the four main Sufi orders of India: Chishtiyya, Qādiriyya, Suhrawardiyya, and Naqshbandiyya. Chishtiyya traces its line of succession back to Ali (Subhan 1960, 175), and Naqshbandiyya to Abu Bakr (Subhan [1960], 162 and 175), but Umar and Uthman are not, to my knowledge, traditionally regarded as the heads of any Sufi orders. In any case, to Lālan, each of the four paths leads in the wrong direction. Lālan-panthī fakirs consider themselves outside of the four main orders (*cār tarīker bāire*).[7]

[Salomon's manuscript is missing for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: M^1, 10:6; M^3 no. 115; LG no. 211.]

7. [See also Salomon's detailed treatment of the "four imams of light" and their esoteric attributions in the annotations to "Āche ādi makkā ei mānabdehe," LG no. 295; 7.]



Come on! Let's follow the Prophet's faith.[1]
The drum of his faith's beaten all the time[2]
in Mecca and Medina.
The Prophet teaches two way:[3]
one's hidden, the other's manifest.
He knows which way suits you best.[3]
Fasting and prayer are public acts.[4]
Through devotion you reach the secret path.

The Prophet opened a priceless store.
You get whatever you ask him for.
He offers you treasures free of charge.
If you refuse, you'll regret it afterwards.[4]

Four friends accompanied the Prophet.[5]
In the form of light, he gave the four
four (~~different~~) sets of rites.[6]
Without the Prophet to show them the road,
there was four-way confusion.
Lalan says, See that you're not drawn in.
(M1,10:6; M3 no. 115, LG no. 211)

[1]Alt. trans.: Let's join the Prophet's faith.
[2]Alt. trans.: round the clock
[3]One's manifest, the other's hidden. He knows which way's right for you; ....He knows what's right for each person; ....He knows what way suits whatperson.
[4]He offers you treasures. You don't have to pay. If you refuse them, you'll regret it someday.
[5]Alt. trans.: The Prophet had four friends.
[6]Alt. trans.: four sets of rites; different sets of rites.

Salomon's MS for "Āy go ẏāi nabir dīne."

19

আয় হারালি আমাবতী না মেনে

Āy hārāli āmābatī nā mene

আয় হারালি আমাবতী না মেনে
ও ে র হয় না সবুর একদিনে ॥

একেতে আমাবতীর বার
মা রসে সে বর
সাধু- বৈ ব তিনে
উদয় সে রসের সনে ॥

তুই ে চাষা ভাই
ও তার ন কিছুই নাই
অমাব য় হাল চালিয়ে
কাল হও কেনে ॥

যে জন রসিক চাষা হয়
ও সে ে গ বুঝে হাল বয়
লালন ফকির পায় না ফিকির
হাপুর পুর ভুই ে নে ॥

āy hārāli āmābatī nā mene
o tor hay nā sabur ek-dine ॥

ekete āmābatīr bār
māṭi rase sarobar
sādhu-guru baiṣṇab tine
uday se raser sane ॥

tui khotnā cāṣā bhāi
o tār jñān kichui nāi
amābasyāy hāl cāliye
kāl hao kene ॥

ẏe jan rasik cāṣā hay
o se ẏog bujhe hāl bay
lālan phakir pāy nā phikir
hāpur hupur bhūi bone ॥

You cut your life short
by not keeping Āmāvatī.[1]
You never have any patience.

When it's Āmāvatī
fields turn into lakes of nectar.[2]
Sadhus, gurus, and Vaiṣṇavas—
all three show up
when the nectar flows.

Brother, you're just a Muslim[3] *farmer.*
You don't have a whit of sense.
Why strike your own deathblow[4]
and push the plow
on the new moon day
and the first day of the moon?

A farmer who's a connoisseur[5]
of nectar[6]
plows when the time is right.[7]
But Lālan hasn't got a clue.[8]
He just goes on sowing seeds
helter-skelter.[9]

1. Āmāvatī is a nonstandard pronunciation of Ambubācī (also pronounced Āmbavatī in Shahidullah [1968a], s.v. *ambuvācī*), a term given to the period of three days in the month of *Āṣāṛh* (June–July) when the sun is in Gemini and in the first quarter of the Ārdrā *nakṣatra* (constellation). At this time, according to Hindu belief, the earth menstruates and farming is forbidden.

2. *ras:* see "Technical Terms" in the introduction. [This list of terms is absent from Salomon's manuscripts but has been reconstructed from her annotations and appended to this publication.]

3. *khotnā* (Ar. *khatna*), lit. "circumcision." Presumably, a Muslim farmer would not observe the Hindu custom of Āmāvatī.

4. *kāl hao:* lit. "become like Yama."

5. Alt. trans.: "who knows the value"

6. *rasik,* in other contexts rendered as "true lover," is translated more literally here as "connoisseur of nectar," since the connection between *ras* and *rasik* is crucial for an understanding of the song. See "Technical Terms" [see note 2 above].

7. "When the time is right" translates *ẏog* as "conjunction."

8. *pāy nā phikir.* Alt. trans.: "doesn't have the knack"; "hasn't got the knack"; "can't get the knack of it."

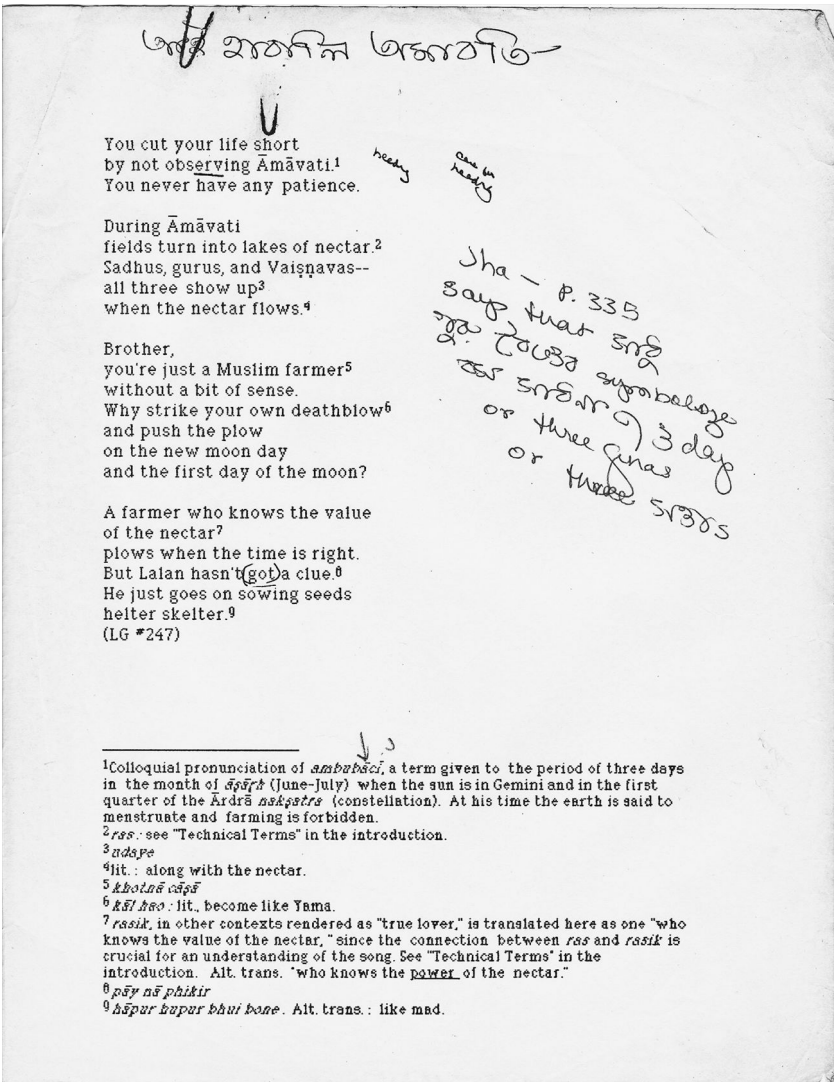
9. *hāpur hupur bhūi bone.*

Āy hārāli āmābatī nā mene

Āmāvatī (*ambuvācī*) is used as a metaphor for a woman's menstrual period, and farming for sexual union. Since longevity is dependent upon preservation of semen, ejaculating is tantamount to cutting one's "life short." "Nectar" (*ras*) is a code word for menstrual blood. "Sadhus, gurus, and Vaiṣṇavas" signify the blood on each of the first three days of a woman's menstrual period (DKES 1995, 115n103), and the "plow" symbolizes the penis.[10] Although during Āmāvatī farming is forbidden on all three days, according to this song, a *sādhak* should abstain from pushing "the plow," i.e., from intercourse, on the first two days of menstruation, "the new moon day" (*amāvasyā*) and "the first day of the moon" (*pratipad*). Those days are considered a time of lust when the danger of the *sādhak* "striking his own deathblow,"—ejaculating—is high. Instead, other rituals such as *maur-maurī karma* (taking menstrual blood and semen orally) are performed. (See the annotations to "Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye" [LG no. 42; **72**].) The "time is right" for plowing at the beginning of the third day, which is termed *dvitīyār prathame,* "the beginning of the second day of the moon," when the creator is believed to appear at the *triveṇī* of the woman's *mūlādhār* and can be "caught" by the *sādhak* who through sexual intercourse attempts to draw it into his penis. As Lālan explains in "Tin diner tin marma jene" ("Know the Three Secrets of the Three Days" [LG no. 73; DKES 1995, no. 232): "The new moon day, the first, the start of the second—that's the time. Poor Lālan asks: Who comes at that juncture?" "Sowing seeds helter skelter" also refers to seminal discharge.

[Salomon's manuscript is missing for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: DKES no. 103, LS vol. 2, no.431; LG no. 247.]

10. [Salomon's manuscript contains the additional note: "Jhā (1995, 335) states that *sādhu guru vaiṣṇav* symbolize *ras sādhanā* of three days, or three *guṇas*, or three *sattās*."]



You cut your life short
by not observing Āmāvati.[1]
You never have any patience.

During Āmāvati
fields turn into lakes of nectar.[2]
Sadhus, gurus, and Vaiṣṇavas--
all three show up[3]
when the nectar flows.[4]

Brother,
you're just a Muslim farmer[5]
without a bit of sense.
Why strike your own deathblow[6]
and push the plow
on the new moon day
and the first day of the moon?

A farmer who knows the value
of the nectar[7]
plows when the time is right.
But Lalan hasn't (got) a clue.[8]
He just goes on sowing seeds
helter skelter.[9]
(LG #247)

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[1] Colloquial pronunciation of *ambubāci*, a term given to the period of three days in the month of *āṣāṛh* (June-July) when the sun is in Gemini and in the first quarter of the Ārdrā *nakṣatra* (constellation). At his time the earth is said to menstruate and farming is forbidden.
[2] *ras*.: see "Technical Terms" in the introduction.
[3] *udaye*
[4] lit.: along with the nectar.
[5] *khotā cāṣā*
[6] *kāl hao*: lit., become like Yama.
[7] *rasik*, in other contexts rendered as "true lover," is translated here as one "who knows the value of the nectar," since the connection between *ras* and *rasik* is crucial for an understanding of the song. See "Technical Terms" in the introduction. Alt. trans. "who knows the power of the nectar."
[8] *pāy nā phikir*
[9] *hāpur hupur bhui bone*. Alt. trans.: like mad.

Salomon's MS for "Āy hārāli āmābatī nā mene."

20

আর কি আসবে সেই কেলে শশী এই গোকুলে

Ār ki āsbe sei kele śaśī ei gokule

আর কি আসবে সেই কেলে শশী এই ে কুলে তারে চেনে না ে কুলবাসী কি ে লে ॥	ār ki āsbe sei kele śaśī ei gokule tāre cene nā gokul-bāsī ki bhole ॥
ননী ে রা বলে ওমনি মারলে তারে নন্দরানী আরও নানা প অপমানি হইলে ॥	nanīcorā bale omani mārle tāre nandarānī āro nānārūp apamāni haile ॥
অনাদির আদি সেই ে বি তারে রাখাল বানায় ন আরও রাখালগণ তার কঁ ধে চড়িলে ॥	anādir ādi sei gobinde tāre rākhāl bānāy nande āro rākhālgaṇ tār kā̃dhe caṛile ॥
হারলে চায় পেলে নেয় না ভবজীবের যায় না তাইতে লালন কয় দৃ হয় না নরলীলে ॥	hārle cāy pele ney nā bhabajīber bhrānti ẏāy nā tāite lālan kay dṛṣṭa hay nā nar-līle ॥

Will the Black Moon[1]
come to Gokul again?
The residents of Gokul
never recognized him.
What delusion![2]

Nanda's wife[3] *called him "butterthief"*
and spanked him for nothing.[4]
He was humiliated
in other ways too.

Nanda turned Govinda,[5]
the Source of the Sourceless[6]
into a cowherd.
The other cowherds
rode on his shoulders.

What you lose, you want.
What you get, you don't take.
The people of this world
keep making the same mistake.
That's why, Lālan says,
they don't notice
his play among men.[7]

1. Alt. trans.: "Dark Moon."

2. Alt. trans.: "How deluded they were!"

3. *nandarānī*.

4. Alt. trans.: "on the spot."

5. Govinda, "the Cowherd," is an epithet of Kṛṣṇa.

6. "The Source of the Sourceless" translates *anādir ādi*. Alt. trans.: "the Beginning of the Beginningless."

7. Published editions: In verse 2 LG has *anādi ādi for anādir ādi*; it also has the tatsama *skandhe*, whereas M1 has the tadbhava *kande* (spelled *konde*), and LSOLG the tadbhava *kāndhe*.

Ār ki āsbe sei keleśaśī

The song alludes to Kṛṣṇa's adventures in the village of Gokul as a young cowherd. None of the villagers, including his foster parents, the cowherd chief Nanda, or his wife Yaśodā, realized Kṛṣṇa's divinity. The name "butterthief" refers to Kṛṣṇa's penchant for stealing butter from the gopīs, for which his foster mother beat him as if he were an ordinary boy (see also Lālan's song "Ār āmāre māris ne mā," [LG no. 349]). Lālan says that the people of this world keep making the same mistake as the villagers of Gokul did; they fail to see that the divine is immanent in man.

The paradoxical epithet "the Source of the Sourceless" expresses the absoluteness of Kṛṣṇa, though *brahman*, the supreme reality, is unborn and therefore has no beginning or source. Kṛṣṇa as the ultimate supreme reality is the beginning or source of *brahman*.

Exemplar: M no. 248

ār ki āsbe sei kele śaśī ei gokule |
tāre cene nā gokulbāsī ki bhole ||

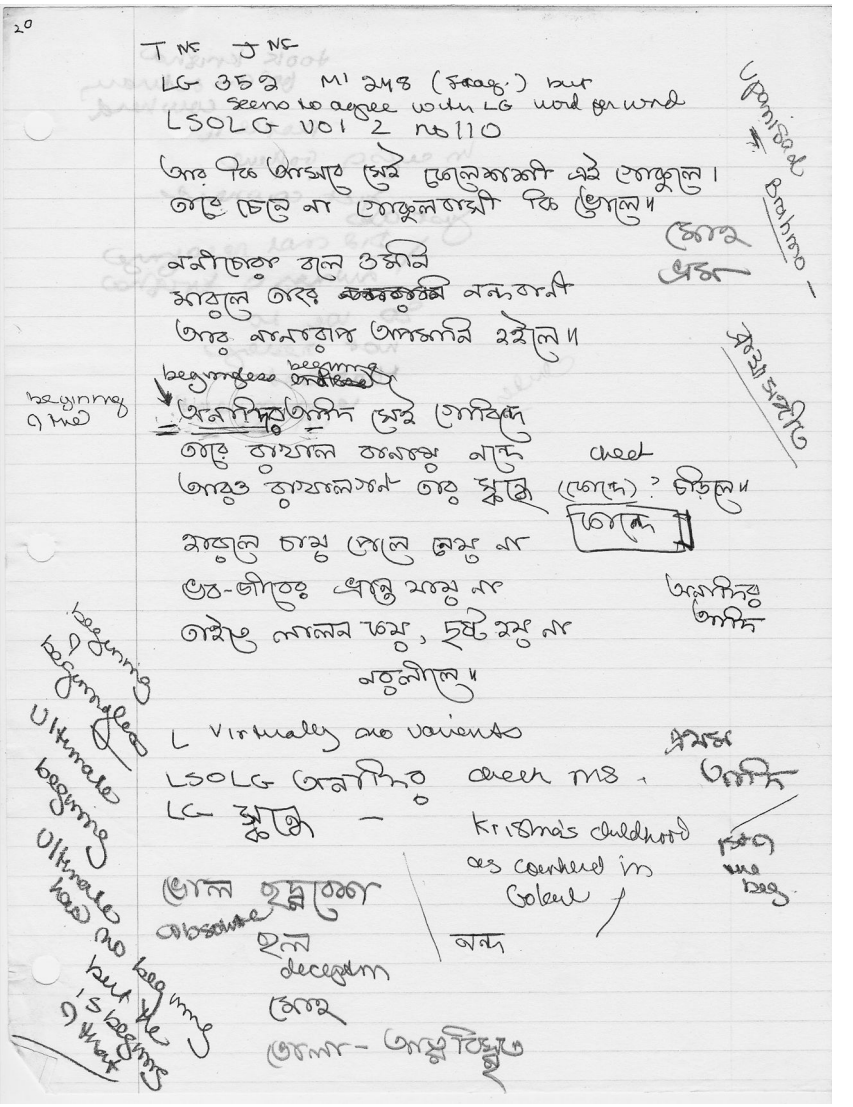
nanīcorā bale omni mārle tare nandarānī |
āro nānārūp apamāni haile ||

anādir ādi sei gobinde tāre rākhāl bānāy nande |
āro rākhālgaṇ tāro konde (i.e., kā̃de) caṛile ||

hārle cāy pele ney[1] nā bhabajīber bhrānto ẏāy nā |
tāite lālan kay diṣṭa hay nā narnile |

[Salomon's manuscript is missing for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 352; M[1] no. 248.]

1. Manuscript has *nae*.



Salomon's MS for "Ār ki āsbe sei kele śaśī ei gokule."

21

আলেফ লাম মিমেতে

Āleph lām mimete

আলেফ লাম মিমেতে ে রান তামাম ে ধ লিখেছে ॥	āleph lām mimete korān tāmām śodh likheche ॥
আলেফ আ জি মিম মানে নবি লামের হয় দুই মানে ও তার এক মানে হয় শরায় চার আর মানে মারফতে ॥	āleph āllāji mim māne nabi lāmer hay dui māne o tār ek māne hay śarāy pracār ār māne māraphate ॥
দরমিয়ানে লাম আছে ডানে বাম আলেফ মিম দুইজনে যেমন গাছ বীজ অ র এই মে ঘুর না পারি বুঝিতে ॥	daramiyāne lām āche ḍāne bām āleph mim duijane ẏæman gāch bīj aṅkur ei mato ghur nā pāri bujhite ॥
ইশারা লিখন ে রানের মানে হিসাব কর দেহেতে তবে পাবি লালন সব অ ষণ ঘুরিস নে ঘুরপথে ॥	iśārā likhan korāner māne hisāb karo dehete tabe pābi lālan sab anveṣaṇ ghuris ne ghur-pathe ॥

In alif, lām, and mīm[1]*—*
the Qur'an has said it all.

Alif is for Allah,
mīm stands for Muhammad,
but lām has two meanings.
Sharī'a teaches one,
and ma'rifa the other.[2]

Lām is in the middle
and on its right and left
are the two letters alif and mīm,
like tree, seed, and sprout.
I can't figure this puzzle out.

The Qur'an only hints at the meaning.
The body holds the clue.
You'll find all you're looking for, Lālan,
but don't take the roundabout route.[3]

1. ["Āleph," "lām," and "mim" (or archaically "mīm") are direct transliterations of their Bengali spellings as used in Lālan Fakir's songs. In Arabic, these are commonly transliterated "alif," "lām," and "mīm," which are the spellings used in Carol Salomon's translation of this song.]

2. *O tār ek māne hay śarāy pracār, ār māne māraphate.* Alt. trans.: "The orthodox preach one, and the mystics the other; Islamic law teaches one, and mysticism the other."

3. Emendations to T [V1a]: In verse 1 and 3 *mane* is a scribal error for *māne*. LG has *nām* for *lām* throughout. In verse 2 for LG *jāni* reads *ḍāne ār bām*.

Āleph lām mimete

Twenty-nine suras of the Qur'an are headed by a letter or group of letters called *muqaṭṭa'āt*, "abbreviated letters." Their significance is obscure, and they have long been a source of mystic speculation, receiving many different interpretations. Among these mysterious letters is the group *āleph, lām*, and *mim*, which appears at the beginning of six suras (2 and 3, and 29–32). In this song Lālan gives the standard equivalents of Allah for *āleph* and Muhammad for *mim* but does not explain what he calls the *sharī'a* and *ma'rifa* (i.e., exoteric and esoteric) interpretations of the *lām*. The letter has commonly been interpreted as representing the angel Gabriel, who, acting as mediator between God and the Prophet, revealed the Qur'an to him (Schimmel 1985, 118). Whether this is the exoteric interpretation Lālan had in mind is not possible to determine.

As for the esoteric interpretation, the only hint Lālan gives is that "the body holds the clue"—the letters have *dehatattva* significance. According to Khodā Bakṣ, the shapes of the [Arabic] letters provide the key to understanding their physical symbolism: *āleph*, a vertical line, signifies the male sex organ; *lām*, curved at the bottom, represents the female sex organ; and *mim*, made up of a head and a tail, is a fetus. The song "Dīner sardar nabiji āmār" (The leader of the faith, my Prophet) by Phulbas clearly describes the *āleph* as a *liṅga*, corroborating Khodā Bakṣ's interpretation at least of this letter (see Salomon 1991, 285). Interpreted in this way, the song expresses the message found in so many of Lālan's songs that by knowing the mystery of creation in the microcosm of the body, one can know the mystery of the creation of the universe.

A comparison of the song under discussion and another song Lālan composed on the same subject, "Āleph, lām, mim āhād nurī" (Alif, lām, mīm—the light of the One),[4] with the strikingly similar group of songs by him about the *acin mānuṣ* "unknown person" points to another possible *dehatattva* interpretation of the *lām* that complements Khodā Bakṣ's explanation. Both groups of songs challenge the audience to figure out the enigma presented in the song; in the former group it is the significance of the *lām*, and in the latter group the identity of the *acin mānuṣ*. Just as the *lām* is positioned between the *āleph* (Allah) and the *mim* (Muhammad), so the "unknown person" is described as ranking "below Khodā" but "above

4. ["Āleph lām mim ahād nurī" also has an oral variant favored by the late Sadhu Humayon Fakir in Narsiṃdī, Bangladesh. In this variant the first line instead reads "āleph he dāl āhād nurī."]

the Prophet" ("Āche din duniyār acin mānuṣ ekjanā," LG no. 90 [9]). Just as the *acin mānuṣ* is identified with the Śakti, it is reasonable to suppose that the *lām* also has that significance. Karim Shah's interpretation of the *lām* in the song on *āleph lām mim* that has not been translated here ["Āleph, lām, mim ahād nurī" mentioned above] supports this hypothesis. The song has an additional enigmatic piece of information about the *lām*: "No one figured out the meaning of the *lām* and so the dot was stolen." The dot (Ar. *nuktā*) is placed above or below a letter to distinguish it from other letters. *Lām*, however, has no *nuktā*. According to Karim Shah, *nuktā* is a pun; it is a synonym of *bindu*, "point" which also means semen. Failure to recognize the true nature of the *lām*, that is, the *acin mānuṣ*, whom Karim Shah says is a part of the Prakṛti (*prakṛtir aṅśa*), results in loss of semen. Only by knowing the woman's cycle and performing *sādhanā* at the right time will the adept be able to control his semen and catch the Uncatchable.

Exemplar: V[1]b, no. 111 (note that I have changed the siglum from T[2] to V[1]a). Also in V[2], no. 284. Oral version: KhB.

Āleph lām mimete
korān tāmām śodh likheche ||

āleph āllāji mim māne nabi, lāmer hay dui māne
o tār ek māne hay śarāy pracār ār māne māraphate ||

darmiyāne lām āche ḍāni bām āleph mim dujane
jaman gāch bic aṅkur[1] ei mato ghur nā pāri bujhite ||

iśārā likhan korānere man[2] hisāb karo dehete
tabe pābi lālan sab anveṣaṇ ghuris ne ghur pāke[3] ||

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V[2]: 59, no. 111; LPhKK, 247; LSOLG vol. 2 no. 1; LG no. 278; DKES no. 284.]

1. V[1]b has *ankuṣ*, which is obviously a scribal error.

2. V[1]b has *korāneri mān*. Emendation based on V[2] and KhB, who give the same reading.

3. V[2] has *pathe*. Either reading makes sense in the context. It is possible that Lālan sang the song both ways.

22

আহাদে আহামদ এসে নবি নাম সে জানালে

Āhāde āhāmad ese nabi nām se jānāle

আহাদে আহামদ এসে
নবি নাম সে জানালে ।
যে তনে করিল সৃ
সে তন ে থায় রাখিলে ॥

আহাদ নামে পরওয়ার
আহামদ নাম সেই এবার
জ মৃ হয় যদি তার
শরার আইন কৈ চলে ॥

নবি যারে মানিতে হয়
উচিত বটে তাই জেনে লয়
পু ষ কি কৃতির কায়
সৃ র সৃ ন কালে ॥

আহাদ নামে কেন রে ভাই
মানব লীলা করেন সঁ ই
ফকির লালন বলে তবে কেন যাই
অদেখা ভাবুক দলে ॥

āhāde āhāmad ese
nabi nām se jānāle ।
ẏe tane karilo sr̥ṣṭi
se tan kothāy rākhile ॥

āhād nāme paraoyār
āhāmad nām sei ebār
janma mr̥tyu hay ẏadi tār
śarār āin kai cale ॥

nabi ẏāre mānite hay
ucit baṭe tāi jene lay
puruṣ ki prakr̥tir kāy
sr̥ṣṭir sr̥jjan kāle ॥

āhād nāme kæna re bhāi
mānab līlā karen sā̃i
phakir lālan bale tabe kæna ẏāi
adekhā bhābuk dale ॥

Ahad came as Ahmad
and spread the Prophet's name.
But where did he leave the body
in which he created the world?

Our Protector, whose name is Ahad,
once took the name Ahmad.
But if Ahmad was born and died,
how does the sharī'a rule apply?

You have to revere the Prophet,
and that's why you need to learn:
At the time of the creation
did he have the body of a woman
or a man?

Brother, why did the Lord
who goes by the name Ahad[1]
play on earth as a man?
Lālan says, And why did I join
the crowd of blind lovers?[2]

1. See note 2 for a suggested emendation to the phrase "go by the name Ahmad."

2. Emendations: C³ is the exemplar for this song. Of the published versions of the song cited above, that of LG most closely resembles the text of C³. Verses 1 and 2 in C³ and LG are interchanged in LSOLG and in the oral version sung by Khorshed Shah. (Variants are cited according to the verse order of C³ and LG.) In the refrain C³ has *nām se jānāle*, whereas LG and the oral version by Khorshed Shah have *nām tār janāle* and LSOLG has *nāmṭi jānāle*. In verse 2, line 2, C³ and LG have *cine ney*, whereas LSOLG and Khorshed Shah have *jene lay*. Both variants have the same meaning, but the latter is preferable in terms of the rhyme. Khorshed Shah adds *nabi* to the beginning of line 3. Emendations to the exemplar: In the refrain for *ẏe tane* C³ has *ẏe stone*. In the first line of verse 1, C³ has *māne* for *nāme*. In the first line of verse 2 C³ has *balite* for *mānite*. Emendations to published editions: In verse 1 line 2 LG misreads *tāi* as *bhāi* and in line 3 *kāẏ* as *kār*. In verse 2 line 2 LSOLG has *rūp* for *nām* and *ābār* for *ebār*. In verse 3 LSOLG has *nabi* whereas all the other versions have *āhād*. Either a word meaning prophet such as *nabi* or a name of the Prophet such as *āhāmad* seems to make better sense in the context than *āhād*. However, none of the versions I have collected have *āhāmad* as a variant.

Āhāde āhāmad ese nabi nām se jānāle

"Ahad (< Ar. *aḥad* 'the One') came as Ahmad and spread the Prophet's name" is yet another expression of the identity of Allah and Muhammad (see the annotations to "Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy" [LG no. 261; **121**]). The Bāuls hold the common Sufi belief that all existence came into being from Muhammad's light (see Pāñja Śāh, "Jānte hay nabijir benā," in Śarīph [1973], 222, no. 4): "From the light of Allah the Prophet was born and from the light of the Prophet, the whole world." The Prophet is thus regarded as the material cause of creation. As Lālan says elsewhere ("Nabir aṅge jagaṯ paydā hay," LG no. 271 [**77**]): "The world came from the Prophet's body." Some Bāul songs, however, suggest that the Prophet rather than God himself does the actual work of creation (see Duddu Shah, "Kudrat ājam sẽi mere," in Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 173): "The Protector was pleased and commanded the Prophet: 'Lift up your head, my beloved. I am putting you in charge of creation.' " According to Khodā Bakṣ, Ahmad left "the body in which he created the world" on the heavenly throne (Ar. *'arsh*). Similarly, the eighteenth-century century Bengali poet Hayat Māhmud says that Muhammad concealed in the *'arsh* became manifest when he was born to Abdullah (Roy 1983, 98). And the Bāul poet Kalu Shah ("Cār ẏoge nabi āmār khelā ẏe kare" in Āsgar [1991], no. 21) says that the Prophet "left his body in the sky but spread his shadow over the earth."

In this song, as in several others (e.g., "Apārer kāṇḍār nabiji āmār" [**4**] and "Niguṛh prem kathāṭi tāi āj āmi," LG no. 244), Lālan asks what seems to be a strange question in regard to the Prophet: "At the time of the creation did he have the body of a woman or a man?" The Bāuls, however, view creation from a tantric yogic perspective, which requires two principles, male and female. Muhammad as the material cause of creation is regarded as the Prakṛti or Śakti, the active female principle in relation to Allah, the passive male principle (see Gopāl, "Mānuṣ cine dharbi," in Śarīph 1973, 107, no. 15): *āraśete puruṣbāri prakṛti muhammad nūri, dui deha ek ātmā dhari ādam hay sr̥jan*, "On the throne is the male Creator and the light of Muhammad is the female. Two bodies took one soul and thus Adam was created." (It is interesting to note that Ibn 'Arabi equates creativity with the female; Schimmel (1975, 272) says that to Ibn 'Arabi "even Adam is, so to speak, 'female,' since Eve was born from him.")

Lālan says that the fact that "Ahmad was born and died" seems to contradict "the sharī'a rule" (*śarār āin*). In Khodā Bakṣ's opinion, this alludes to the dictum that the Prophet Muhammad is "the life of the prophets"

(*hāyātul murasālīn*)—that is, that he is the preexistent source of all prophetic activity who lives eternally. (In his song "Rāchul rāchul bale ḍāki" [LS no. 8] Lālan ascribes the phrase to the Qur'an to lend it authority, although it does not actually occur there.) This paradox is resolved by postulating two forms of the Prophet, the pre-eternal light of Muhammad and the historical Muhammad. (See the annotations to "Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy" [LG no. 206; **76**].)

The Lord played "on earth as a man" due to his desire to manifest himself in order to be known and loved. A "blind lover" is someone who cannot see the divine with the eye of intuitive knowledge (*jñān-cakṣu*) and therefore is only capable of blindly following the laws of the sharī'a.

[Sources for the original Bangla version: Salomon's manuscript; C^3 no. 158; LG no. 282; LSOLG vol. 1 no. 33; LS vol. 2, no. 378.]

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23

উপ ে ধে কাজ দেখ রে ভাই ঢেকি গেলার ম ে

Uparodhe kāj dekho re bhāi ḍhēki gelār mato

উপ ে ধে কাজ দেখ রে ভাই
ঢেকি গেলার ম ে ।
ওরে যায় না গেলা
গলা ফেড়ে হয় সে হত ॥

uparodhe kāj dekho re bhāi
ḍhēki gelār mato ।
ore ẏāy nā gelā
galā pheṛe hay se hato ॥

মনটা যাতে রাজি হয়
ণটা তাতে আপনি যায়
পাথর দেখে ে লার মত
আবার বেগার ঠেলা ঢেকি গেলা
টাকশালে সই নাই ে ॥

manṭā ẏāte rāji hay
prāṇṭā tāte āpani ẏāy
pāthar dekhe śolār mato
ābār begār ṭhelā ḍhēki gelā
ṭākaśāle sai nāi to ॥

মুচির চাম কে ে তে গ মা
ে ন ণে যায় দেখ না
কেউ ফুল দিলে পায় না ে
মন যাতে নয় পূজলে কি হয়
ফুল দিয়ে শত শত ॥

mucir cām keṭote gaṅgā mā
kon guṇe ẏāy dekh nā
keu phul dile pāy nā to
man ẏāte nay pūjle ki hay
phul diye śata śata ॥

যার মনে যা লাগে ভাই
ক ক ক ক ক ক তাই
তার ে ল কেন আর এত
লালন বলে লাথিয়ে পাকায়
সে ফল হয় কি মি ে ॥

ẏār mane ẏā lāge bhāi
karuk karuk karuk tāi
tār gol kæna ār eto
lālan bale lāthiye pākāy
se phal hay ki miṭho ॥

Look brother!
Being forced to work
is like swallowing a husking machine—
It doesn't go down.
It tears open your throat.
You end up dead.

What the mind agrees to,
the heart goes along with.
A rock can seem light as cork.
But forced labor
is like swallowing a husking machine.
In the mint you can't pull it off.[1]

Think why the Goddess Ganges
went to the shoemaker's hide flask.
Nobody gets a blessing like this
just by offering flowers.
What good is worshiping
with hundreds of flowers
if your heart's not in it?

Whatever a man desires
let him do it, let him do it,
let him do it.
What's all the fuss?
Lālan asks, Does a fruit taste sweet
that's kicked till it's ripe?[2]

1. *ṭākaśāle sai nai to*: lit. "It isn't tolerated in the mint." Alt. trans.: "In the mint it doesn't pay off." For the esoteric significance of "mint" see the annotations.

2. Mitra misreads *uparede* (dialectal for *uparodhe*) as *upabede*.

Uparodhe kāj dekho re bhāi ḍhẽki gelār mato

The first sentence of the refrain *uparodhe kāj dekho re bhāi ḍhẽki gelār mato*, which recurs in slightly different form in the first verse, is a variant of the Bengali proverb *uparodhe ḍheki gelā*, lit. "Swallowing a husking machine to comply with a request." The proverb expresses the difficulty of doing something against one's will.

The esoteric meaning of the song is hinted at in the last line of the second verse. The "mint" signifies the vagina; see also LG no. 173 ["Jāni man premer premī kāje pele"]: *ghuskijāri prem-ṭãkśāle*, "whoring in the mint of love"; BBOBG no. 197 ["Maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakirī" **100**]: *khāṭbe nā lālan bhẽṛe ṭãkṣāle cāturi*, "Lālan, you fool, clever tricks don't work in the mint"; and Jhā [1995] no. 96/98 ["Kon pathe jābi man ṭhik halo nā"]: *karo lāphālāphi sār kāje sanakār* (i.e., *sūnyakār*, not *svarṇakār* as Jhā interprets the word) *ṭākaśāle paṛibe ẏābe jānā*, "You make cavorting around your focus. But your work is bogus. You'll be found out when you fall (ejaculate) in the mint (vagina)." The implication is that forced labor, meaning forced sex, is not the genuine article and has no place in the mint, meaning the vagina, for a sadhu who wishes to control his semen and be successful at *sādhanā* (cf. Jhā [1995], song no. 353 by Rūpoi: *se ghāṭe jor khāṭe nā*, "At that *ghāṭ* force doesn't work"). It is interesting to note that the Kartābhajās refer to the symbolic language of their songs as *tyāksāla bol* "language of the mint" (Chakravarti 1985, 367).

Although this song does not mention the name of the shoemaker (*muci*), two other songs by Lālan, "Bhakter dvāre bāndhā āche sãi," "The Lord is bound (to his devotee) by devotion," (T: 61, 112; Mitra, 143; LG no. 53), which praises the shoemaker for his *bhakti*, and "Āpan maner guṇe sakali hay," "Everything depends on the quality of your mind," (BBOBG no. 101 [LG no. 55]), which, like the song under discussion, contains an allusion to a story about the shoemaker and the River Goddess Ganges, refer to him as Rāmdās. According to Khodā Bakṣ's telling of the legend, Rāmdās wished to go on a pilgrimage to the Ganges River but was too poor to do so. Instead he placed a flower in a leather flask filled with water that he used for his work. The Goddess Ganges herself put out her hand and took the flower.

The Rāmdās described by Lālan seems to be the fifteenth-century Hindi Sant poet Ravi (Rāi) Dās, who is second only to Kabīr in fame. (Note that in the two songs by Lālan that give the shoemaker's name, the verse concerning Rāmdās follows a verse praising Kabīr.) Ravi Dās was an untouchable *camār*, a leatherworker or shoemaker, and is renowned for his intense

bhakti. A legend related by Hawley in *Songs of the Saints of India* (1988, 55) connects Ravi Dās with the Goddess Ganges: The goddess helped Ravi Dās prove to a group of Brahmans that he had as much right to preach as they did. The piece of wood that the Brahmans threw into the Ganges River sank, whereas the stone that Ravi Dās threw in floated.

It is tempting to connect the line in the song under discussion "A rock can seem light as cork" with the stone that Ravi Dās threw into the Ganges. However, the legend concerning the shoemaker and the goddess is not given in enough detail in Lālan's songs to determine whether the two tales are different versions of the same legend or whether Khodā Bakṣ's telling of it is actually the legend Lālan had in mind.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[2]: 56, no. 106; Mitra, 257; LG no. 447; LS no. 580.]

Exemplar: V[1]b no. 106 (not extant in M; not in J)

uparede[1] *kāj dekho re bhāi ḍheki gelār mato /*
o re tā ẏāẏ nā gelā olā galā pheṛe haẏ se hato //

manṭā ẏāte rāji haẏ
prāṇṭā tāte āpni ẏāẏ
pāthar dekhe solār mato /
ābār begār ṭhelā ḍheki gelā
ṭākaśāle saẏ nāi to //

mucir cām keṭote gaṅgā mā
kon guṇe ẏāẏ dekh nā
keu phul dileo pāẏ nā to/
man ẏāte naẏ pujle ki haẏ
phul diẏe śato śato //

ẏār mane ẏā lāge bhāi
karuk karuk karuk tāi
tār gol kene ār eto /
lālan bale nātie[2] *pākāẏ*
se phal ki haẏ miṭho //

1. For *uparodhe*; Mitra misreads *uparede* (dialectal for *uparodhe*) as *upabede*.

2. for *lāthie*.

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24

এ কি আইন নবি করল জারি

E ki āin nabi karlo jāri

এ কি আইন নবি করল জারি
পাছে মারা যাই
আইন সাধ ভাষা ভারি ॥

শরিয়ত আর মারফত আদায়
নবির আইনে এই দুই কুম সদায়
শরা নবুয়ত বিলায়েত মারফত
জানতে হয় রে গভীরি ॥

নবুয়তে অদেখা ধিয়ান
বিলায়েতে পেরও নিশান
নজর এক দিক যায় আর দিক আ র হয়
দুই পে কি প ঠিক করি ॥

শরাকে সরে শ লেখা যায়
ব মারফত সে ঢাকা আছে তায়
সরে শ থুই তুলে ও কি দিই ফেলে
  লালন ব ভিখারি ॥

e ki āin nabi karlo jāri
pāche mārā ẏāi
āin sādh bhāṣā bhāri ॥

śariyat ār māraphat ādāy
nabir āine ei dui hukum sadāy
śarā nabuyat bilāyet māraphat
jānte hay re gabhīri ॥

nabuyate adekhā dhiyān
bilāyete rūper-o niśān
najar ek dik ẏāy ār dik āndhār hay
dui rūpe kirūp ṭhik kari ॥

śarāke sarapoś lekhā ẏāy
bastu māraphat se ḍhākā āche tāy
sarapoś thui tule o ki dii phele
  lālan bastu bhikhāri ॥

What kind of law
did the Prophet preach?
It will kill me in the end.
Its high-flown language
is so hard to understand.

Sharī'a and ma'rifa—[1]
always two doctrines[2]
to the Prophet's law.
Sharī'a is the prophet's way,
Ma'rifa, the saint's.
A subject like this
you've got to know in depth.[3]

The prophet's way
you take on blind faith.[4]
The saint's way reveals
the emblem of his shape.[5]
I look in one direction;
the other grows dark.
How can I handle them both?[6]

sharī'a is a cover,[7]
so it's written;
ma'rifa is the stuff[8]
that is hidden.
Do I save the cover
or throw it out?
It's the stuff Lālan craves.[9]

1. *śariyat*: "Islamic law" [<Ar. *sharī'a*]; *māraphat*: "mystic knowledge" [<Ar. *ma'rifa*].

2. *hukum:* alt. trans.: "tenets"; "precepts."

3. Alt. trans.: "This subject you've got to know in depth"; "This you have to know in depth."

4. *nabuyat[e] adekhā dhiyān:* lit. "The prophet's way is unseeing meditation."

5. *rūper-o niśān:* alt. trans.: "banner"; "sign."

6. Alt. trans.: "How can I manage them both?"

7. Alt. trans.: "lid."

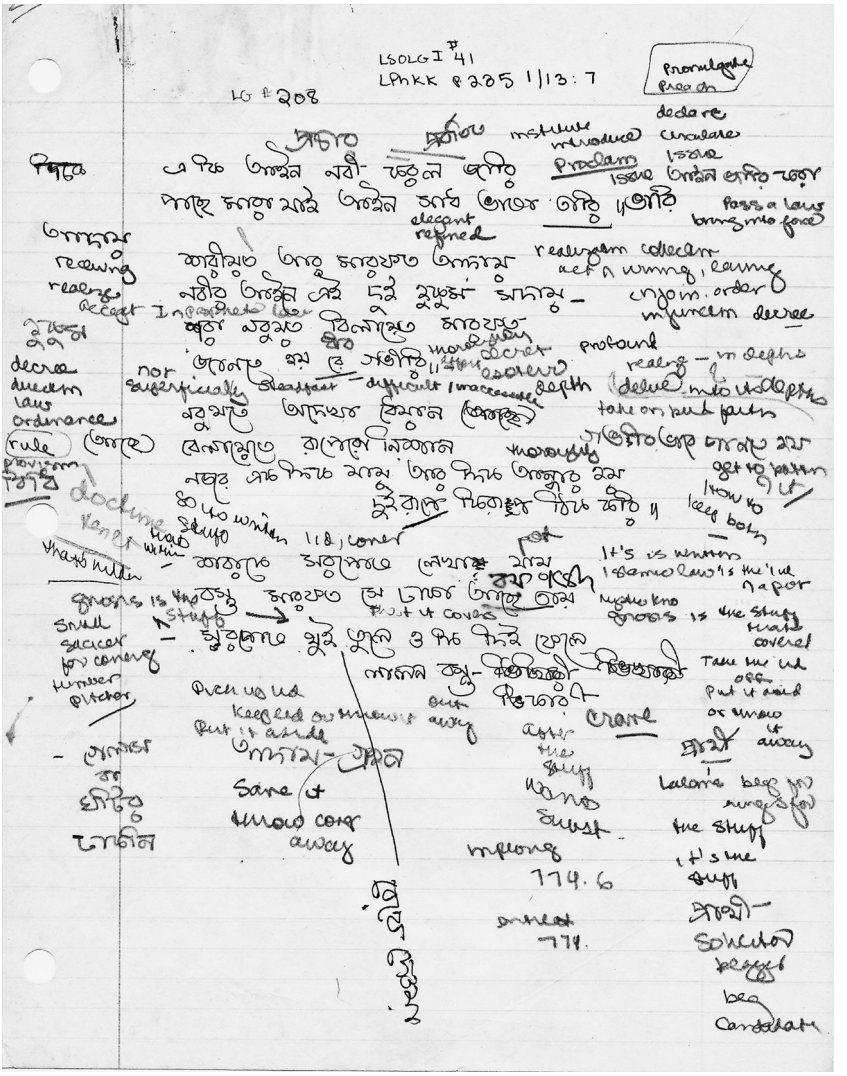
8. *bastu:* "substance."

9. Lit. "Lālan is a beggar for the stuff."

E ki āin nabi karlo jāri

Lālan characterizes Sharī'a as belonging to the prophet's way because the prophets taught what is *ẓāhir*—the blind formalities of canonical religion open to all. In contrast, Ma'rifa belongs to the saint's way because it represents what is *bāṭin*—the secret doctrines that are not accessible to everyone and that lead to a revelation of the divine. Lālan rejects Sharī'a, comparing it to a "cover" that is dispensable in favor of Ma'rifa which is the "stuff" (*bastu*) of true value. (Note that *bastu* is in other contexts a technical term referring to semen and menstrual blood, the two divine essences.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 208; DKES no. 6; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 41.]



Salomon's MS for "E ki āin nabi karlo jāri."

25

এ কি আসমানি ে র

E ki āsamāni cor

এ কি আসমানি ে র	e ki āsamāni cor
ভাবের শহর লুটছে সদায়	bhāber śahar luṭche sadāy
ও তার আসা যাওয়া কেমন রাহা	o tār āsā ẏāoyā kæman rāhā
কে দেখেে বে আমায় ॥	ke dekhecho balo āmāy ॥
শহর বেড়ে অযুত ে রে	śahar beṛe aẏut dore
মাঝখানে ভাবের মন্দিরে	mājhkhāne bhāber mandire
সেই নিগম জায়গায়	sei nigam jāygāy
ও তার পবন রে ে কি ফেরে রে	o tār paban dvāre cauki phere re
এমন ঘরে ে র আসে যায় ॥	æman ghare cor āse ẏāy ॥
এক শহরে চ শ জেলা	ek śahare cabbiś jelā
দাগছে রে কামান দুবেলা	dāgche re kāmān dubelā
বলিয়ে জয় জয়	baliye jay jay
ধ ে রে এ ঘাট মারে রে	dhanya core e ghāṭ māre re
রাখে না সে কাহাে ভয় ॥	rākhe nā se kāhāro bhay ॥
মন-বু র অে চর ে রা	man-buddhir agocar corā
বললে কি বি ে রা	balle ki pratyabi torā
আজ আমার কথায়	āj āmār kathāy
সঁই লালন বলে ভাবুক হলে	sāi lālan bale bhābuk hale
ধা লাগে তাহারি গায় ॥	dhākkā lāge tāhāri gāy ॥

What kind of thief is this—
who comes from the sky
and keeps looting the city of love?
What route does he take?
Tell me, has anyone seen him?

Fathomless water surrounds the city.
In a remote corner in the city's center
is a temple of love with gates of wind.
Watchmen[1] *guard these gates,*
but still the thief sneaks in.

In this one city alone
there are twenty-four districts.
Canons are fired day and night
to shouts of victory.[2]
But that blessed thief
goes and robs the temple,
fearing nobody.

The thief is beyond
the reach of the mind.
You won't believe
what I'm going to say.
Lālan Sā̃i says, if you're a true lover,
you might bump into him.[3] [4]

1. This could also be translated as "a watchman," since singular and plural with general reference are not distinguished in Bengali.

2. *dāgche* [*re*] *kāmān dubelā*: lit. "Cannons are fired twice a day."

3. *bhābuk hole corer dhākkā lāge tāhāri gāy:* It is not possible to tell from the Bengali whether the agent of the sentence is the thief or the true lover. However, it is most probably the true lover, since the thief tries to avoid contact. [The Bengali version chosen for this publication omits the word "*corer*" (see Emendations below).]

4. Emendations to the exemplar: M is the exemplar for this song. Verse 1: M has *aghāt*, which is probably a dialectal variant of *agādh*. (*Aghāt* is given for *agādh* also in M's transcription of Lālan's famous "Āmi ekdin nā dekhilām tāre," LG no. 18 **[14]**.) LG and BBOBG have *aẏut*, and LSOLG has *agādh*. Verse 2: BBOBG has *sāṛe cabbiś jelā* for *cabbiś jelā*. Although this reading is consistent with Bāul doctrine (see the annotations), it makes the line hypermetric. M has *ghar*, whereas LG, BBOBG, and LSOLG have *ghāṭ*. *Ghar* seems to be more consistent with the imagery of the preceding verse than *ghāṭ*, which introduces a new image. M has *dore*, as does LG and LSOLG. BBOBG, however, has *duẏāre*. It is clear that *dore* < Pers. *daryā*,

E ki āsamāni cor

This is one of several songs that Lālan composed on the theme of the *sahaj mānuṣ* as thief, including: "Śahare ṣola jan bombeṭe" [LG no. 20; **126**], "Lāglo dhūm premer thānāte" [BBOBG no. 108], "Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phād pete" [LG no. 49; **73**], "Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy" [LG no. 35; **120**], "Man ki tui beṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā" [LG no. 428; **98**], and "Se līlā bujhbi kṣepā kæman kare" [BBOBG no. 124]. See, in particular, the annotations to "Raṃmahale . . ."

The "sky" is the *sahasrār-cakra*, the abode of the *sahaj mānuṣ*. The "city of love" (*bhāber śahar*) is the microcosmic body, and the "temple of love" (*bhāber mandire*), like the "palace" in "Raṅgmahale . . . ," refers to the *triveṇī* in the *mūlādhār-cakra*, where the *sahaj mānuṣ* becomes manifest; it symbolizes the center of the universe and the starting point of creation, as well as the center of the self. It may seem contradictory that the "temple" is in the "city's center," yet "in a remote corner" (*nigum jāygāy*; lit. "an inaccessible" or "hidden place"), but as Eliade points out (1969, 380): "The thing that symbolizes absolute reality, sacred power, and immortality is hard of access. Symbols of this sort are situated in a 'centre'; in other words, they are closely guarded and to get to them is equivalent to an initiation, a 'heroic' or 'mystical' conquest of immortality." The "gates of wind" refers to the practice of breath control. It also may signify the nostrils or the *brahmadvār*, the opening to the *suṣumnā*; it is through this middle channel that the *sādhak* must make his breath flow if he is to succeed in *sādhanā*. The "watchmen" probably signify the mind. As previously mentioned, control of breath and mind is the means to control semen and "catch the thief." The fact that the thief was able to get through the "gates of wind" and rob the "temple" probably means that the *sādhak* was not able to maintain concentration and attain mastery of breath control practices. The number twenty-four, or more commonly "twenty-four and a half" (see Lālan's song "Mānuṣ dharo nehāre," LG no. 31), stands for the number of moons in the body: the nails of the hands and feet, the cheeks, the mouth, and the tongue, with the forehead constituting the half moon. According to Khodā Bakṣ, *kāmān*, "cannon," is a pun on *kām*, "lust." "Robbing the temple," like such images as

"sea" was confused with *dor* < *Skt. dvāra*, "door" and was then changed to the related word *duyār*. Verse 3: M has *corer dhākkā lāge,* whereas LG, LSOLG, and BBOBG all omit *corer,* which makes the line hypermetric.

"looting the storeroom," is a metaphor for the ejaculation of semen. Only the "true lover" (*bhābuk*) "bumps into the thief," that is, has a chance to "catch" him.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; M[1] no. 200; LG no. 103; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 236; BBOBG no. 191.]

26

এ কুলে মের মে

E gokule śyāmer preme

এ কুলে মের মে
কেবা না মজেছে সখি
কা কথা কেউ বলে না
আমি একা হই কল ॥

e gokule śyāmer preme
kebā nā majeche sakhi
kāro kathā keu bale nā
āmi ekā hai kalaṅkī ॥

অনেকেতে ম করে
এমন দশা ঘটে কারে
গ না দেয় ঘরে পরে
  মের পদে দিয়ে আঁখি ॥

anekete prem kare
æman daśā ghaṭe kāre
gañjanā dey ghare pare
śyāmer pade diye ãkhi ॥

তলে তলে গজা খায়
  কের কাছে সতী কওলায়
এমন সৎ অনেক পাওয়া যায়
সদর হয় যে সেই পাতকী ॥

tale tale gajā khāy
loker kāche satī kaolāy
æman saṯ anek pāoyā ẏāy
sadar hay ẏe sei pātakī ॥

অনুরাগী রসিক হলে
সে কি ডরায় কুলশীলে
লালন বেড়ায় ফুকচি খেলে
  মটা দিয়ে চায় আড় খি ॥

anurāgī rasik hale
se ki ḍarāy kulaśīle
lālan beṛāy phukci khele
ghomṭā diye cāy āṛ cokhi ॥

My friend,
who in this town of Gokul
is not in love with Śyām?[1]
No one talks about the others.
Only my name they smear.

Plenty of women have affairs,
but who suffers like I do?
My family and friends condemn me,
while they keep their eyes glued
to Śyām's feet.

Eating sugar candy on the sly,
they proclaim their chastity to all—
Honest women like these
are easy to find.
Yet a woman who goes public
is branded a sinner.

A true lover doesn't fear
to lose her family honor.
But Lālan just slinks around,
casting furtive glances
through a veil.[2] [3]

1. Śyām [Shyam]: epithet of Kṛṣṇa.

2. Lit. "Lālan wanders around taking peeks, casting furtive glances through a veil."

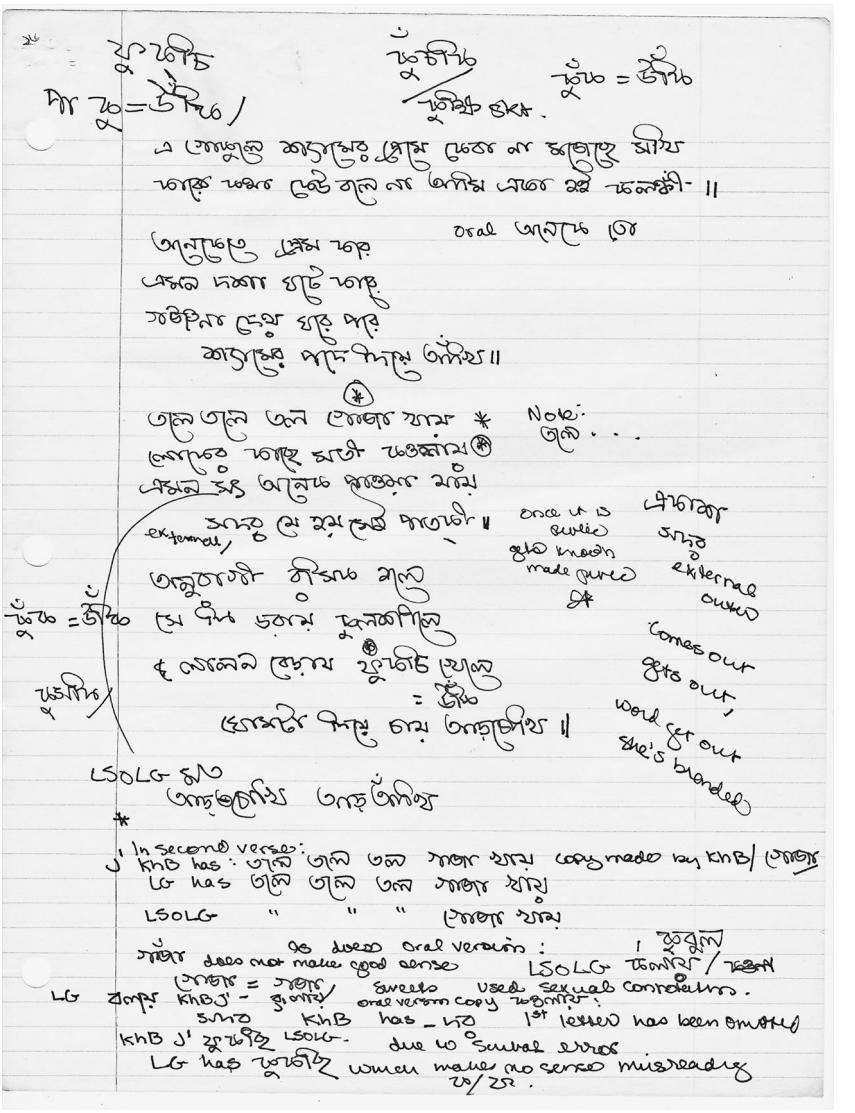
3. Emendations to the exemplar: Verse 2: J^1 reads *gājā*, LG has *gā̃jā*, and LSOLG *gojā*. In KhB's transcription of J^1 (J^2) *gājā* is replaced by *gojā*. An oral version of the song that I recorded also has *gojā*. The LG reading *gā̃jā* "ganja" does not make much sense in the context. J^1's reading *gājā* may be a mistake for *gojā* (the *ekār* may have been omitted due to scribal error) or may be a dialectal variant of *gā̃jā*, as the omission of the nasal is a typical feature of East Bengal dialects. *Gojā* seems to be the lectio difficilior, but its meaning here is obscure. I have tentatively taken it in the sense of *gajā* "a kind of sweet" (perhaps influenced by the Hindi *gojhā*), used in this context as a sexual metaphor. J^1 and LG read *balāy*. LSOLG has *kalāy*, and the oral version has *kaolāy*, as does J^2; *kalāy*, or its variant *kaolāy*, a dialectal word meaning "to proclaim," "to publicize" (< Arabic *qawl* and not *qabūl* as Tālib suggests; see Shahidullah 1968[a], s.v. *kalāno*) is clearly the correct reading; J^1 has *dar* instead of *sadar* occurring in LG, LSOLG and the oral version. Verse 3: J^1 reads *phukchi*, and LSOLG has a variant this word, *phukci*. According to Shahidullah 1968[a], def. 2, *phukci* means "a peek," "a furtive glance" in Pabna dialect, which is basically the same as that of Kushtia.

E gokule śyāmer preme

This is one of Lālan's many songs on the theme of the *līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, here called by his epithet Śyām, which, like Kṛṣṇa, means "dark" or "black." Rādhā, who is the song's narrator, was a married woman, the wife of Kṛṣṇa's uncle Abhimanyu (Āyān), when she fell in love with Kṛṣṇa. According to Bengali Vaiṣṇava belief, the love of a married woman for her lover (*parakīya prem*) is the highest form of love, as the feeling of *viraha* (the pain of separation), which is the measure of the depth of love, is most intense in it (Dimock 1966, 211).

In the signature line of the song, Lālan takes the persona of a woman who does not have the courage to proclaim her love. (Other songs in which Lālan adopts a woman's role are "If only I could get Gaucā̃d" ("Ẏadi gaurcā̃dke pāi," LG no. 326 [**109**]) and "Mind, how much longer will you stay at home?" ("Kuler bou haye man ār kato dine," LG no. 14 [**45**].) It was a common convention in Bengali Vaiṣṇava poetry, known as *sakhībhāva*, for the poet to take the part of a woman, particularly of one of Rādhā's friends. Bengali Vaiṣṇavas believe that since Kṛṣṇa is the sole male in the universe, the devotee should consider himself a woman in relation to him. On the Tantric notion of "becoming a woman," see the annotations to "It's a strange show—the fakir ways of the Sādā Sohāgī saints" ["Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sā̃i," LG no. 443; **13**] and also "Ambrosial Waters" ["Amṛta bāri," LG no. 187].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1] no. 199; LG no. 364; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 106; LS vol. 1, no. 244.]



Salomon's MS for "E gokule śyāmer preme."

27

এ দেশেতে এই সুখ হলো

E deśete ei sukh halo

এ দেশেতে এই সুখ হলো
আবার ে থা যাই না জানি।
পেয়েছি এক ভাঙা ে কা
জনম গেলো ছেচতে পানি ॥

কার বা আমি কে বা আমার
ব ঠিক নাই তার
বৈদিক মেঘে ে র অ কার
উদয় হয় না দিনমণি ॥

আর কি রে এই পাপীর ভা
দয়াল চঁ দের দয়া হবে
কতদিনে এই হালে যাবে
বাহিয়ে পাপীর তরণি ॥

কার ে ষ দিব এই ভুবনে
হীন হয়েছি ভজন ণে
লালন বলে কতদিনে
পাব সঁ ইর চরণ দুখানি ॥

e deśete ei sukh halo
ābār kothā ẏāi nā jāni।
peyechi ek bhāṅā naukā
janam gelo checte pāni ॥

kār bā āmi ke bā āmār
prāpta-bastu ṭhik nāi tār
baidik meghe ghor andhakār
uday hay nā dinamaṇi ॥

ār ki re ei pāpīr bhāgye
dayāl cā̃der dayā habe
katadin ei hāle ẏābe
bāhiye pāpīr taraṇi ॥

kār doṣ dibo ei bhubane
hīn hayechi bhajan guṇe
lālan bale katadine
pābo sā̃ir caraṇ dukhāni ॥

So this is the happiness I find here,
and yet I don't know where else to go.[1]
I got a broken-down boat
and spent my life bailing water.

Who is mine and whose am I?
I set no store by my heritage.[2]
Vedic clouds blacken the sky.[3]
The jewel of day doesn't rise.

Will this sinner be so lucky?
Will the merciful moon have mercy on me?
How much longer[4] *must I go on this way,*
rowing my boat of sin?

Whom in the world can I blame?
My worship fell far short.
Lālan says, How long before
I get to the feet of my Lord?

1. The line could also be translated, "and I don't know where I'm going to."

2. *prāptabastu ṭhik nāi tār*: The term [*prāpta-bastu*] has the same esoteric meaning as *paitṛk-dhan* in BBOBG no. 25 ("Man āmār āj paṛli phere," **94**). See notes to the translation.

3. *baidik meghe ghor andhakār*: The word "sky" is added for the sake of the translation; the line can be literally translated, "It's pitch dark because of Vedic clouds."

4. [*kata din ei*. Other variants include: *kata dine* and *āmār dine*.]

E deśete ei sukh halo

This is a good example of how a song by Lālan composed over one hundred years ago can at one and the same time carry an esoteric message for initiates and speak to the general public of contemporary Bangladesh. According to one Bangladeshi scholar, the first verse of the song epitomizes the plight that Bangladeshis find themselves in today.

On the meaning of the "ramshackle boat" and "bailing water," see commentary to LG no. 428 ("Cirakāl jal chẽce,"**[60]**). *Prāptabastu* "patrimony," *dinamaṇi* "jewel of day," and *dayāl cā̃d* "merciful moon" signify "semen" or the "Absolute in semen," as does *bastu* "matter," *maṇi* "jewel," and *cā̃d* uncompounded. "I take no stock in my patrimony" means that the poet is unable to retain his semen. "Vedic clouds" symbolize canonical religion.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 403; LSOLG 252.]

Salomon's MS for "E deśete ei sukh halo."

28

এই মানুষে সেই মানুষ আছে

Ei mānuṣe sei mānuṣ āche

এই মানুষে সেই মানুষ আছে
কত মুনি ঋষি চার যুগ ধরে
তারে বেড়া খুজে ॥

ei mānuṣe sei mānuṣ āche
kata muni ṛṣi cār ẏug dhare
tāre beṛācche khũje ॥

জলে যমন চঁ দ দেখা যায়
সে চঁ দ ধরতে গেলে হাতে কে পায়
ও সে আলেক মানুষ অমনি সদায়
আছে আলেকে বসে ॥

jale ẏaman cā̃d dekhā ẏāy
se cā̃d dharte gele hāte ke pāy
o se ālek mānuṣ amani sadāy
āche āleke base ॥

অচিন দলে বসতি ঘর
দল প বারাম তার
দল নি পণ হবে যাহার
সে প দেখবে অনাসে ॥

acin dale basati ghar
dvidal padme bārām tār
dal nirūpaṇ habe ẏāhār
se rūp dekhbe anāse ॥

আমার হে কি মন
আমি বাইরে খুজি ঘরের ধন
দরবেশ সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় ঘুরবি লালন
আ ত না বুঝে ॥

āmār halo ki bhrānti man
āmi bāire khũji gharer dhan
darbeś sirāj sãi kay ghurbi lālan
āptatattva nā bujhe ॥

That man is in this man.[1]
Yet for four ages,
countless seers and sages
have roamed in search of him.

The unseen man[2]
always sits in an unseen place[3]
beyond their grasp.
Who can reach out and catch
the reflection of the moon
in water?[4]

His house is on an unknown petal,
his court in the two-petaled lotus.
Those who discover[5] *the petals*
will have no trouble seeing his form.

How deluded I am!
I search outside
for the treasure
that's in my house.
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
you'll keep walking in circles
until you understand
the truth of the Self.[6]

1. Although I have followed convention and translated *mānuṣ* as "man," the word does not necessarily indicate the male gender. A more literal translation would be "person," or "human being."

2. *ālek mānuṣ*. On the word *ālek*, see the annotations.

3. Lit. "the unseen."

4. Lit. "Like the moon reflected in a body of water—for who can reach out and catch it in his hands?—the unseen man always sits in an unseen place."

5. *nirūpaṇ*: alt. trans.: "perceive," "find."

6. The texts of the three manuscripts and LSOLG are identical with the exception of two minor variants in T. In verse 1, T omits *gele* and gives *omni* for *tamni*. LG: In verse 1, *temni se thāke sadāy* is given for *o se ālek mānuṣ tamni sadāy*. In verse 2, *deśe* occurs for *dale* and *o se* for *se rūp*. Both LG and LSOLG give standard Bengali *anāyase* for dialectical *anāse* in verse 2 and *ātmatattva* for dialectical *āptatattva* in verse 3.

Ei mānuṣe sei mānuṣ āche

According to Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 340), the Bāuls call the Self a *mānuṣ*, "man" (on the translation of the word, see text note 1) because the Self resides in man, because it can be obtained through worship involving the human body, and because they actually conceive of the Self in human form.

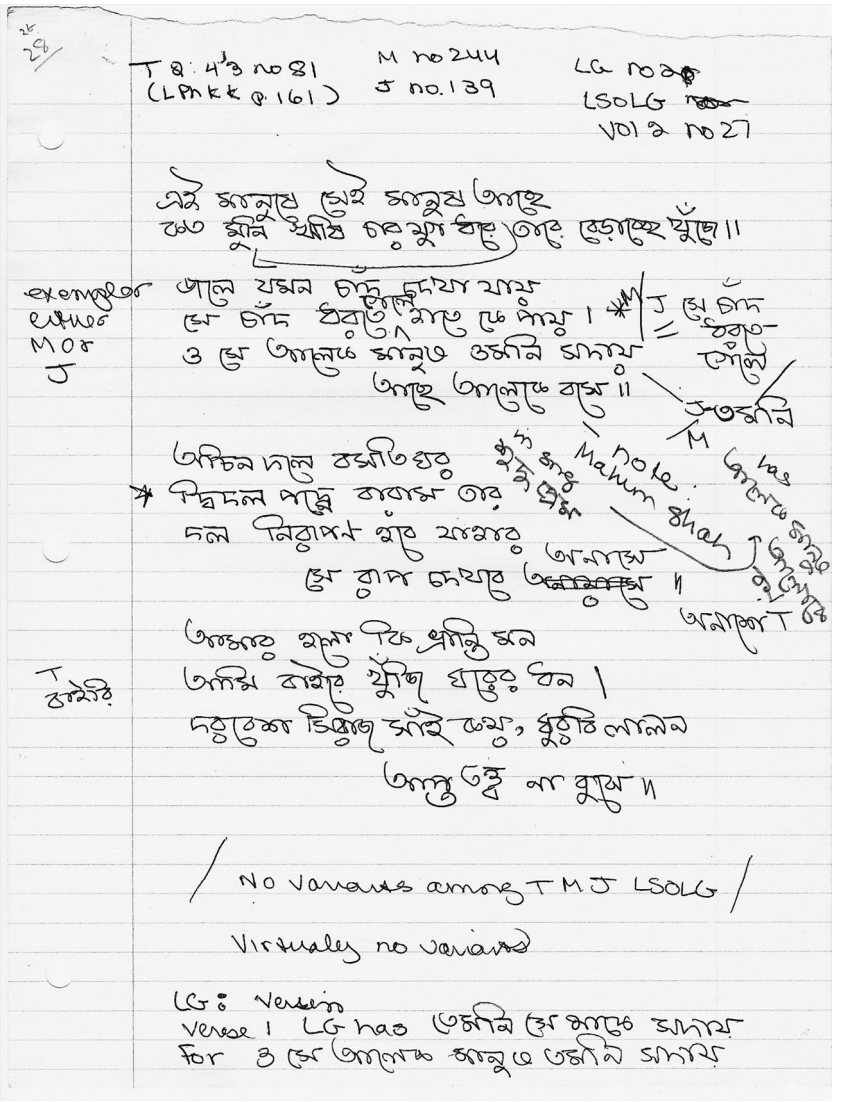
Ālek (<Skt. *alakṣya*) *mānuṣ*, "unseen" or "invisible man," refers to the Supreme in his formless aspect, Nirañjan. See Lālan's song "O re āleker mānuṣ āleke ray" [BBOBG no. 49]. See also "Only he on whom the guru has mercy" ["Gurur dayā ẏāre hay sei jāne," LG no. 139; **55**], where Lālan calls the Supreme an "unseen rider" (*ālek soyār*). The "unseen place" (*ālek*) and the "unknown petal," like the "unknown land" in "Only he finds out the truth" ["Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy," LG no. 239; **106**], signify the *sahasrār*.

The word *ālek* is used not only by the Bāuls but also, in the form *alakh*, by Sants and Nāths to refer to the formless ultimate reality that is the *sahaja*. When begging, the Nāths shout "*alakh, alakh*" (Briggs 1938, 202). Similarly, Bāul fakirs say "*ālekjān*" when greeting one another or when performing rituals (BBOBG, 397).

When Lālan says "Those who discover the petals will have no trouble seeing his form," he is probably referring to the two-petaled lotus, mentioned in the previous line as the location of the Lord's court, the place where he becomes manifest. (In other songs the "court" is in the *mūlādhār*. See the annotations to "In my Lord's own court" ["Ẏekhāne sãir bārāmkhānā," LG no. 58; **118**].) The adept who succeeds in retaining his semen during sexual intercourse and in bringing it up to this *cakra* has a vision of the effulgent form of the divine.

On the "truth of the Self" see the annotations to "Tie the loincloth of your mind on tightly" ["Maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakirī," **100**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 403; BBOBG no. 50; LSOLG, 252.]



Salomon's MS for "Ei mānuṣe sei mānuṣ āche."

29

একদিন ও পারের কথা ভাবলি না রে

Ekdin-o pārer kathā bhābli nā re

একদিন ও পারের কথা ভাবলি না রে ।
পার হবি হিরের সঁ ে কেমন করে॥

এক দমের ভরসা নাই
কখন কি করে রে সঁ ই
তখন কার দিবি ে হাই
কারাগারে ॥

বিনে কড়ির সদায় কেনা
মুখে সঁ ইর নাম জপনা
তাতে কি অলমপানা
দেখি ে রে ॥

ভাসাও অনুরাগ-তরি
বসাও মু দ-কা রি
লালন কয় সেই সে পাড়ি
যাবে সে রে ॥

ek-din-o pārer kathā bhābli nā re ।
pār habi hirer sā̃ko kæman kare ॥

ek damer bharasā nāi
kakhan ki kare re sā̃i
takhan kār dibi dohāi
kārāgāre ॥

bine kaṛir sadāy kenā
mukhe sā̃ir nām japanā
tāte ki alampānā
dekhi tore ॥

bhāsāo anurāg-tari
basāo murśid-kāṇḍāri
lālan kay sei se pāṛi
ẏābe se re ॥

Not even once
did you think of the crossing.
Now how will you cross over
the diamond-sharp bridge?[1]

You're not safe for a minute.[2]
No telling what the Lord will do
or when he'll do it.
Who will you appeal to
from your prison cell?

The merchandise doesn't cost a cent.[3]
Yet you just parrot God's name.
I've never seen such indolence.[4]

Launch the boat of love.
Station the murshid at the helm.
Lālan says, Then you'll make it across.[5] [6]

1. Alt. trans. (lit.): "the diamond bridge."

2. *ek damer bharasā nāi*. Alt. trans.: "You haven't a breath of hope."

3. *bine kaṛir saodāi kenā*. Cf. the second verse of Lālan's song "Come on! Let's follow the Prophet's faith" [**18**]:

The Prophet opened a priceless store.

You get whatever you ask him for.

He offers you treasures that don't cost a cent.

If you refuse them, you'll regret it in the end.

[The Bengali version chosen for this edition reads sadāy for saodāi, although the latter also seems like a plausible reading (see Emendations that follow).]

4. Abu Rushd translates the verse as follows: "You can buy the merchandise for free, and meditatively utter the name of the Master, a sure cure for indolence." I do not think that Lālan is recommending the recitation of God's name, for this is a practice he often criticizes as useless (see for example, "What good is talk when you don't know what to do?" ["Nā jene karaṇ kāraṇ kathāy ki habe," LG no. 142; **80**]); rather, he is saying that only through the difficult *sādhanā* of the Bāuls can one avail oneself of the merchandise. Repeating God's name is the lazy way to worship and does not lead to liberation. Alt. trans.: "What a rare display of indolence!"

5. Lit. "That one will make it across." Alt. trans.: "Then you'll make it across in the end"; Then you'll reach the other shore."

6. Emendations: J¹ is the exemplar for the song. manuscripts: In the refrain J¹ has *pārer bhābnā*, whereas T and M¹ have *pārer kathā*. In verse 1 J has *kariben*, whereas T and M have *karbe re*. In verse 2 J¹ has *saodāi*, which makes better sense in the context than T and M's

Ek-din-o pārer bhābnā bhābli nā re

The "diamond-sharp bridge" is the bridge termed *ṣirāṭ* "way" in Arabic that, according to Muslim belief, spans hell and that everyone must cross on the Day of Judgment. The good pass over it easily to enter Paradise on the other side, while the wicked fall off into hell. The bridge is described in *ḥadīth* (tradition) as thinner than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword.

Lālan and other Bāul poets undoubtedly use it metaphorically. I found some clues to its underlying meaning in three other Bāul songs that mention the bridge. Lālan's "Bāndā pulsurāter kathā kichu, bhābio mane" ("Servant of God, Think about Crossing the Ṣirāṭ Bridge," [in] LSOLG vol. 2, no. 20) is a companion piece to the song under discussion. It describes the bridge as "sharp like a diamond" (*hīrer dhār cokā*) and "winding, with three bends" (*tribhaṅga bākā*). It further says that the only recourse one has when crossing the bridge is the hem of Fatima's garment. Similarly, [the Bengali folk poet] Hatem says in "Dhādā lāglo re tor mane" (personal collection) that one the day of the crossing of the Ṣirāṭ Bridge, the responsibility for the entire world will rest with Fatima (*kul duniyār bhār phātimār upar, pulserāt pār haoyār dine*). And Khudi Sai ("Ār janamer kathā ki tor mane paṛe nā," Śarīph 1973, 187, no. 26) sings: "The Mother will take you across the Ṣirāṭ Bridge, sharp as a diamond (*pulsirāte hīrār dhāre pār karibe mā*).

Just as the bridge is described as winding, so is the river of the menstrual flow (*bākā nadī*). "The three bends" perhaps suggest the triangle shape of the *yoni*. "Crossing the bridge" thus seems to mean remaining *āṭal* "steady," that is, preventing ejaculation, while engaging in sex during the *sādhikā*'s menstrual period. Lālan's unpublished song and the songs by Hatem and Khudi Sai mention that Fatima, who represents the Śakti, takes the *sādhak* across because success in *sādhanā* is not possible without the help and cooperation of the Śakti, the *sādhikā*. If she gives way to lust, then the *sādhak* will not be able to control his semen. The "merchandise"

reading *sadāi*. J also has *āllār*, whereas T and M have *sãir*. In verse 3 J¹ appears to read *śeṣ* (spelled *ses*), but the manuscript is not clear, and T and M read *sei se* (spelled *sei śe*). Since the subject *se* also appears at the end of the line, *sei se* is redundant and may be an error for *śeṣe*. I do not have an oral version of this song with which to compare the manuscript readings. LSOLG follows J¹ except for the following readings: In the refrain it gives *ek-din-o* for *ek-din* [The variant in LSOLG was preferred for this version]. In verse 2 it reads *sadāi* and in verse 3 *sei se* following M¹ and T. LG in verse 2 gives *tor e* instead of M¹ and T's reading *tore*.

that "doesn't cost a cent" in the song under discussion is semen, which must not be wasted.[7]

[Sources for the Bangla original include: Salomon's manuscript; J^1 321, T^2:18, no. 32 (source of LPhKK, 133); M^1 no. 15: LSOLG vol. 1, no. 81; LG no. 422 (based on T).]

7. [A note to the manuscript reads: "Seems to imply the opposite (i.e. that it is worthless)!"]

30

এক ফুলে চার রং ধরেছে

Ek phule cār raṃ dhareche

এক ফুলে চার রং ধরেছে
ও সে ভাবনগর ফুলে
কি আজব ে ভা করেছে ॥

মূল ছাড়া সে ফুলের লতা
ডাল ছাড়া তার আছে পাতা
এ বড় অকৈতব কথা
কে পেতাবে কই কার কাছে ॥

কারণ বারির ম সে ফুল
ভেসে বেড়ায় একূল ওকূল
ত বরণ এক মর কুল
সে ফুলের মধুর আশে ॥

ডুবে দেখ মন দেল দরিয়ায়
যে ফুলে নবির জনম হয়
সে ফুল ে সামা ফুল নয়
লালন কয় যার মূল নাই দেশে ॥

ek phule cār raṃ dhareche
o se bhābanagar phule
ki ājab śobhā kareche ॥

mūl chāṛā se phuler latā
ḍāl chāṛā tār āche pātā
e baṛa akaitab kathā
ke petābe kai kār kāche ॥

kāraṇ bārir madhye se phul
bhese beṛāy ekūl okūl
śveta baraṇ ek bhramar byākul
se phuler madhur āśe ॥

ḍube dekha man del dariyāy
ẏe phule nabir janam hay
se phul to sāmānya phul nay
lālan kay ẏār mūl nāi deśe ॥

Four colors in a single flower—
How strangely beautiful
that flower makes the city of love!

The flower has a stem, but no roots;
it has leaves, but no branches.
This story cannot be told.[1]
Who would believe me?
Who could I tell it to?

The flower floats
from bank to bank
in the waters of creation.
A white bee hankers
after its honey.

O mind, dive
into the Ocean of the Heart.
It is no ordinary flower
from which the Prophet was born.
Lālan says, Its roots are not in the ground.[2]

1. The usual meaning of *akaitab* is "not fake," "pure," "genuine." In Bāul songs, however, it is also used in the sense of "cannot be told" (presumably, negative prefix *a-*, Bengali *kahā*, and the Skt. gerundive suffix *-tavya*) often together with the word *kathā* "story." *Akaitab* occurs in Lālan's song in both senses. For an example of it used in the former sense, see "Mind, find out about the act of love" ["Jāno re man sei rāger kāraṇ," LG no. 143; **62**], and for another example of it used in the latter sense, see "Can you find out what shape the lord takes in man" ["Ẏe rūpe sā̃i āche mānuṣe," LG no. 222, **116**].

2. Emendations: Manuscripts: Of the four manuscript versions of the song, the exemplars T and M¹ no. 231 give the first and second verses in the order translated. J¹ and M¹ no. 22 give them in the reverse order, even though T and M¹ were transcribed by the same scribe and M¹ nos. 22 and 231 are in the same manuscript. The only other variant of any note occurs in verse 1: T *pertābe* (misread in LPhKK as *per bhābe*), M¹ no. 231 *pratābe*, and M¹ no. 22 *petābe* are all variants of the archaic denominative verb derived from Skt. *pratyaya* "belief." J¹ has the lectio facilior *peyeche*. Published editions: In the refrain BBOBG has *phule bhāb nagare* for *bhābnagar phule*. LG has *nagare for nagar,* and BBOBG has *dharache* for *kareche*. BBOBG gives verses 1 and 2 verses in the same order. In verse 1 (following the order of the exemplar) BBOBG adds the extra word *ghurteche* after *āśe*. In verse 2 LG has *pratyay habe*, LSOLG has *ke tā pābe* and BBOBG has *e phuler bhāb* for T *pertābe*. In verse 3 LG has *śāmānya nay* for *sāmānya phul nay*, and LSOLG has *nay* for *nāi*.

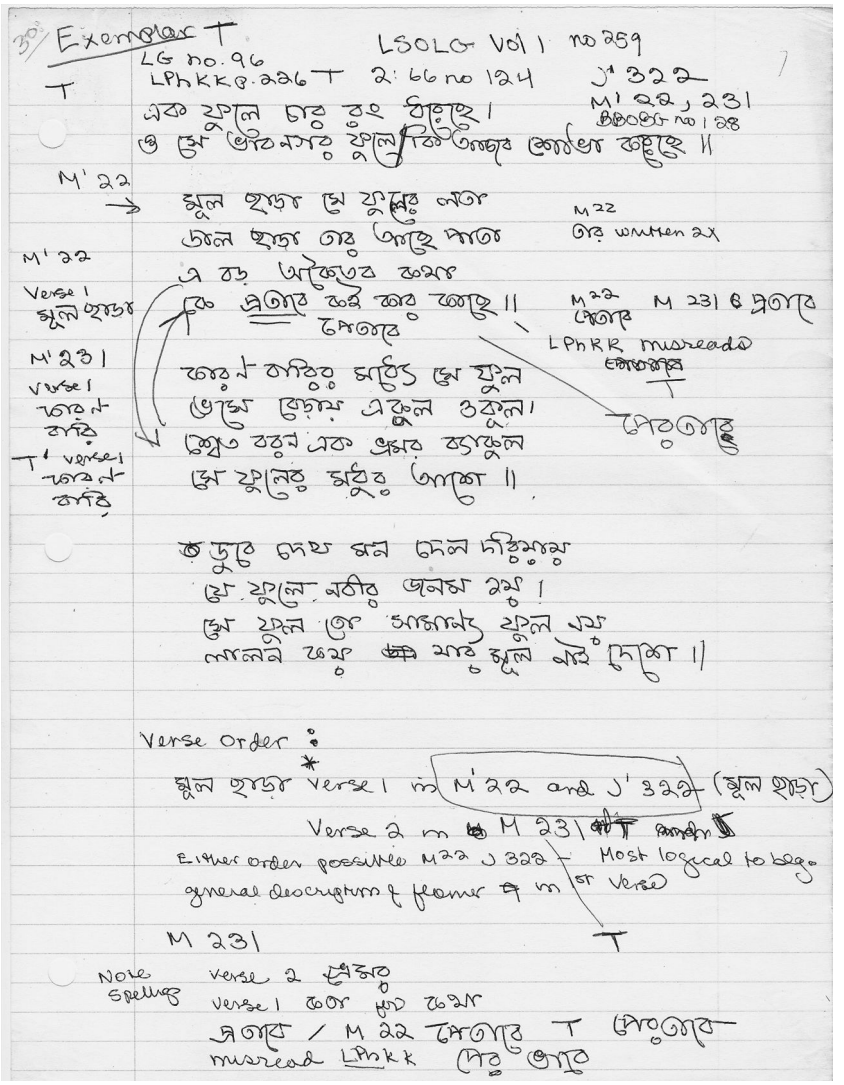
Ek phule cār raṃ dhareche

The conditions that were present when the universe was created are recreated every month in a woman's body when she menstruates. The flower that "floats from bank to bank in the waters of creation" is the material cause of creation present in menstrual blood; "the waters of creation" symbolize menstrual blood. The four colors of the flower are the four different colors (black, white, red, and yellow) that the Bāuls attribute to the blood of the first four days of menstruation. These colors are also connected with the four lights that are said to surround the Absolute's seat in the *lā mokām* and to be experienced by the adept during sexual *sādhanā* (see Pāñja Śāh's song "Ei mānuṣe nabir nūre jhalak dey," translated in Salomon 1991, 292). In addition, they are identified with the elements earth, air, fire, and water and their microcosmic equivalents, the four bodily excretions feces, semen, blood, and urine, which are termed the *cāri candra* "four moons" or *cār piyālā* "four cups." The four cups (*jahari, jabbari, chattari*, and *nūri*) are in turn associated with the three states of *fanā'* "annihilation" [Bng. *phānā*] (i.e., *fanā' fī l-shaykh* "annihilation in the spiritual guide," *fanā' fī l-rasūl* "annihilation in the Prophet" and *fanā' fī llāh* "annihilation in Allah") and the state of *baqā' bi-llāh* "subsistence in God" (see Lālan's song "Karo re piyālā kabul śuddha imāne" [LSOLG vol. 1, no. 76]) and with the Sufi orders Suhrawardī, Chishtī, Naqshbandī, and Qādirī.

The "white bee" hankering after the flower's honey signifies the *sahaj mānuṣ* in female semen who is attracted to the Śakti in menstrual blood.

"The flower from which the Prophet was born" refers to the luminous flower that came from heaven containing Muhammad's light. The light entered Abdullah's body when he received the flower, and through sexual intercourse he in turn transferred it to Amina. The historical Muhammad was born ten months later. (For details, see the annotations to "The world came from the Prophet's body" ["Nabir aṅge jagaṯ paydā hay," LG no. 271; 77]). In this song Lālan equates Muhammad's light from which the world was created with the flower representing the primal Śakti. (On Muhammad as the female principle, see the annotations to "Ahad came as Ahmad" ["Āhāde āhāmad ese nabi nām se jānāle," LG no. 282; 22].)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: J¹ 321, T2:18, no. 32 (source of LPhKK, 133); M¹ no. 15: LSOLG vol. 1, no. 81; LG no. 422 (based on T).]



Salomon's MS for "Ek phule cār raṃ dhareche."

31

এখন আর ভাবলে কি হবে

Ækhan ār bhāble ki habe

এখন আর ভাবলে কি হবে
কৃতিক র লেখাপড়া
  আর কি ফিরিবে ॥

তুষেতে পাড় কেউ যদি দেয়
আর কি তাতে দানা বের হয়
মন হলো সেই তুষের য়
  ব হীন ভবে ॥

ক র উড়ে যায় যমন
ে লমরিচ মিশায় তার কারণ
মন হতো গলমরিচ তমন
  ব কেন যাবে ॥

কথার চিড়ে হাওয়ার দধি
ফলার দিলে নিরবধি
লালন বলে যার তমনি
  কেন না পাবে ॥

ækhan ār bhāble ki habe
kṛtikarmār lekhāpaṛā
  ār ki phiribe ॥

tuṣete pāṛ keu ẏadi dey
ār ki tāte dānā ber hay
man halo sei tuṣer nyāy
  bastuhīn bhabe ॥

karpūr uṛe ẏāy ẏaman
gol-maric miśāy tār kāraṇ
man hato gol-maric taman
  bastu kæn(a) ẏābe ॥

kathār ciṛe hāoyār dadhi
phalār dile nirabadhi
lālan bale ẏār tamani prāpti
  kæna nā pābe ॥

Why worry now?
Does the Creator revise
what he's written?

If you thresh chaff
do you get grain?
Well, your mind is like chaff—
there's nothing inside.[1]

Camphor evaporates
unless you add black pepper.[2]
If your mind were like black pepper,
would your essence have dried up?[3]

Rice flakes of words,
curds of air—
that's the snack[4]
you always prepare.
Lālan says, Why shouldn't you get
what you deserve?[5]

1. *bastuhīn bhabe*: lit. "devoid of substance [or essence] in this world."

2. Lit. "That's why you add black pepper."

3. *bastu kæn ẏābe*.

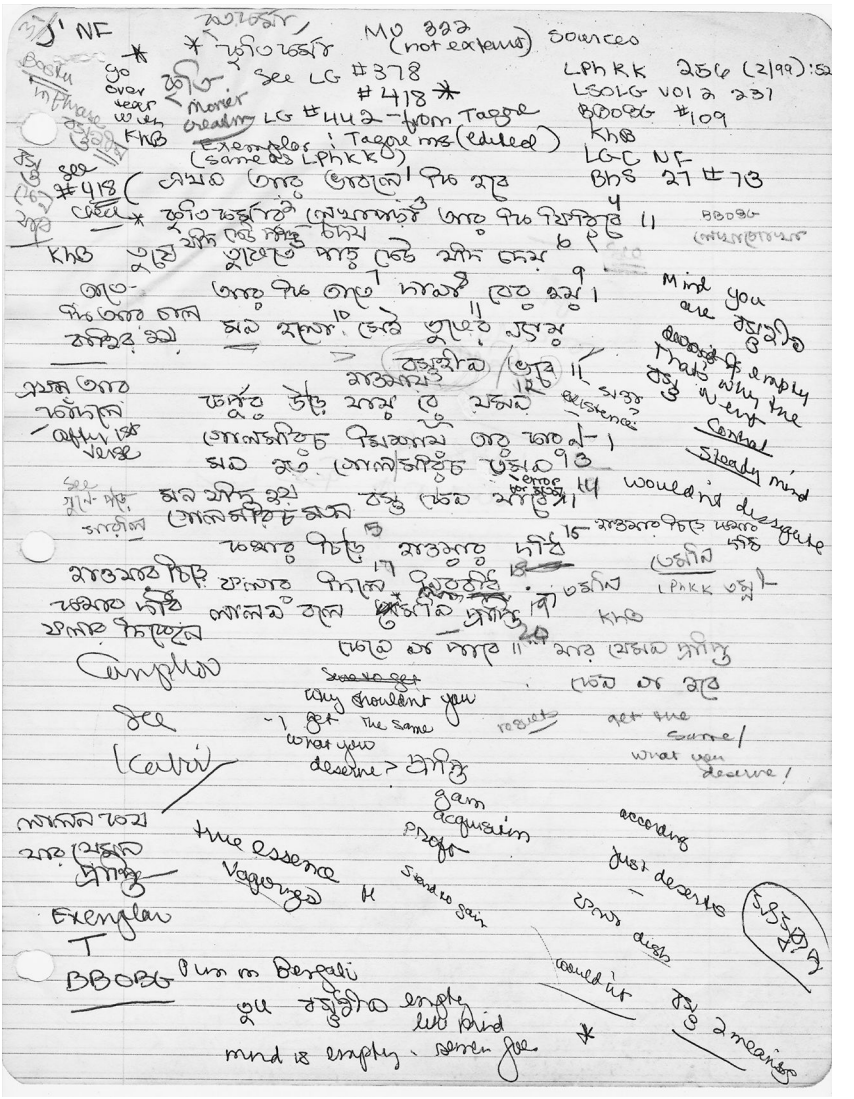
4. "Snack" translates *phalār* (< *phalāhār*, "a meal of fruit"), which consists of refreshments such as fruits, sweets, curds, and rice flakes (*ciṛe*).

5. Emendations: Refrain: Instead of *bhāble* LSOLG has *kā̃dle*. In a rendition of the song by Khodā Bakṣ *kā̃dle* replaces *bhāble* in one repetition of the refrain, indicating that Khodā Bakṣ knew both variants. For *kṛtikarmā* LSOLG and BBOBG has *kṛtakarmer*. For *lekhāpaṛā* BBOBG has *lekhājokhā*. For *phiribe* LSOLG has *sāribe*. Verse 1: LG has *dānādār hay* for T *dānā ber hay. Dār* is obviously a mistake as LG bases the text of this song on T. Verse 2: For *bastu kæn ẏābe* BBOBG has *bastu ẏāy kabe*. Verse 3: T has *dodh*, which is a scribal error for *dodhi* [*dadhi*]. LSOLG, BBOBG, and Khodā Bakṣ's oral version all have *hāoyār ciṛe kathār dadhi* instead of T *kathār ciṛe hāoyār dadhi* (cf. the proverb *kathāy ciṛe bheje nā*). T has *birabadi*, which is a scribal error for *nirabadhi* given in all the other versions cited. For the signature line, instead of T *lālan bale tamani prāpti kene nā pābe*, LSOLG has *ẏæman karma tæmani prāpti phakir lālan kay bhebe*; BBOBG has *lālan bale tæman prāpti kena nā habe*, and Khodā Bakṣ sings *lālan kay ẏār ẏæman prāpti kæna nā habe*; LG has *amni* for *tamani*. There are a number of other variants throughout the text, but they do not appreciably affect the meaning.

Ækhan ār bhāble ki habe

The third verse of this song refers to a practice common in rural Bengal of mixing black pepper with camphor to prevent it from evaporating. "Essence" translates *bastu*, a code word for semen. Lālan says that just as black pepper helps to retard the evaporation of camphor, so a steady mind aids in arresting semen. Lālan uses the same metaphor of camphor for semen in his song "Khāli bhā̃r thākbe re paṛe" [LS no. 215].

[Sources for the original Bangla version: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 52, no. 99; LPhKK, 256; LG no. 442 (based on T); BBOBG no. 109; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 231.]



Salomon's MS for "Ækhan ār bhāble ki habe."

32

এনে মহাজনের ধন বিনাশ করলি পা

Ene mahājaner dhan bināś karli kṣyāpā

এনে মহাজনের ধন বিনাশ
করলি পা
স বাকির দায়ে যাবি যমালয়ে
হবে রে কপালে দায়মাল ছাপা ॥

কৃতিক সেহি ধনী
অমূ মাণিক মণি
করিল কৃপা ে রে করিল কৃপা
সে ধন হারালি রে মন
এমন কি ে র কপাল বদওফা ॥

আন বাজারে এলে
পারের লাভ করে বলে
এখন শূ সে দফা
স রি স মজে কুর
হাতের তীর হারায়ে হলি পা ॥

দেখলি নে মূল ব ধুড়ে
কাঠের মালা নেড়ে চেড়ে
মিছে নাম জপা
লালন ফকির কয় কি হবে উপায়
বৈদিকে রইল ন-চ ঝঁ পা ॥

ene mahājaner dhan bināś
karli kṣyāpā
sadya bākir dāye ẏābi ẏamālaye
habe re kapāle dāymāl chāpā ॥

kṛtikarmā sehi dhanī
amūlya māṇik maṇi
karilo kṛpā tore karilo kṛpā
se dhan hārāli re man
æman ki tor kapāl badaophā ॥

ānanda bājāre ele
byāpārer lābh karbo bale
ækhan śūnya se daphā
saṅgeri saṅge maje kuraṅge
hāter tīr hārāye hali kṣyāpā ॥

dekhli ne mūl bastu dhuṛe
kāṭher mālā neṛe ceṛe
miche nām japā
lālan phakir kay ki habe upāy
baidike railo jñān-cakṣu jhā̃pā ॥

Madman,
you brought the merchant's treasure here
and squandered it.
You'll go to the kingdom of death
for what you owe.
They'll stamp "deported" in your fate.

That rich merchant is the creator.
He stocks all sorts of precious jewels
and was kind to you.[1]
But you, my mind, lost his treasure.
Your fate sure took a bad turn![2]

You came to the market of bliss,
boasting you'd make a killing.
Now you're flat broke.
The battlefield of sin[3]
obsessed you and your wicked friends.
You shot all your arrows
then went mad.[4]

You searched,
but didn't see the true essence.
In vain, you toyed with wooden beads
and muttered God's name.
Lālan Fakir says, What am I to do?[5]
Holy scriptures are blocking my view.

1. Alt. trans.: "had a soft spot for you"; "favored you"; "took pity on you"; had mercy on you."

2. *æman ki tor kapāl badaophā.*

3. "Battlefield of sin" translates *kuraṅga*. The primary meaning of the word as used here is "debauchery," "licentiousness" (lit. "bad play"). But *ku* can mean "sin" and *raṅga* "battlefield," hence "battlefield of sin." Lālan seems to be punning on this meaning, since he uses the image of arrows in the next line.

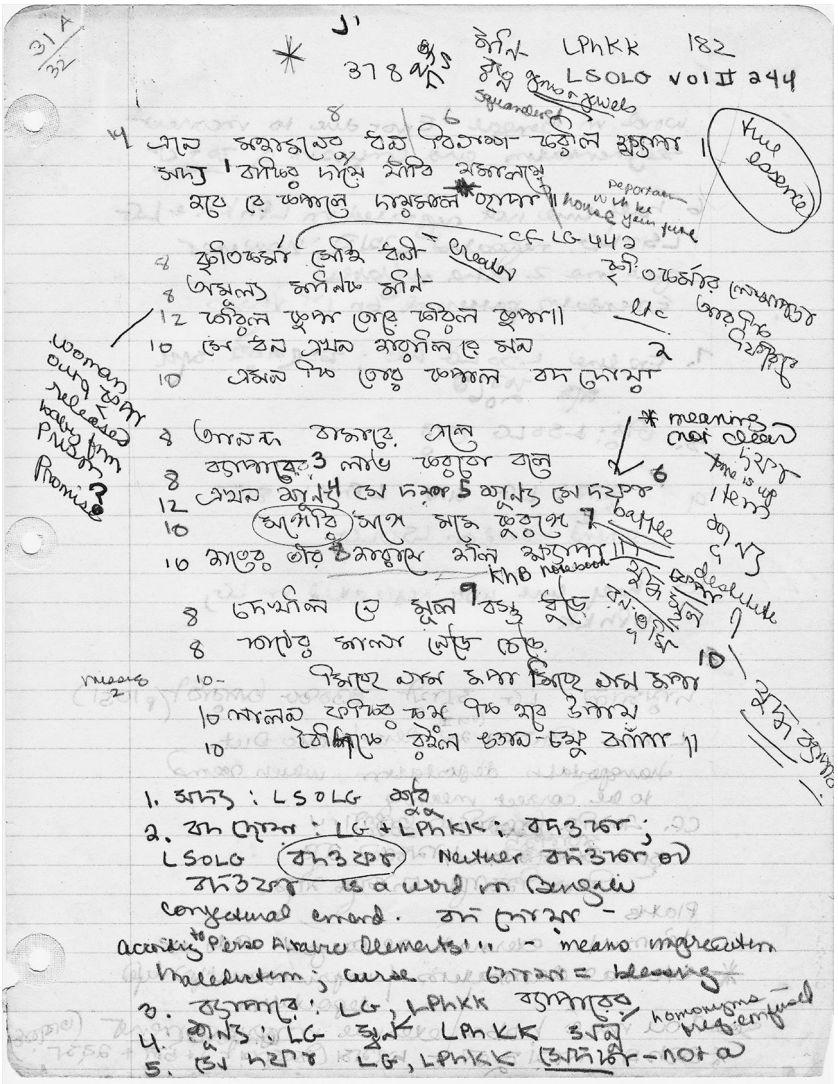
4. Khodā Bakṣ's oral version of the song has *phāpā* "empty" instead of *kṣyāpā* "mad." This variant makes good sense in the context but is not attested to in any of the manuscripts I have examined.

5. [Emendations:] LSOLG: in verse 2 read *kuraṅge* for *kuraṣe* and *tīr* for *tār*. LPhKK: in verse 1 Mitra misreads *badaokā* for *badaophā*. In verse 2 he misreads *sedakā* for *se daphā* and *saṅgeri* for *kusaṅgeri* and in the final verse *mal for mūl*. There is only one minor difference of any significance between the two versions. In the second line of the refrain LSOLG has *śudhu* and T has *sadya*.

Ene mahājaner dhan bināś karli kṣyāpā

"Squandering the merchant's treasure" and "shooting arrows" symbolize the spilling of semen. On death as a metaphor for ejaculation, see the annotations to "Ebār ki sādhane śamān jvālā ẏāy" [LG no. 453; **33**].

[Sources for the Bangla original version include: LSOLG vol. 2 no. 244; T[1]: 32, no. 58; LPhKK 182.]



Salomon's MS for "Ene mahājaner dhan bināś karli kṣyāpā."

33

এবার কি সাধনে শমন লা যায়

Ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy

এবার কি সাধনে শমন লা যায়।
ধ ধ বেদের ম
শমনের অধিকার তায়॥

দান ত তপ য করে
মু ফল পেতে পারে
সে ফল ফুরালে তারে
ঘুরিতে ফিরিতে হয়॥

নি ণ মু সেধে সে
লয় হবে প র ম
সাধন করে এমন
কি সুখে সাধতে চায়॥

পথেরও লমালে পড়ে
ডুবলাম কূপজল মাঝারে
লালন বলে কেশে ধরে
কূলে নেও আমায়॥

ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy।
dharmādharma beder marma
śamaner adhikār tāy॥

dān brata tapa ẏajña kare
mukti phal pete pāre
se phal phurāle tāre
ghurite phirite hay॥

nirbāṇ mukti sedhe se to
lay habe paśur mato
sādhan kare æman prāpta
ki sukhe sādhte cāy॥

pather-o golamāle paṛe
ḍublām kūp-jal mājhāre
lālan bale keśe dhare
kūle neo guru āmāy॥

Now how to worship
to escape the torment of death?[1]
The truth of the Vedas,
piety and sin—
these things are under death's jurisdiction.

Take vows, give charity,
perform sacrifices and austerities:
You may earn the reward of liberation,
but when your reward expires,
you will have to go around again.

Reach nirvana
and be absorbed like an animal.
Why would any devotee[2] *want to worship*[3]
just to gain that goal?

I got into a mess[4] *along the way—*
fell in a well and almost drowned.[5]
Lālan says, O guru,
grab hold of my hair
and pull me to dry ground.[6]

1. Alt. trans.: "Now what's the worship for escaping the torment of death?"; "Now what worship can free you from the torment of death?"

2. *sādhak*: alt. trans.: "sadhu."

3. Lit. "For what happiness would any adept . . ."

4. [In another of her manuscripts, Salomon translates this line: "I got into a jam along the way."]

5. *ḍublām kūp-jal mājhāre*: lit. "and plunged into a pond." Lālan seems to use the term *kūpjal*, literally "well water," to mean any body of water cut off from its source. See LG no. 375: "Rākhle sā̃i kūp-jal kare āndelā pukure," "Lord, you made me into stagnant water confined to an isolated pond": *nadīr jal kūp-jal hay / bile bāoṛāte ray / sādhya ki gaṅgāte jāy / gaṅgā nā ele pare*, "When water's cut off from a river, it stagnated in marshes and swamps. Can it ever reach the river if the river doesn't come to it?"

6. "dry ground": lit. "shore," "bank."

Ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy

[Salomon left two sets of annotations for this song; the first covers the song itself, while the second, being more interpretive, treats the song contextually with other songs that cover similar themes, left in boldface.]

[I]

Lālan rejects conventional morality prescribed in the scriptures as the means to escape "the torment of death" because, as Eliade (1965, 96) explains, "Good and evil have no meaning or function except in a world of appearances, in profane and unenlightened existence. From the transcendental viewpoint, good and evil are, on the contrary, as illusory and relative as all other pairs of opposites."

By "liberation" (*mukti*) Lālan here means heaven. Going to heaven is also not desirable, as it is only a temporary arrangement; when one's time in heaven is over, one has to "go around again."

Finally, Lālan rejects nirvana, total absorption in God, since complete non-duality would mean that the adept could not experience the bliss of union. In some songs, however, Lālan seems to take a non-dualistic position; see, for example, LG no. 158 ["Sāi darbeś ẏārā āpnār phānā kare adhare miśāy tārā"], where he describes the state of *phānā* (Ar. *fanā*) as the merging of one form into the other and compares it to the mixing of pond water and river water, both into a single stream. Evidently he espouses neither total dualism nor total monism, but rather holds a position similar to that of Gauṛīya Vaiṣṇava *acintyabhedābheda*, "unimaginable difference and non-difference."

[Sources for the Bangla original version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 453; V[1]b no. 135.]

[II]

[The notes to this section were somewhat jumbled and incomplete in Salomon's typescript, and certain paragraphs were more complete than others. Run-on sentences and incomplete ideas have been edited carefully while trying to preserve as much as possible the section's overall original content.]

This song is one of at least six that begin with almost the same question concerning the type of worship that will lead the adept to the desired goal, expressed variously as escaping death, obtaining the Uncatchable One or

the Unseen (*ālek*) Śā̃i, or reaching the steady state (*aṭal-prāpti*).[7] This group of songs does not actually respond to the question directly, but rather goes on to mention rituals and *sādhanā*s that in Lālan's view are ineffective, beliefs that are false, and sects that are in error.

Escaping **Death** is a central theme in Lālan's songs and one of the prime motivations for *sādhanā*. Death refers to ejaculation as well as physical death. Seminal emission is considered a kind of death for two reasons: (1) [Some] Bāuls believe that semen is made up of *śukrakīt*, living organisms containing the male divine principle. When semen is ejaculated, these organisms die. (2) In addition, the spilling of semen depletes the body of its vital energy necessary for good health and long life and ultimately leads to death.

Vedas (*bed*) refers to scriptures in general. The term *bed* includes the Qur'an as well as Hindu religious texts. For example, in the song "Ẏe jan sādhaker mūl goṛā" [LG no. 234; **113**] by Lālan, it occurs in an Islamic context, as it does also in these lines of a song by Rasik (BBOBG no. 436): "The Fakir path is outside the Vedas. [Fakirs] don't heed the book of the Qur'an without the Prophet's way."[8] [Many] Bāuls emphasize the orality and secrecy of their teachings, which can be obtained only from the guru and not from scriptures. *Bed* when followed by the words *bidhi or bidhān* (lit. "prescriptions of the Vedas"; see, for example, Lālan's song "Ṣaṛo rasik bine kebā tāre cene," LG no. 137) means scripturally based ritualism, whether Hindu or Muslim, and is the opposite of the path of love (*prem*). Worship prescribed by scriptures is based on *anumān* (conjecture) rather than on *bartamān* (lit. "existing," i.e., what exists and is perceivable by the senses), as *prem sādhanā* is. In contrast to *prem sādhanā*, it is not centered on human beings and the human body and its substances (*bastu, ras*), nor is it performed with a female partner. Moreover, it is motivated by desire (*kām*), that is, sex ending in ejaculation rather than by passion (*rāg*) or love (*prem*), which requires seminal retention or limited seminal emission. As Rasik explains (BBOBG no. 336): "A passionate man (*rāgī*) retains his seed. He opposes desire and doesn't obey the rules of the Vedas."[9]

7. See the following songs: "Ki sādhane āmi pāi go tāre" (LG no. 125), "Kon sādhane tāre pāi" (LG no. 123), "Ki sādhane pāi go tare" (LG no. 126), "Kirūp sādhaner bale adhar dharā yāy" (LG no. 50), and "Kāre āj sudhāi se kathā" [LG no. 328; **40**].

8. *bed chāṛā phakirer ei dhārā / māne nā ketāb-korān, nabīr tarīk chāṛā.*

9.

rāgī ūrdhvarati kāmbirodhī
beder bidhān māne nā.

See Openshaw's discussion of *bedbidhi* (2002, 197–198).

Lālan rejects notions of **piety and sin** (*dharmādharma*) as set down in scriptures and imposed by society as the means to escape the torment of death because they are relative and therefore false; they have no meaning except in the impermanent, unenlightened world of ordinary creatures (*jīb*). In "Pāp puṇyer kathā āmi kāre bā śudhāi" (Hosen 1998 [LS],vol. 2, no. 502) Lālan explains that standards of piety and sin (*pāp pūnya*, synonymous with *dharmādharma*) differ according to "society and situation" (*deś samasyā*). He observes that in Tibet polyandry is an accepted practice, but in his own country a woman who marries more than one husband would be punished as a whore. Christians eat the meat of cows and pigs, yet Hindus and Muslims are repulsed by it. Since there is no single standard for all people, Lālan concludes that conventional notions of right and wrong are false constructs. Lālan also rejects conventional notions of piety and sin because one often does virtuous acts, such as those mentioned in the first verse, and avoids sinful deeds for one's own benefit for a reward either in this life or in the next. Bāuls criticize such actions as *hetu*[10] (having a selfish motive), since they stem from desire; their prime motivation is the achievement of one's own happiness (*ātmasukh*). They are actions characteristic of a person caught in *saṃsāra* and so are under death's jurisdiction.

In contrast, those who know pure love (*śuddha prem*) act without any selfish motives (*nirhetu*; also *nihetu* and *niḥhetu*). They are totally absorbed in the beloved and have no self-awareness (*ātmasmṛti*). They have no fear or shame and do not distinguish between opposites such as piety and sin, purity and impurity. They also reject all categories that divide people such as caste, religion, and gender, viewing everyone as the same. Thus in "Se bhāb sabāi ki jāne" (LSOLG vol. 2, no 330 [LG no. 361]) Lālan says that "at the sight of Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs lose all awareness of piety and sin."[11] In "Gaur ki āin ānilen nadīyāy" [BBOBG no. 75] he describes the new set of laws based on love that Caitanya brings to Nadīyā as having "nothing in it you would call piety or sin" (*dharmādharma kichu nāi tāte*) and as leveling caste and wiping away distinctions based on purity and impurity, touchability and untouchability.[12]

10. The special sense in which the word *hetu* (and its negative *nirhetu* and *hetuśūnya*) are used in Bāul songs reflects the influence of Bengali Vaiṣṇavism. The Caitanya Caritāmṛta (2.24, śloka 2) quotes a verse from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (1.7.10) containing *ahaituki*, the negative adjective of *hetu*, and the commentary of that verse (2.24.20) defines *hetu* as enjoyment (*bhukti*). See Dimock (1999, 720 and 722–723).

11. *gopīr pāp-puṇyer jñān thāke nā kṛṣṇa-daraśane.*

12. Dimock (1966, 108), writing about the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā doctrine of equality or sameness, relates the Sahajiyā practice of treating Brahman and untouchable, pure and impure

The **reward of liberation** (*mukti*) is heaven. By going to heaven one does not escape death because, according to Hindu belief, heaven is only a temporary state. As Lālan remarks in "Kāre bale aṭal prāpti" (LSOLG vol. 2, no. 221 [LG no. 439]), "The happiness you get from heaven doesn't last forever. Some go to heaven, commit a sin, and then come back to earth again."[13] ([See also the reference to *behesta*] in "Ki kari kon pathe ẏāi" [LG no. 12; **43**]). **Nirvana** (*nirbāṇ mukti*), total absorption in the absolute, is also not a desirable goal according to Lālan, since complete non-duality would mean that the adept could not experience the bliss of union. Echoing Ramprasād,[14] Lālan asks in the eponymous opening line of "Cini haoyā majā ki khāoya majā" (LSOLG vol. 1, no. 206): "Is it more fun to become sugar or to eat it?" And in a later verse, after describing *nirbāṇ mukti* in the same words as in the song under discussion, he adds: "If sugar consumes sugar, can you know whether it brings pleasure or pain?"[15]

alike to the Tantric notion of the conjunction of opposites: "The apparent duality of things must be destroyed before there can be a reversion to the true and ultimate unity, the undisturbed blissful state of *sahaja*." On the one hand Bāuls reject conventional notions of piety and sin, but on the other they have their own beliefs as to what constitutes a sin. See the annotations to "E deśete ei sukh halo" [LG no. 413; **27**].

13.

svarge theke sukh paoya
sei to nahe cirasthāyī //
keha ẏeye svargabāse
pāp hale pher bhabe āse.

14. Rāmprasad says in "Kāj ki re man ẏeye kāśī" (Rāy 1971, no. 332):

What's the use of Nirvana?
It's like water merging with water.
O it's no good to become sugar.
I love to eat it.

nirbāṇe ki āche phal, jalete miśāy jal /
ore, cini haoyā bhālo naẏ (man) cini khete bhālobāsi.

15. *cinite cini khāẏ tāte ki jānā yāẏ / duḥkha sukha bojhā.*

In some songs, however, Lālan seems to take a monistic position. For example, in "Sā̃i darbeś ẏārā" (LG no. 158) he says that Sā̃is and Darveshes annihilate themselves and merge into the uncatchable and compares the state of *phānā* [Ar. *fanā'*,"annihilation"] to the merging of pond water and Ganges water into a single stream. An intermediate position between dualism and monism similar to that of Gauṛiya Vaiṣṇava *acintyabhedābheda*, "unimaginable difference and non-difference," could explain the seeming inconsistency, but I have not come across any songs that provide evidence that Lālan holds such a view. [See, however, Salomon's comment on the term *acintyabhedābheda* in the first section of the commentary to this song.] Inconsistency is more the rule in Bāul songs than the exception. It is s*ādhanā*

Lālan emphasizes devotion (*bhakti*) over liberation (*mukti*). In the second verse of "Ki sādhane āmi pāi go tāre" (LG no. 125), he explains, clearly influenced by Caitanya Caritāmṛta 2.24.21, that *mukti* is selfish worship.[16] In contrast, *bhakti* is *nirhetu* and results in pure love (*śuddha prem*). In "Pāro nihetu sādhan karite" (LG no. 33) Lālan remarks, perhaps in answer to the opening question of the song translated here: "If you can worship selflessly (*nirhetu sādhan*), you'll leave behind old age and death. It doesn't exist in that land." He further says, "Take refuge in devotion, not liberation, and pure love will grow—a love that gets the Lord's approval."[17] The object of devotion is not some hypothetical deity but rather, as Duddu (Jāhāṅgīr no. 72) spells out, a woman: "The root of worship is pure devotion and the vessel of devotion is a woman."[18]

that is primary, and not any particular theology. Nathan and Seely (Sena 1982, 12) note that Rāmprasād too "seems on occasion to contradict himself about the desired end of salvation." Sometimes he expresses the desire to merge with the Goddess and sometimes just to remain in proximity to her. [Salomon's manuscript also here contains the following question in the main text, demonstrating her continued grappling with the exact nature of the "ultimate state" according to fakirs: "(Check what fakirs believe about whether the ultimate state is dualistic or monistic. Do they have an explanation of Lālan's seemingly inconsistent position on monism vs. dualism?)"]

16.

pañcaprakār muktir bidhi
aṣṭadaś prakāre siddhi
e sakal kay hetu-bhakti
ihār baś nāi ālek sãiji mere //

Rites for the five kinds of liberation
and the eighteen kinds of enjoyment;
these are all called selfish worship.
My unseen lord isn't won over by them.

17.

pāro nirhetu sādhan karite
ẏāo re cheṛe jarāmṛta nāi ẏe deśete //
. . .

muktipad tyajiye sadāy
bhakti pad rekhe (error for rekho) hṛday,
śuddha premer habe uday,
sãi rājī yāte.

18.

sādhaner mūl śuddha bhakti
bhakti pātra han prakṛti.

Well signifies the vagina of a woman who does not help her partner retain his semen. The **guru** whom Lālan begs to rescue him from drowning, that is, ejaculation, is most likely the *sādhikā*.[19] (Cf. Lālan's "Pār karo dayāl āmāy keśe dhare," LSOLG vol. 1, no. 3 [LG no. 402], which also uses the metaphor of the well and the trope of asking someone, in this case the "merciful one," i.e., the *sādhikā*, to pull him by the hair to the other side.) The *sādhanā* based on love and having no selfish motives is the worship "to escape the torment of death." This worship, of course, involves sexual intercourse and the reversal of the flow of semen, going against the current of the natural course of birth and death. Lālan sums up what such worship involves in the following verse from "Se bhāb sabāi ki jāne" [LG no. 361]:

You can catch the uncatchable
by selfless love (niḥhetu bhāb).

Unsteady, you're a mortal creature;
steady, a god.
Does that make you a connoisseur of love?
A connoisseur is caught up in the confecting of syrup (ras).

Bāuls advocate neither being unsteady (i.e., ejaculating) nor being steady (i.e., celibate or practicing total seminal retention).[20] Semen has to be made to descend from the *sādhak*'s *sahasrār* or *ājñā-cakra*, heated through sexual intercourse in the fire of the woman's vagina, and according to some even ejaculated. This turns it into a thickened substance likened to molasses or rice pudding, which is then taken back up to the head. By reversing the direction of the flow of semen and bringing it up to his head, the *sādhak* is able to also reverse the course.

[Nevertheless,] in song after song Bāul poets refer to themselves as *pāpī* in the sense that they have ejaculated and ask the guru, who is often the *sādhikā*, to save them (i.e., help them gain control over semen). Since conventional religion allows the indiscriminate spilling and does not define it as a sin, it is not a worship for escaping death.

19. Note that in this song, as in the songs of crossing (*pārer gān*) in which he is probably addressing the *sādhikā*, he does not give Siraj Sā̃i's name in the *bhaṇitā* (see the discussion of "strategies of secrecy" in the introduction). [This introduction to our knowledge does not exist in Salomon's manuscripts.]

20. For another interpretation of "steady," see the discussion in the annotations to "Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ" [LG no. 143; **62**].

In contrast, worship for love (*prem upāsanā*) is based on nondiscrimination beyond opposites and is *nirhetu*, "without desire for one's own benefit." Piety and sin are relative and therefore belong to the plane of profane existence over which death has power. Gaur and (the) gopīs, who follow the path of pure love, are not bound by convention nor rituals. Their worship is *nirhetu*:

niḥhetu bhāb adhar dharā
ṭale jib aṭale īśvar
tāite ki hay rasik nāgar
rasik bibhor ras bhiyane [LG no. 361].

The *rasik* is not concerned with conventional standards of morality; his concern is with *ras*. Lālan says that notions of "piety and sin" sanctioned by conventional religion lead to death because one does good deeds and avoids bad deeds for some reward, whether it is in this world or in the next. This is *hetubhakti*, "worship for a particular purpose." It is desire for one's own happiness. Bāul worship, in contrast, is *hetuśūnya* or *nirhetu*, "beyond notions of sin and virtue." The models are the gopīs, [who] transgress all without desire for their own happiness, only for Kṛṣṇa's *kām*: [see] "Gandhahīn sei ẏe prem hetuśūnya sādhanā," and "Pāp puṇya āpan hāte" ([Jāhāṅgīr no.] 162).

Lālan catalogs what he considers the useless rituals, misguided goals, and false beliefs of Hindus, Muslims, and even Christians, and explains what sets his beliefs and practices apart from them. In a couple of songs in which Lālan singles out specific religious traditions for criticism, [he] does so obliquely, putting the objections in someone else's mouth.

Lālan characterizes his worship, which he terms *mānuṣer karaṇ*, "worship of the human being," as *hetuśūnya* or *nirhetu* "worship for its own sake, without desire for results." He does not place any importance in the name of God:

["Gaur ki āin ānilen nadīyāy" (BBOBG no. 75)]

What law did Gaur bring to Nadīyā
It's impossible for anyone to follow.

His behavior is weird
and his judgments are too.
It's a terrifying thing to hear about
let alone to watch.

There's nothing in it
you'd call piety or sin.
He sings only praises of love.
He doesn't obey caste rules
for he's made all castes one.

He doesn't know pure from impure.
He always eats seven meals
and then bathes once.
He makes the impossible possible, touches
what people are loathe to touch.

Pāñja Śāh in his song in praise of women, "Bhajan-sādhan karbi re man kon rāge" (Haque [1990], no. 137), takes up the subject of abuse of women together with harm to one's guru (*meye mero nā re bhāi, mārle guru mārā hay*). Khodā Bakṣ informed me that during his *khilāphat* ceremony he repeated the following promise: "If you destroy Hindu temples you'll be forgiven. If you set the mosques of Muslims on fire, you'll be forgiven. But if for your own benefit you even hurt the feelings of another person, you'll never be forgiven" (*tumi hindur debālay cūrṇabicūrṇa karo māph habe, musalmāner masjide agni nikṣep karo māph habe, kintu nijer svārther janya parer dele āghāt dile seṭā kono dine māph habe nā*). As Lālan explains in the opening of his remarkable song ["Pāp puṇyer kathā āmi kāre bāśudhāi," LS no. 502]: "What is a sin in one land is a virtue in another." He goes on to give two examples of customs that differ according to "society and situation."

Ejaculation is considered a selfish action and is strongly condemned in Bāul songs because it is done for personal pleasure and is equated with death itself. Whereas ejaculation dooms the adept to remain caught in *saṃsāra*, sexual intercourse without ejaculation or with limited emission is the worship "to escape the torment of death." By "going against the current" and bringing semen back up to his head, the *sādhak* reverses its natural course, thereby preventing death, that is, the spilling of semen. Such intercourse is praised as selfless (*nirhetu*) because both the *sādhak* and *sādhikā* focus on their partners rather than on themselves. The *sādhak* concentrates on giving the *sādhikā* pleasure through long-lasting sexual intercourse. In turn, the *sādhikā* helps the *sādhak* to retain his semen and will even push him away should she realize he is about to ejaculate.

The Bāuls put their own spin on what constitutes a sin; in all these songs the sin is ejaculation.[21] It is condemned as a selfish action motivated by *ātmasukh*, and also by desire for progeny, which only serves to perpetuate the cycle of birth and death (see the annotations to "Mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ" [LG no. 456; **103**]). Moreover, [some] Bāuls advocate *ahiṃsa* (nonviolence) and believe that ejaculation kills *śukrakīṭ*.

However, in at least two songs, "Bhajaner nigūṛh kathā ẏāte āche" (LG no. 376) and "Aṭalo rūper sarobar śrīrūp se ghāṭer gheṭelā" (Jhā, 59, no. 198), Lālan indicates that he considers Tantras as authoritative sources and recommends reading them.[22] Jhā (1995, 204) notes that Lālan knew Śivacandra Vidyārṇava, the guru of Arthur Avalon, who popularized Tantra in the West. Śivacandra lived in the village of Kumārkhāli, Kushtia, a short distance from Lālan's *ākhṛā*, and his father, Kṛṣṇasundar, was the guru of Lālan's friend Harināth Majumdār, who composed Bāul songs and was known as a *śakher* (amateur) Bāul.

[The following two questions were found at the end of the Salomon's annotations, reflecting further lines of intended research on the above themes:]

1. In "Eneche nabin āin nadīyāte" [LG no. 321] what does *sātbār kheye ekbārkhān / nāi pūjā nāi pāpapuṇya-jñān* refer to?
2. In "Bede ki tār marma jāne" [LG no. 133] does *nīre kṣīre* refer to the mixing of semen and blood? Where and how is it done?

21. Women too are believed to have semen and are enjoined not to ejaculate. [See however Salomon's annotations to Mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ (**103**) for Bāul sexual rituals that do include ejaculation.]

22. "Bhajaner nigūṛh kathā . . ." has the following line:

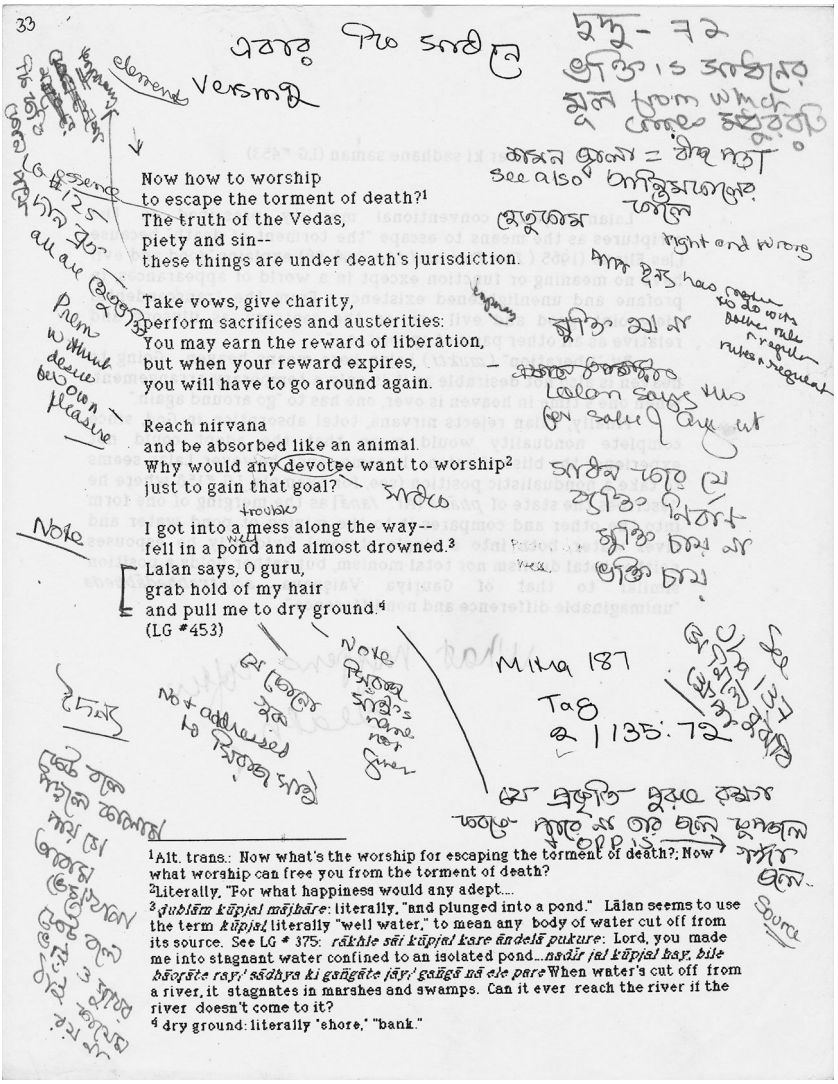
śakti sār tantra paṛo
ghor ẏāy ghuce /

Read the Tantras
whose essence is the Śakti
and the darkness will lift.

In "Aṭalo rūper sarobar . . ." Lālan says:

rasīk tantra dhuṛe ghuce jābe maner gholā /

If the rasik searches the Tantras
the mists clouding his mind will clear.


33

Now how to worship
to escape the torment of death?[1]
The truth of the Vedas,
piety and sin--
these things are under death's jurisdiction.

Take vows, give charity,
perform sacrifices and austerities:
You may earn the reward of liberation,
but when your reward expires,
you will have to go around again.

Reach nirvana
and be absorbed like an animal.
Why would any devotee want to worship[2]
just to gain that goal?

I got into a mess along the way--
fell in a pond and almost drowned.[3]
Lalan says, O guru,
grab hold of my hair
and pull me to dry ground.[4]
(LG #453)

[1] Alt. trans.: Now what's the worship for escaping the torment of death?; Now what worship can free you from the torment of death?
[2] Literally, "For what happiness would any adept....
[3] *ḍubilām kūpjal mājhāre*: literally, "and plunged into a pond." Lālan seems to use the term *kūpjal* literally "well water," to mean any body of water cut off from its source. See LG # 375: *rākhle sāi kūpjal kare āndelā pukure*: Lord, you made me into stagnant water confined to an isolated pond...*nadīr jal kūpjal hay, bile bāṛāte rayr,' sādhya ki gāṅgāte jāy,' gāṅgā nā ele pare* When water's cut off from a river, it stagnates in marshes and swamps. Can it ever reach the river if the river doesn't come to it?
[4] dry ground: literally "shore," "bank."

Salomon's MS for "Ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy."

ঐ

34

ঐ এক অজান মানুষ ফিরছে দেশে

Ai ek ajān mānuṣ phirche deśe

ঐ এক অজান মানুষ ফিরছে দেশে
তারে চিনতে হয় তারে মানতে হয় ॥

শরিয়তের বুনিয়াদে
পাবে না তা ে ে মতে
জানা যাবে মারফতে
যদি মনের বিকার যায় ॥

মূল ছাড়া এক আজ বি ফুল
ফুটেছে সে ভবনদীর কূল
চিরদিন এক রসিক বুলবুল
সে ফুলেতে মধু খায় ॥

 নেছি এক মানুষের খবর
আলেফের জের মিমের জবর
লালন বলে ে স নে ফঁ পর
মু দ ধরলে জানা যায় ॥

ai ek ajān mānuṣ phirche deśe
tāre cinte hay tāre mānte hay ॥

śariyater buniyāde
pābe nā tā kono mate
jānā ẏābe māraphate
ẏadi maner bikār ẏāy ॥

mūl chāṛā ek ājagubi phul
phuṭeche se bhāb-nadīr kūl
ciradin ek rasik bulabul
se phulete madhu khāy ॥

śunechi ek mānuṣer khabar
ālepher jer mimer jabar
lālan bale hos ne phā̃par
murśid dharle jānā ẏāy ॥

An unknown man
roams the land.
You have to know him[1]
and honor him too.

Rely on Sharī'a,
and finding him
is out of the question.[2]
You can reach[3] *him*
only through Ma'rifa,
if you get over
your state of delusion.

A strange flower
without roots
blooms on the banks
of the river of love.
From time immemorial
a passionate nightingale
has been drinking the flower's nectar.

I've heard tell of a man:
zer on alif, zabar on mīm.[4]
Lālan says,
Don't get lost in confusion.
Turn to a murshid
and you'll learn the solution.

1. The gender of the "unknown man" is ambiguous in the original, since the Bengali third person pronoun *se* (here in the objective case, *tāre*) is unmarked for gender.

2. This line is translated according to the variant in BBOBG no. 76. [Salomon's manuscript also has the variant from T: *jāne nā tā sariyate* (*śarīyate*).]

3. Lit. "know."

4. *Zer* (Persian equivalent of Arabic *kasra*) is the vowel marker *i* placed underneath a letter. *Zabar* (Persian equivalent of Arabic *fatḥa*) is the vowel marker *a* placed above a letter.

Ai ek ajān mānuṣ phirche deśe

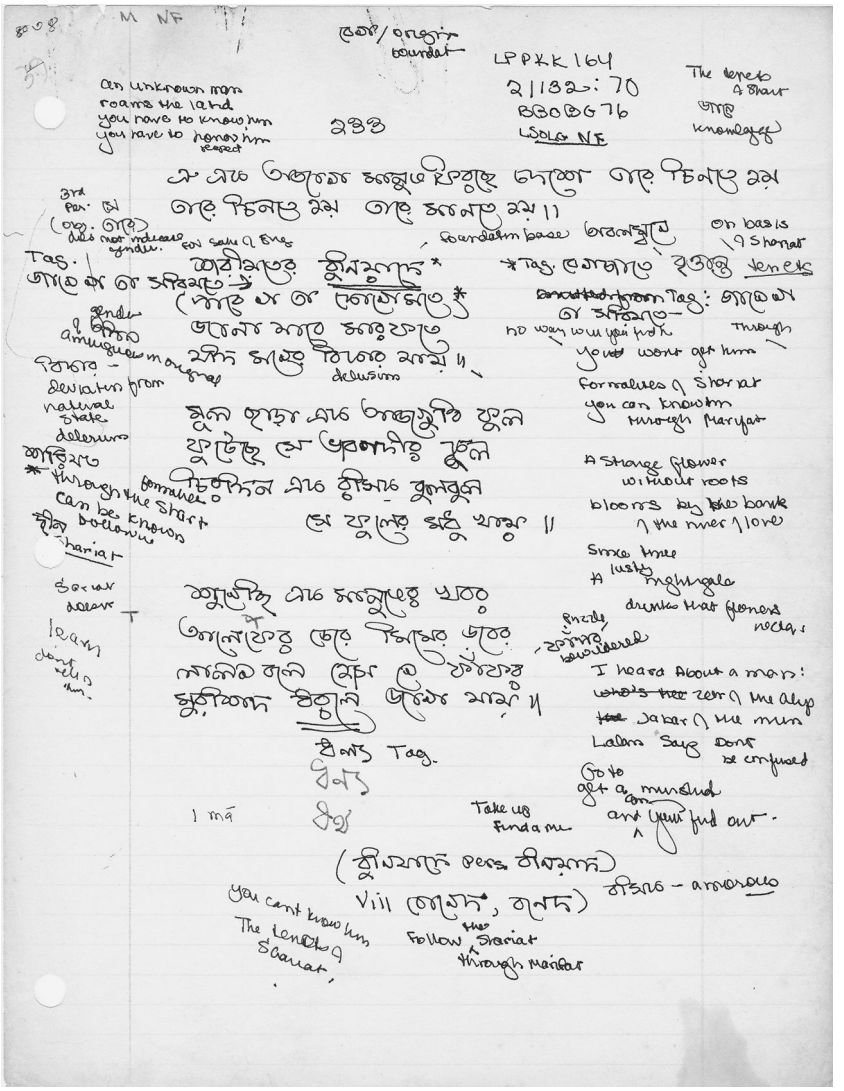
This is one of several songs Lālan composed about a mysterious "unknown man" (*ajān mānuṣ*) who seems to be the *sahaj mānuṣ* "natural man," the form of the Supreme who appears in menstrual blood. (I have discussed these songs at length in a paper, "The Enigma of the Ajān Mānuṣ 'Unknown Man,'" to be published in the volume of papers given at the seminar Enigmatic Modes of Expression held in Jerusalem in 1988–1989.)[5]

In this song Lālan rejects Sharī'a [Bng. *śarīyat*] (Islamic law) as the path leading to the "unknown man." He says that the mysterious figure can be reached only through Ma'rifa [Bng. *māraphat*] (mystic knowlege). The "flower without roots" is the Śakti (female power), and the "river of love" is menstrual blood. The "nightingale" signifies the *ajān* or *sahaj mānuṣ* (also often symbolized by the bee, such as in LG no. 96 ["Ek phule cār raṃ dhareche," **30**]), who is attracted to the Śakti in menstrual blood.

Letter mysticism using the Perso-Arabic alphabet, a common feature of Sufi poetry, is found in a number of Lālan's songs besides the one under discussion. In the riddle in the last verse, "zer on alif, zabar on mīm," "alif" stands for Allah and "mīm" for the Prophet Muhammad. This is not only explicitly stated by Lālan in another song (LG no. 278) but is the conventional symbolic meaning of the letters. The symbolism of the "zer" (*i*) and "zabar" (*a*), however, is more obscure. The key to their meaning in the riddle lies not in their phonetic values, as one would expect, but in their positions and literal meanings: "zer" is placed below a letter and means inferior, while "zabar" is placed above a letter and means superior. Thus by referring to the "unknown man" as "zer on alif, zabar on mīm" Lālan is saying that this figure is inferior to or beneath Allah (symbolized by the "alif") and superior to or above the Prophet (symbolized by the "mīm"). This is a cryptic way of saying what Lālan expresses straightforwardly in at least two other songs (LG nos. 102 ["Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sāi," **114**] and 90 ["Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā," **9**])—that the "unknown man" is "greater than the Prophet, but not as great as Khodā (God)."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; BBOBG no. 76; LG no. 233; LSOLG no. 323.]

5. [The published volume from this seminar, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman, eds., *Untying the Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), unfortunately did not include this paper (nor have the editors been able to locate an unpublished version). It is likely, however, that much of the paper's content was included in the annotations to "Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā" [**9**], which contain a detailed explanation of this recurrent theme in Lālan's songs.]



Salomon's MS for "Ai ek ajān mānuṣ phirche deśe."

ও

35

ও কালার কথা কেন বল আজ আমায়

O kālār kathā kæna balo āj āmāy

ও কালার কথা কেন বল আজ আমায়।
যার নাম নিলে আ ন লেগে
অ লে যায় ॥

তুমি বি নাম ধে
জলে অনল দিতে পা
রাধারে ভুলাতে ে
এবার বুঝি কঠিন হয় ॥

যে কৃ রাধার ওলি
তারে ভুলায় চ বলী
সে কথা আর কারে বলি
ঘৃণায় আমার জীবন যায় ॥

শতেক হঁ ড়ির ন চাকা
রাই বলে ধিক তারে দেখা
লালন বলে ওহে বঁ কা
ে জা হবে মানের দায় ॥

o kālār kathā kæna balo āj āmāy।
ẏār nām śunile āgun lege
aṅga jvale ẏāy ॥

tumi binde nāmṭi dharo
jale anal dite pāro
rādhāre bhulāte toro
ebār bujhi kaṭhin hay ॥

ẏe kṛṣṇa rādhār oli
tāre bhulāy candrābalī
se kathā ār kāre bali
ghṛṇāy āmār jīban jāy ॥

śatek hā̃ṛir byañjan cākā
rāi bale dhik tāre dekhā
lālan bale ohe bā̃kā
sojā habe māner dāy ॥

Why do you talk to me about Kālā, today?
It burns me up to hear his name.

You're my good friend Bṛndā.[1]
But I think this time you could sooner
set water on fire
than soothe Rādhā.[2]

So Candrāvalī has seduced
the bee who stung Rādhā.
Who else can I confide in?
I could die of shame.

That man who has sampled
at least a hundred pots of curry—
damn the sight of him, says Rādhā.
Lālan says, Your anger will set
that crooked fellow straight.[3]

1. *tumi bṛnde* [Salomon's manuscript: *binde*] *nāmṭi dharo:* lit. "You go by the name Bṛndā." The implication is that under ordinary circumstances Bṛndā would be able to calm Rādhā simply because she is her close friend.

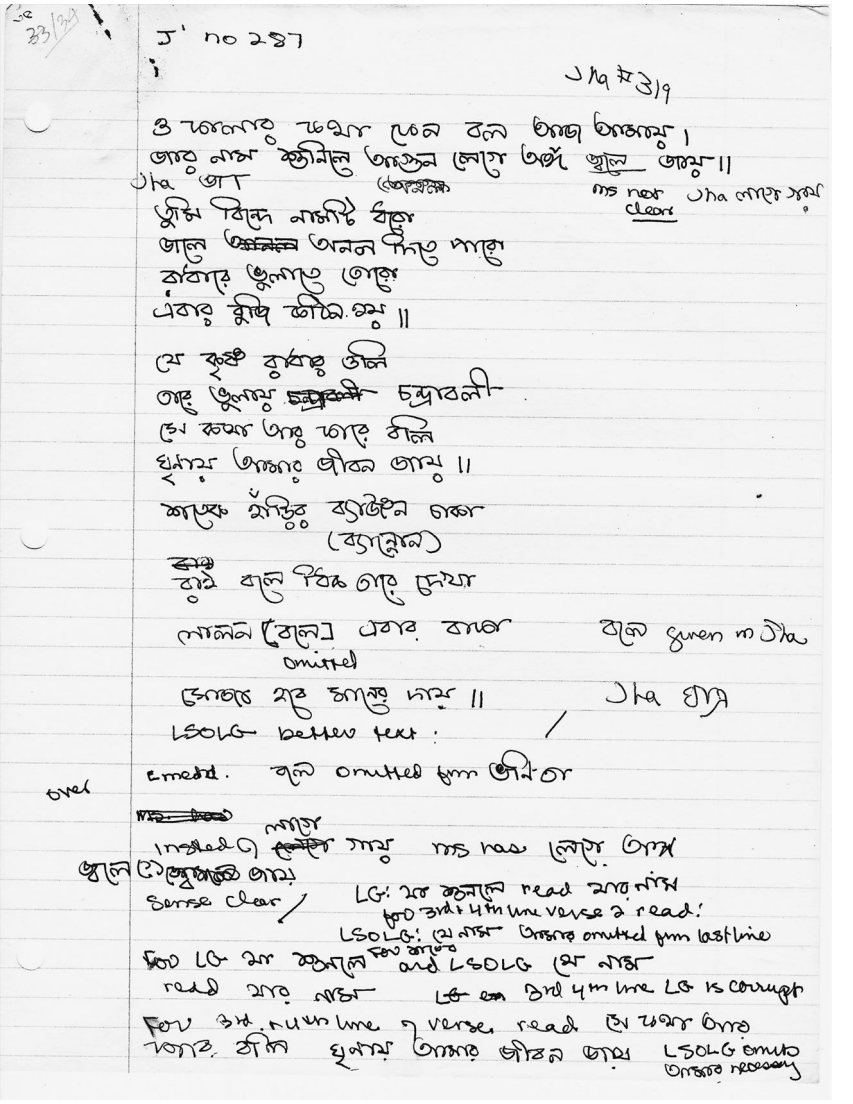
2. Lit. "You may be able to set water on fire, but this time I think you'll find it hard to soothe Rādhā." Although Bṛndā is the patron goddess of the forest Bṛndāban [< Skt. Vṛndāvana], supernatural powers such as "setting water on fire" are not traditionally ascribed to her. I have therefore taken the line in the figurative rather than the literal sense.

3. Manuscript: In the *bhaṇitā,* J¹ omits *bale* after *lālān*. Published editions: For the second line of the refrain in LG and LSOLG read as in J¹: *ẏār nām śunile āgun lege aṅga jvale ẏāẏ*. Verse 2: For LG *e kathā śune ghṛṇāẏ, e jīban ẏāẏ* read *se kathā ār kāre bali, ghṛṇāẏ āmār jīban ẏāẏ*. For LSOLG *e jīban* read *āmār jīban*. Verse 3: For LSOLG *śatek hā̃ṛi cākhā* read *śatek hā̃ṛir byañjan cākhā*. For LG *e bā̃kā* read *ebār bā̃kā*.

O kālār kathā kæna balo āj āmāy

In this song Bṛndā, Rādhā's *sakhī* and messenger to Kṛṣṇa, tries unsuccessfully to mollify Rādhā's anger at her lover for having an affair with her rival Candrāvalī. (See also ["Tomrā ār āmāy kālār kathā bale nā," LG no. 366; **66**] and ["Ẏao he śyām rāi kuñje ār eso nā," LG no. 370; **110**], spoken by Rādhā, and "Nārīr eto mān bhālo nay o rāi kiśorī" [LG no. 367] and "Chār māne maje Kṛṣṇadhanke ceno nā" [LG no. 369], spoken by Bṛndā.) According to Khodā Bakṣ, Bṛndā coaxed Kṛṣṇa into taking up with Candrāvalī, assuming that the inevitable reconciliation between the couple would result in a more passionate love. *Byañjan* "curry" signifies the female sexual organ.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1] no. 287; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 114; LG no. 368; LS no. 269.]



Salomon's MS for "O kālār kathā kæna balo āj āmāy."

36

ও দু নূরের ভেদ বিচার জানা উচিত বটে

O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe

ও দু নূরের ভেদ বিচার জানা
উচিত বটে
নবিজি আর নি প ে দা নূর
সে কি কার ॥

নবির যেন আকার ছিল
তাহাতে নূর চুয়ায় বে
নিরাকারে কি কারে
নূর চুয়ায় ে দার ॥

আকার বলিতে ে দা
শরাতে নিষেধ সদা
আকার বিনে নূর চুয়াতে
মাণ কি ে তার ॥

জাত এলাহি ছিল জাতে
কি প এে সিফাতে
লালন বলে নূর চিনিলে
যে ে র আ র ॥

o duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā
ucit baṭe
nabiji ār nirūp khodā nūr
se ki prakār ॥

nabir ẏæna ākār chilo
tāhāte nūr cuyāy balo
nirākāre ki prakāre
nūr cuyāy khodār ॥

ākār balite khodā
śarāte niṣedh sadā
ākār bine nūr cuyāte
pramāṇ ki go tār ॥

jāt elāhī chilo jāte
ki rūp elo siphāte
lālan bale nūr cinile
ẏeto ghor āndār ॥

You should understand
what sets those two lights apart.[1]
The Prophet and bodiless Khodā—
what sort of lights are they?

The Prophet had a body, it seems.
You say light oozed from him.
But how could Khodā's light ooze
when he has no form?

Islamic law forbids you to say
Khodā has a body.
But what's the proof light oozes
from someone who's bodiless?

The divine essence was in light.[2]
How did it get qualities?
Lālan says, If I recognized the light,
this thick darkness would lift.[3]

1. *O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe*: lit. "You should know how to judge the difference between those two lights." *Bhed* means both "difference" and "mystery," "secret." Either translation is possible here.

2. "Light": see text note 3. [Salomon is translating *jute*, although she notes that *jāte* "essence" is also possible, which is given in the Bengali version above.]

3. Emendations: The first and second halves of the opening line are interchanged in LSOLG and LG. Both begin with the phrase *jānā ucit baṭe*. In verse 1, instead of *coyāy balo*, the oral versions of Khodā Bakṣ and Khorshed Shah have *cuyāilo*. In verse 2 LG has *surte* instead of *śarāte* and omits the following word *niṣedh*. *Ākār* should be given as the first word of the third line rather than the last word of the second line. In the third line of the verse T has *coyāne* and LG has the dialectal variant *cuyāne*. These are the correct readings. The oral versions of Khodā Bakṣ, Khorshed Shah, and Karim Shah, who left out the first verse in his rendition of the song, have *cuyāno*, which violates the rhyme scheme. LSOLG has *cuyāle*. In the last verse T and LG give *jute* "light," whereas the three oral versions I collected and LSOLG give *jāte* "essence." Either variant may be correct.

O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe

This is another song that refers to the theory of creation from drops of liquid light that oozed from the body of Nur Muhammad. As noted previously, only the absence or presence of palpable form "sets the two lights apart," that is, distinguishes God from the Prophet. Since "the Prophet had a body," his light could be perceived because we do not see light but only its receptacle (Corbin [1978]: 116). In addition, he could shed drops of light. As Karim Shah explained, "Whatever oozes, oozes from a body." (*ẏā cuẏāẏ tā deha diẏe cuẏāẏ*). Lālan says that according to Islamic law (Ar. *sharī'a*), Khodā "has no body." Then how did God's light ooze to create the world, he asks? According to Bāul belief, it is both correct to say God is *nirākār* (formless) and that he has *ākār* (form). But he is unknowable in his unmanifest, formless state. When he desired to be known, he revealed the form inherent in him and manifested himself first in the Prophet's light and then in man, whom he made in his own image. As Lālan puts it: "Adam's body is my body said the uncatchable Lord in plain words."

Lālan mentions three stages in the manifestation of the Absolute, *nirākār* "formless," *sākār* "with subtle form" or *svākār* "own form," and *ākār* "form." (Cf. Jilī's three stages in the descent of the Absolute in Nicholson 1983, 94–97.) According to Kalu Shah ("Oi nūr khude raṅe chilo," Āsgar [1991], no. 95), it was in the stage between formlessness and form that Khodā's light oozed: "Allah was not formless then. He had subtle form (*sākār*). In his subtle form light dripped from Him and He gained form" (*ākār*). The Bāul poet Ramjan ("Nairākāre śūnyer upar chilen sā̃i," Śarīph 1973, 67, no. 7) refers rather cryptically to the form that the Lord took: "Ahad is in light. My Lord and Master stood erect in the form of light. Light oozed from Him, you see, and the world was created." Phulbas (private collection, "Dīner sardār nabiji āmār") [is] somewhat more explicit:

He took a body in the form of an alif,
keeping his mīm form hidden.
He revealed his name Ahad.
. . .
The head of the alif split
and a drop of light fell.
Mother in the form of Eve caught it.
Our Lord and Protector was born
in the form of mīm.

Karim Shah explained to me that the alif here represents a *liṅga*. The *mīm* stands for Muhammad, and Eve (*hāoyā*) is the Śakti who was the receptacle or womb for the Lord's seed.

If "the divine essence (*dhāt* [Bng. *jāt*]) was in light" (or, according to the variant, "in pure essence"), Lālan asks, "How did it get qualities" (*ṣifāt* [Bng. *siphāt*])? That is to say, how did the objects of creation come into existence? The relation of essence to qualities is a problem much discussed in Islamic theology. Sufis who hold that Being is one—a doctrine first formulated by Ibn Arabi called *waḥdat al-wujūd*—believe in their essential unity. According to Ibn Arabi (Roy 1983, 151, quoting L. Massignon in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 4, 684), "The existence of created things is nothing but the very essence of the existence of the Creator." Or, to put it another way (Nicholson 1983, 90), "The creation of the world is just this manifestation, accompanied by division and plurality, of the Essence as the attributes, or of Being as the object of thought: and in reality the essence is the attributes." This is also the view of the Bāul fakirs. Lālan sings ("Paṛe bhūt ār hos ne manurāy" [LG no. 215]): "In the essence are the attributes, and in the attributes is the essence." In other words, God encompasses all that is manifest, and all that is manifest is pervaded by God. Man is in God, and God in man. The light immanent in man, that is, the Prophet's light, is no different from the transcendent light of divine essence.

Whereas the Sufi theologians account for the manifestation of attributes in terms of emanations, the Bāuls posit a primal Śakti who brings forth creation, an interpretation reflecting the influence of Tantric philosophy.

[Sources for the original Bangla version: T^2: 35, no. 65; LPhKK, 244; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 82; LG no. 240.]

37

ও ে র ঠিকের ঘরে ভুল পড়েছে মন

O tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man

ও ে র ঠিকের ঘরে ভুল পড়েছে মন।
কিসে চিনবি রে মানুষ রতন ॥

আপন খবর নাই আপনারে
বেড়াও পরের খবর করে
মনরে আপনারে চিনিলে পরে
পরকে চেনা যায় তখন ॥

ছিলি ে থা আলি ে থা
রণ কিছু হে না তা
মন রে কি বুঝে মুড়ালি মাথা
পথের নাই অ ষণ ॥

যার সাথে এই দেশে আলি
তারে আজ ে থায় হারালি
দরবেশ সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় পেট সাকালি
তাই লয়ে পাগল লালন ॥

o tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man।
kise cinbi re mānuṣ ratan ॥

āpan khabar nāi āpanāre
beṛāo parer khabar kare
man-re āpanāre cinile pare
parke cenā ẏāy takhan ॥

chili kothā āli kothā
smaraṇ kichu halo nā tā
man-re ki bujhe muṛāli māthā
pather nāi anveṣaṇ ॥

ẏār sāthe ei deśe āli
tāre āj kothāẏ hārāli
darbeś sirāj sā̃i kay peṭ sākāli
tāi laye pāgal lālan ॥

My mind,
you miscalculated.[1]
Now how will you recognize
the jewel in man?

You don't know your own self,
yet you roam from place to place,
asking about someone else.
Only when you know yourself
can you know the other.

Where were you before?
Where did you come from?
Have you forgotten everything?
What were you thinking
when you shaved your head?
You didn't even look for the right road.

Today, where did you lose the person
who came with you to this country?
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
you were only eager
to fill your potbelly.[2] [3]

1. Lit. "You made a mistake in your accounts."

2. *peṭ sākāli:* lit. "a belly like a sack." *Sākāli* (*sãkāli*) < Portuguese *saccola* is "a bag with two mouths" (Chatterji 1926, 623).

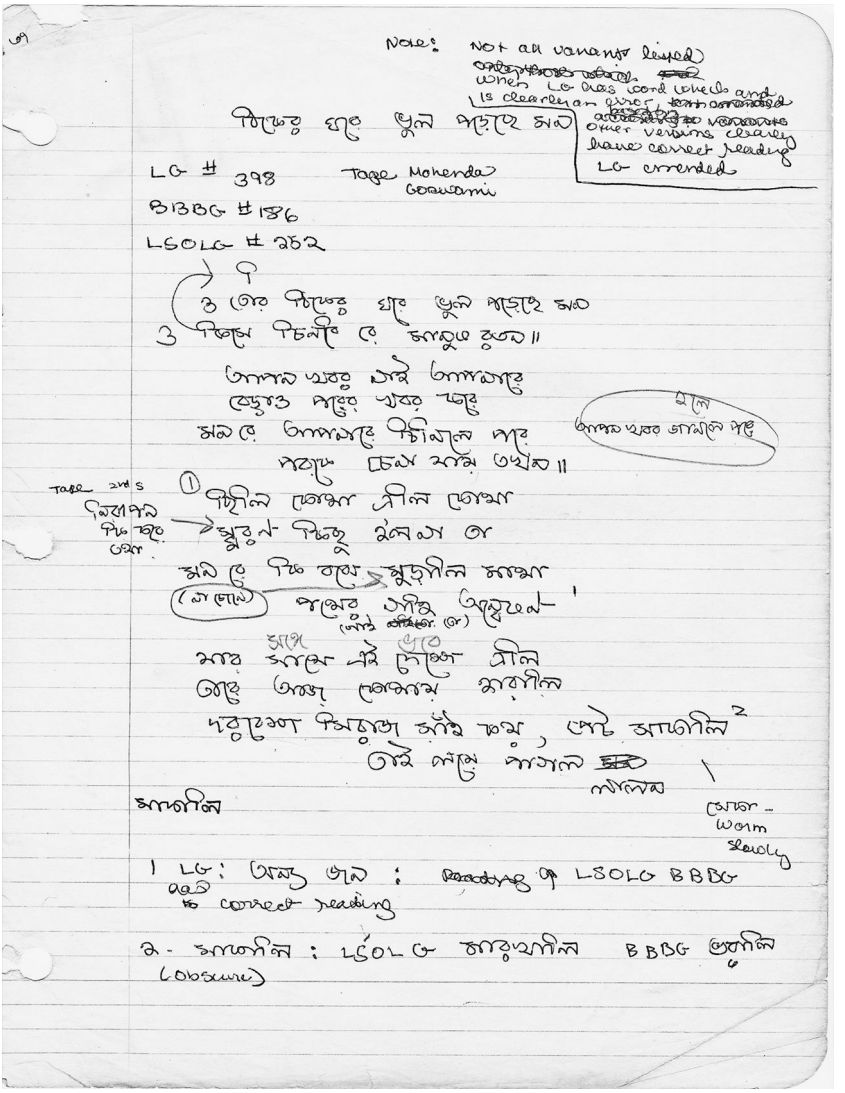
3. Emendations: In verse 2 Mitra incorrectly reads *tār* for *tā*; the final *r* is crossed out in the manuscript.

O tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man

In song after song, Lālan expresses the belief that by knowing yourself you can know God, since the two are one and the same. The Bāul notion that man is no different from God ultimately traces back to the Upaniṣadic equation of *ātman* with *brahman*. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (3.7.23; quoted in Eliade 1976, 95–96), for example, identifies the self with the Supreme and, like the Bāuls, also with semen: "He who is present in the semen, whom the semen does not know, whose body (vehicle) the semen is, that is your self (*ātman*), the inner controller, the Immortal." The Bāul belief in the essential unity of man and God also reflects the influence of the Tantric Buddhist and Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā concept of *sahaj*, which is the true nature of the self, as well as the Sufi identity of the soul with the divine essence.

To cite a few examples of Lālan's use of Sufi sources in songs on this theme: Lālan quotes both in the original Arabic (LG no. 254 ["Man re ātmatattva nā jānile"]) and in Bengali translation (LG no. 255 ["Āmi ki tāi jānle sādhan siddhi hay"]) Ḥallāj's famous saying *anā'l ḥaqq* (Bengali *āmi satya*),"I am the Truth," and he includes in one song (LG no. 273, "Kudarater sīmā ke jāne") the first half of the Sufi saying often quoted by Bāuls: *man ārafa nafsahu fakad ārafa rabbahu*, "He who knows himself knows God." Moreover, Lālan's songs about man's search for the Supreme who, unbeknownst to him, is with him all the time are reminiscent of Sufi texts such as ʿAṭṭār's *Musibatnāme* (The book of affliction), which tells the story of a mystic who wanders the world in search of God only to find him in the "ocean of his own soul."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]:63, no.115; LPhKK no. 196; LG no. 398; BBOBG no. 186; LSOLG no. 252; J[1] no. 439.]



Salomon's MS for "O tor ṭhiker ghare bhul paṛeche man."

38

ও মন আমার দেখে নে জ্ঞান হলো না

O man āmār dekhe śune jñān halo nā

ও মন আমার দেখে নে
জ্ঞান হলো না।
আমি কি করিতে কি করিলাম
আমার দু তে মিশিল ে না ॥

মদন রাজার ড ভারি
হলাম তার আ কারী
আমি যার মা তে বসত করি
চিরদিন তারে চিনলাম না ॥

রাগের আ য় নিলে তখন
কি করিতে পরে মদন
আমার হে কামে ভী মন
মদন রায়ের গাটরী-টানা ॥

উপর হাকিম একদিনে
কৃপা করতেন নিজ ণে
দীনের অধীন লালন ভণে
যেত রে মনের ে টানা ॥

o man āmār dekhe śune
jñān halo nā ।
āmi ki karite ki karilām
āmār dugdhete miśilo conā ॥

madan rājār ḍaṅkā bhāri
halām tār ājñākārī
āmi ẏār māṭite basat kari
ciradin tāre cinlām nā ॥

rāger āśray nile takhan
ki karite pare madan
āmār halo kām-lobhī man
madan rāyer gāṭarī-ṭānā ॥

upar hākim ek-dine
kr̥pā karten nija guṇe
dīner adhīn lālan bhaṇe
ẏeto re maner doṭānā ॥

Though I've been around,
my darkness didn't lift.
I did just the opposite
of what I meant to do.
I spoiled my milk
with cow piss.

King Madan beats an irresistible drum.
I obey his every command.
Yet I never even got to know
the owner of the land I live on.

If you take refuge in love
Madan can do you no harm.
But I succumbed to lust,
and now I'm a coolie
who carries Madan's bags.

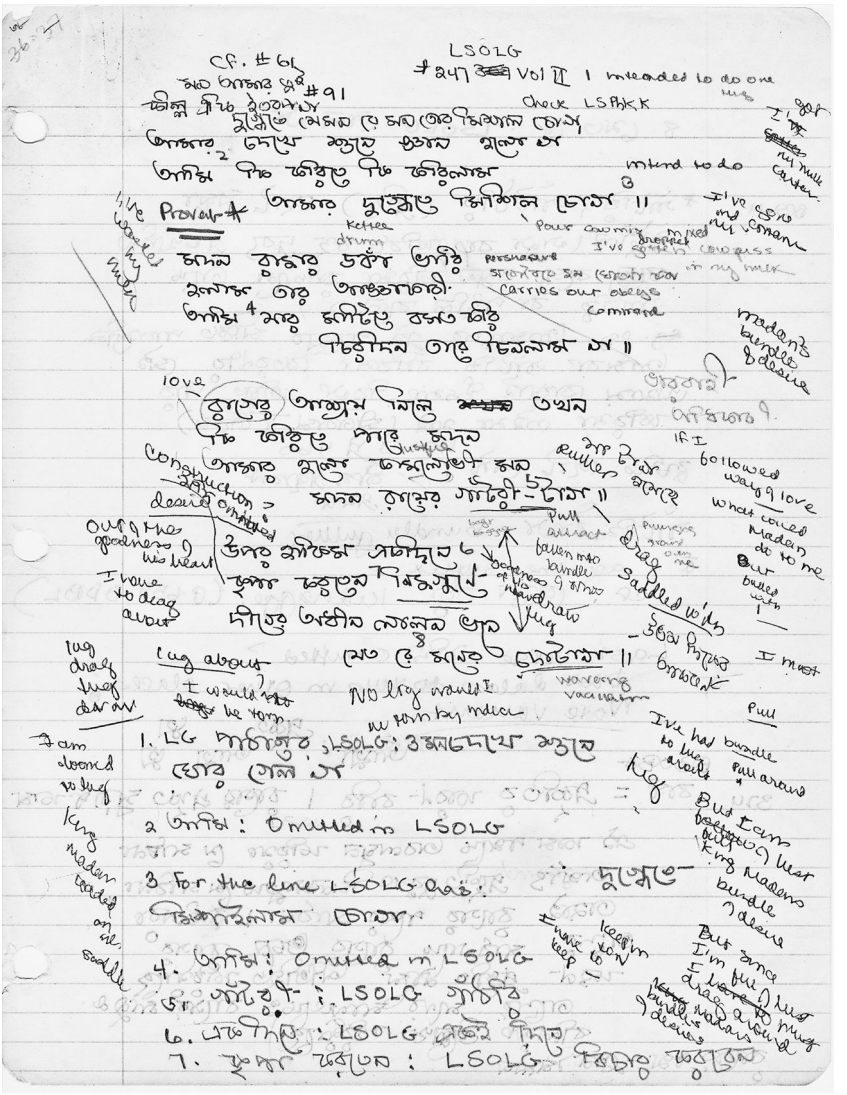
Had the judge up above
seen fit to be merciful
says Lālan, poorest of the poor,
I wouldn't be in this dilemma.[1]

1. Emendations: Only the first line of the song differs to any significant extent among the versions. T and M have *O man dekhe śune ghor gelo nā*, whereas LG has *āmār dekhe śune jñān halo nā*. It is interesting to note that in the table of contents to M, which like T was transcribed by Maniruddin Shah, *jñān* is given in the title instead of *ghor*, but not in the text, suggesting that perhaps these variants originated with Lālan, who may have sung the song slightly differently on different occasions. [The Bengali version provided in this publication gives a third alternative: *O man āmār dekhe śune ghor gelo nā*.]

O man āmār dekhe śune *jñān halo* nā

"Spoiling milk with cow piss" is yet another metaphor for spilling semen. The same image is used in at least one other song by Lālan: "Man āmār tui korli e ki itarpānā" [LG no. 61]. (On milk as a metaphor for semen, see "Madhur dil dariyāy" [LG no. 116; **93**]; see also O'Flaherty 1980, 22–24.) Madan is an epithet of the god Kāma, who incites lust, and the "owner of the land" is the Lord (*sā̃i*). "Love" (*rāg*) signifies intercourse involving seminal retention, while "lust" (*kām*) connotes sex that ends in ejaculation.

[Sources for the original Bangla version: Salomon's manuscript; T^2:93, no. 169; Mitra: 158–159; M 188; LG no. 91; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 247.]



Salomon's MS for "O man āmār dekhe śune jñān halo nā."

39

ও মন তিন ে ড়ায় ে খঁ হলে না

O man tin poṛāy to khā̃ṭi hale nā

ও মন তিন ে ড়ায় ে খঁ হলে না	o man tin poṛāy to khā̃ṭi hale nā
না জানি আর ক ে মার	nā jāni ār karme tomār
কি আছে তাও বুঝলাম না ॥	ki āche tāo bujhlām nā ॥
লোহা জ কামারশালে	lohā jabda kāmār-śāle
যে প থাকে লে	ẏe parẏanta thāke jvāle
ভাব যায় না তা মরিলে	svabhāb ẏāy nā tā marile
তেমনি মন তুই একজনা ॥	temani man tui ek-janā ॥
অনুমানে জানা গেল	anumāne jānā gelo
চুরাশি ল র ফের পড়িল	curāśi lakṣer phero paṛilo
আর কখন কি করবি বে	ār kakhan ki karbi balo
হয় না সে বিবেচনা ॥	hay nā se bibecanā ॥
দেব দেবতার বাসনা যে	deb debatār bāsanā ẏe
মানুষও-জ র লাগিয়ে	mānuṣ-o janmer lāgiye
লালন কয় সে মানুষ হয়ে	lālan kay se mānuṣ haye
মানুষের করণ জানলে না ॥	mānuṣer karaṇ jānle nā ॥

O my mind,
refined three times
and still not pure—
I can't imagine
what you did wrong
in your last life.[1]

The iron in a blacksmith's shop
is pliable as long as it's hot.
Some people have natures
even death can't change.
You, my mind are one of them.

I figure you made the rounds
8,400,000 times to get this birth.
Tell me, what will you do with it,
and when will you do it?
You haven't given it a thought.

Even the gods want to be human
Lālan says, You were born a man,
but you don't act the part.[2] [3]

1. Alt. trans.: "I can't imagine what you did in your last life."

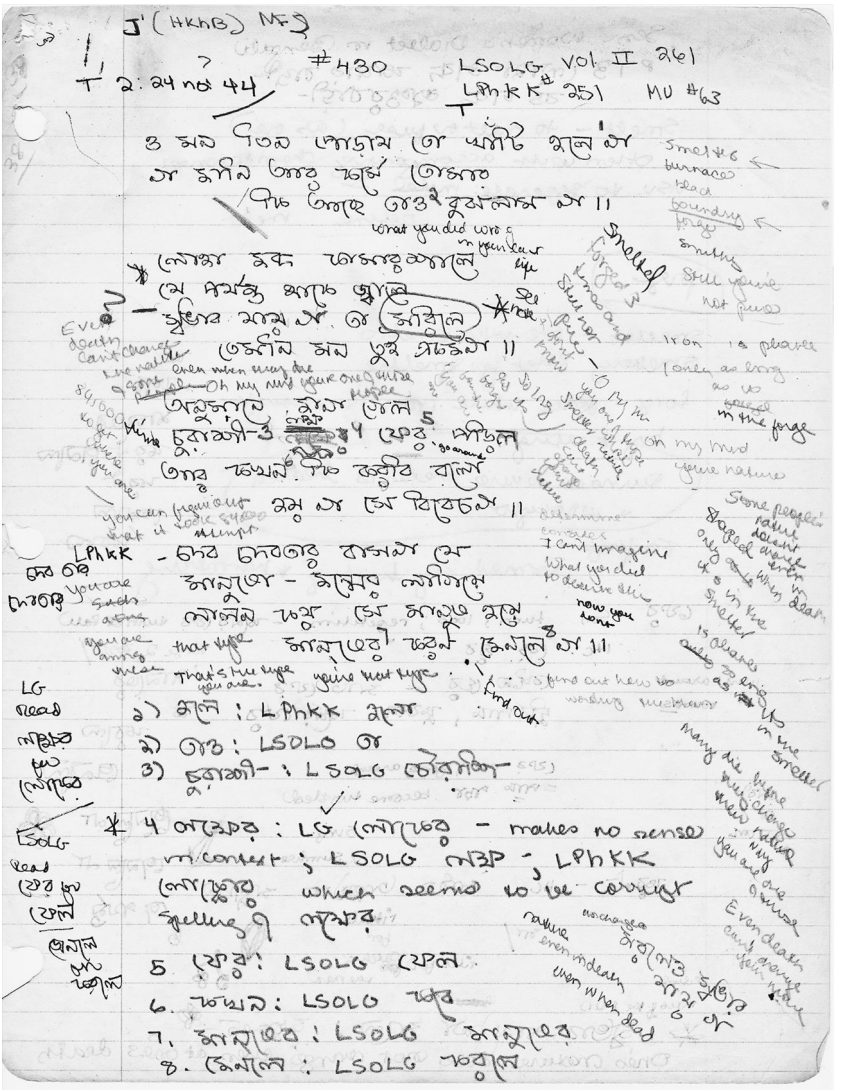
2. *mānuṣer karaṇ jenle* [or *jānle*] *nā*: Alt. trans. (more lit.): "You didn't learn to act the part, and you didn't learn how a man should act." The line translates literally: "You didn't learn the actions (*karaṇ*) of a/the man." In Lālan's songs *karaṇ* is often synonymous with *sādhanā* "religious practice" (cf. Lālan's song "Mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ" [LG no. 456; **103**]). Thus the underlying meaning of the line is "You didn't learn the worship a man's supposed to do," or "You didn't learn the worship of the Man." (That is to say, "You didn't learn how to worship god.")

3. [Emendations:] LPhKK: In the last verse Mitra misreads *debatār* as *deb tār*. LSOLG: In the last verse read *jenle* for *karle*.

O man tin poṛāy to khā̃ṭi hale nā

According to Khodā Bakṣ, "refined three times" refers to the three times in the birth process when a soul experiences pain: before conception when it is contained in the father's semen, when it is in the mother's womb, and during birth. "8,400,000" refers to the number of times a being is reborn in other forms before it attains human birth. Since a human body is essential to gaining liberation, "even the gods want to be human."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2:24, no. 44; LPhKK, 251; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 261.]



Salomon's MS for "O man tin poṛāy to khāṭi hale nā."

ক

40

কারে আজ ধাই সে কথা

Kāre āj śudhāi se kathā

কারে আজ ধাই সে কথা	kāre āj śudhāi se kathā
কি সাধনে পা তারে	ki sādhane pābo tāre
যে আমার জীবন দাতা ॥	ẏe āmār jīban dātā ॥
নতে পাই পাপী ধা ক সবে	śunte pāi pāpī dhārmik sabe
ই নে সি নে যাবে	illine sijjine ẏābe
উভয় সব কয়েদি রবে	ubhay sab kayedi rabe
অটল র কই মতা ॥	aṭal prāpter kai kṣamatā ॥
ই ন সি ন সুখ দুখের ঠঁই	illin sijjin sukha dukher ṭhẽi
ে নখানে রেখেছেন সঁই	kon-khāne rekhechen sẽi
হেথা কেন সুখ দুখ পাই	hethā kæna sukha dukha pāi
ে থাকার ে গ ভুগি ে থা ॥	kothākār bhog bhugi kothā ॥
যখনকার পাপ তখন ভুগী	ẏakhankār pāp takhan bhugī
শি তখন হয় কেন গী	śiśu takhan hay kæna rugī
লালন বলে ে ে দেখি	lālan bale bojho dekhi
কখন শি র ে নাখাতা ॥	kakhan śiśur gonākhātā ॥

Who do I ask this question, today?
What kind of worship
can I win him with—
the one who gave me life?

I hear sinners go to hell
and saints to heaven.
But both end up in prison.
They're powerless to reach
the steady state.

Heaven's a place of joy
and hell of sorrow.
But where did the Lord put them?
Why do we feel joy and sorrow here?
If you have a good time somewhere
do you suffer for it elsewhere?[1]

If we suffered on the spot
for the sins we commit,
why does a baby get sick?
Lālan says, Try to understand!
When did the baby sin?[2]

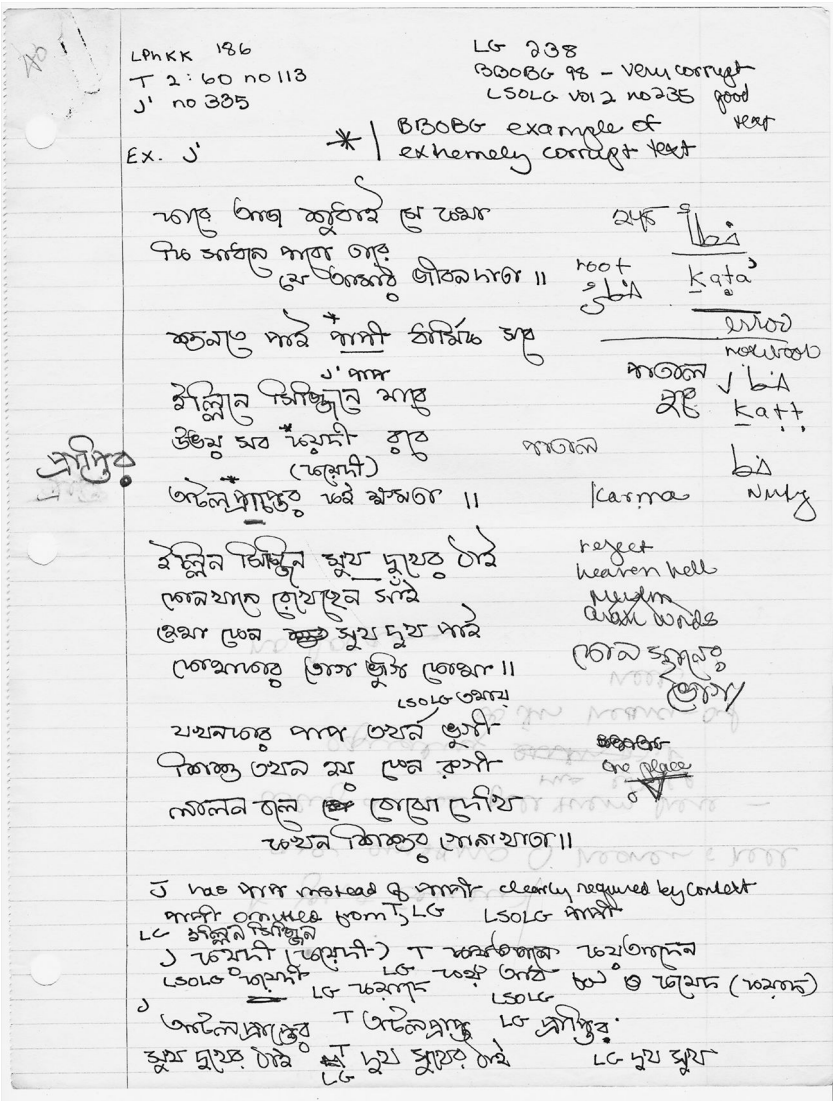
1. *kothākār bhog bhugi kothā*: lit. "Where do we suffer for having a good time somewhere?" In this line Lālan puns on *kothā*, "where" and its possessive form *kothākār*, "of where," "of somewhere," and pejoratively "of some godforsaken place." He also plays on *bhog*, "enjoyment," "sensual pleasure," and *bhugi*, "I/we suffer," both from the same root *bhug* "to enjoy," "to suffer" (< Skt. *bhuj*). Alt. trans.: "If you have a good time somewhere, do you suffer for it somewhere else?"

2. [Emendations:] J[1] is the exemplar for this song. Verse 1: The first line should read as in LSOLG and in Khodā Bakṣ's oral version: *śunte pāi pāpī dhārmik sabe*. J has *pāp* instead of *pāpī*. T and LG omit the word between *pāi and dhārmik* entirely. For *kayedī* (J *kaydī*) T has *kay āden*, which is probably a corruption of *kayād* or *kayādī*; LG has *kay ādh*. This is obviously an error for *kayād* (*kayed*), which is the variant given by Khodā Bakṣ. For J's reading *aṭal-prāpter* T has *aṭal-prāpto* and LG and LSOLG have *aṭal-pratir*. Verse 2: For *bhog* LG has *pāp*. Verse 3: For *gonākhātā* LG has *gonār khātā*, mistaking *khātā* "sin" (Ar. khaṭa') for its homonym meaning "ledger" (Ar. *khaṭṭ* "writing").

Kāre āj śudhāi se kathā

In this song Lālan argues that only the law of karma can account for man's suffering. He rejects the belief that dead souls go to heaven or hell, which he refers to by the Arabic terms *illin* (the Bengali form of Ar. 'Illiyun) and *sijjin* [Ar. Sijjīn]. (In the Qur'an, 83:18–19 and 83:7–8, 'Illiyun and Sijjīn are the places where the records of the pious and the wicked are kept.) He says that heaven is as undesirable as hell, for it is not possible to catch the Lord and "reach the steady state" (*aṭal prāpta*) as long as one is confined to either place. This can only be accomplished before death by becoming "dead while alive" through the practice of Bāul sexual rituals. Furthermore, heaven and hell are only hypothetical places. They cannot be located on any map; thus there is no way to prove that they exist. The "joy and sorrow" we experience in our lives, however, is not hypothetical. We suffer here on earth for having "a good time somewhere," that is, for committing sins in another birth. If we suffered "on the spot for the sins we commit," and not in another life, then how can one explain why a baby, who is too young to have sinned, falls sick? Lālan implies that life itself is hell for those who haven't freed themselves from karma and reached the "steady state." Abdul Karim Shah, commenting on this song, explained: "Children are born and then die; this is the human life cycle. It's called hell. But the person who reaches heaven won't be born again."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 60, no. 113; LPhKK, 186; J^1 no. 335; LG no. 238; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 23.]



Salomon's MS for "Kāre āj śudhāi se kathā."

41

কারে ধাব রে ম কথা কে বলবে আমায়

Kāre śudhābo re marmakathā ke balbe āmāy

কারে ধাব রে ম কথা
কে বলবে আমায়
যারে ধাই সেই বলে না
ম ে থা পাই ॥

যে দিনে সঁ ই নিরাকারে
ভেসেছিল ডি ভরে
কি প থেকে তার মাঝারে
কি প গ হয় ॥

সেতারা প ছিল যখন
গহনা প পাক পা তন
আকার কি নিরাকার তখন
সেহি দয়াময় ॥

জগৎপতি সোবহানে
বরকতকে মা বললেন কেনে
তার পতি কি নয় সে জনে
লালন ভাবে তাই ॥

kāre śudhābo re marmakathā
ke balbe āmāy
ẏāre śudhāi sei bale nā
marma kothā pāi ॥

ẏe dine sāi nirākāre
bhesechilo ḍimba bhare
ki rūp theke tār mājhāre
ki rūp gaṇya hay ॥

setārā rūp chilo ẏakhan
gahanā rūp pāk pāñjātan
ākār ki nirākār takhan
sehi dayāmay ॥

jagaṯpati sobahāne
barakatke mā ballen kene
tār pati ki nay se jane
lālan bhābe tāi ॥

Who can I ask the mystery?
Who will tell me?
No one I ask will say.
How can I find out?

On the day the Lord floated
in an egg in the void,
what shape did he have?
What shape did he take in the end?

When the shining star appeared,
the Five Holy People were its ornaments.[1]
Did that Merciful One have form then
or was he formless?

Why did the Father of the World—
glory be to him—
call Barakat "mother?"
Wasn't he her husband?
Lālan keeps wondering.[2]

1. *setārā rūp chilo ẏakhan gahanā rūp tār pāk pāñjātan*: The line is ambiguous. It could also be translated: "When (the Lord) had the form of a shining star, the Five Holy People were his ornaments." Although "the Lord" (*sā̃ier*) is not explicitly expressed, it seems to be implied from the context.

2. Emendations: I have no manuscript source for this song, but I discussed the text with Khodā Bakṣ. The following emendations to the two published versions cited are based on his version, which makes the best sense in terms of the mythology. LG: In verse 1 for *ki rūpe gaṇya hay* read *śeṣe ki rūp hay*; in verse 2 for *se tār rūp* read *setārā rūp*, for *bāhan rūp tār pāy pāñjātan* read *gahanā rūp tār pāk pāñjātan*, and for *barakat ke* read *barakatke*. LSOLG: In verse 1 for *ẏār kāche yāi se rāg kare kather marma nā pāoya* read *yāre sudhāi se bal e nā marma kothā pāi*. In the last verse for *tār ki mātā nāi nirjane* read *tār pati ki nay se jane*.

Kāre śudhābo re marmakathā ke balbe āmāy

See the annotations to "Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā" (LG no. 115 **[104]**) for a discussion of the cosmic egg. The "void" (*nairākār*) refers to the fourth of eleven stages of creation termed *kār*s after the final syllable in the name of each stage. See the introduction for an overview of this theory of creation.[3] Duddu Shah (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 179) describes the stage *nairākār* in this way:

> *After darkness, haze, and fog*
> *comes the void.*
> *How to describe the stages?*
> *What was created in each of them*
> *and how was it done?*
>
> . . .
>
> *The egg wasn't really in anyone's womb.*
> *So who supported it as it floated in the void?*
> *Whom did the Lord call "mother?"*

According to Khodā Bakṣ, when the Lord was in the egg, he had the shape or form of light. This interpretation is corroborated by another song by Lālan (["Ke bujhe tomār apār līle,"] LG no. 202): "You were a light in the void. You incarnated in the egg." The answer to the question "What form did he take in the end?" is that of the Creator called Nirañjan or Brahmā (see the annotations to "Māyere bhajile . . ." [**104**]), as a song attributed to Lālan (Tālib 1968, vol. 1, no. 264) makes explicit: "I heard when the egg hatched he had the form of Brahmā."

A "shining star," made up of the Five Holy People, the preexistent forms of the Prophet, Fatima, Ali, Hasan, and Husayn, who are described as the ornaments, also appeared when the egg broke: "Halim says, The Five People were in the blue sky in the guise of a shining star. They were five merged into one, so the scriptures say" (Caudhurī and Hak [1985], no. 103). Fatima, Ali, Hasan, and Husayn represent the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—while Muhammad is Divine Light. Poets differ somewhat as to the ornaments that the Five Holy people are associated with and their location on the star, which has anthropomorphic shape. According to a song attributed to Lālan (Mansuruddin 1984, no. 205), Hasan and Husayn are the earrings on the star's ears, Ali is the necklace around its

3. [This introduction is absent from Salomon's manuscripts.]

neck, and Muhammad the crown on its head. Fatima, not identified with any ornament, is in the middle of the star. According to Pāñja Śāh (1890, 49), instead of a star, the Five Holy People ornament a luminous peacock:

In the peacock's nose was a nose pin.
It's known as Hazrat Ali.
Hasan and Husayn are known as the two arm ornaments.
The Prophet Muhammad was on the head.
Mother Fatima was inside.

In the song under discussion, Lālan seems to suggest that the star itself represents the Lord. Other poets identify it with Muhammad or Fatima. According to a song ["O nabi dīner rasul"] attributed variously to Lālan (LSOLG vol. 1, no. 32) and Hatem (Haque 1985, no. 77), the star and the peacock were different forms of the Prophet at different stages of creation:

First the Prophet was Allah's light,
second a flower of the Tuba tree,[4]
third the necklace of a myna bird,
fourth a star, and fifth a peacock.

(For another source describing the Five Holy People as ornaments on a star, see Śarīph 1969, 55.)

In contrast, Ramjān (Śarīph 1973, 5, no. 2) equates the star with Fatima: "At first, mother, you were a star. That's why your name is Zohura" (Ar. *zahra*,"luminous"; *al-zahrā'* is one of Fatima's epithets). It is interesting to note that the association of the pre-existent forms of the Holy People with ornaments worn by Fatima can be traced to Arabic sources. In several texts (e.g., Suyuṭī, *La'ālī* I, 395–396; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, II, 495–496; *Lisān al-Mizān*, III, 346; cited by Rubin 1975, 99) the image (*ṣūra*) of Fatima is described as a body of light wearing a crown on her head representing Ali and two earrings symbolizing Hasan and Husayn.

At a performance of Bāul songs in Jhinaidah in 1986 I heard Mahendranāth Goswāmī relate a story about an argument between Fatima and Gabriel as to whether Gabriel or Muhammad is older. Mahendranāth refers both to the tradition that associates the Holy People with ornaments that adorn Fatima and to the tradition that identifies the *setārā*

4. The name of a tree in Paradise.

with Muhammad. The story is as follows: In order to prove to Gabriel that Muhammad is older than he is, Fatima describes the creation of the cosmic egg from the Lord's semen (*bindu*), which she as the Śakti supported on her chest, and the subsequent emergence of the other four Holy people when the egg hatched. She says that it was through her that Muhammad, Ali, Hasan, and Husayn became manifest and that they were her ornaments: "The Prophet was a rose on my head, Hasan and Husayn were golden earrings on my ears, and Ali was an ornament on my nose. There was no one else. Uncle Gabriel was born later." When Gabriel is not convinced, Fatima takes him to Muhammad, who asks Gabriel what he saw after he was born. Gabriel replies that he saw a shining star (*nūrer setārā*). Muhammad says that he was the star, thus settling the argument.

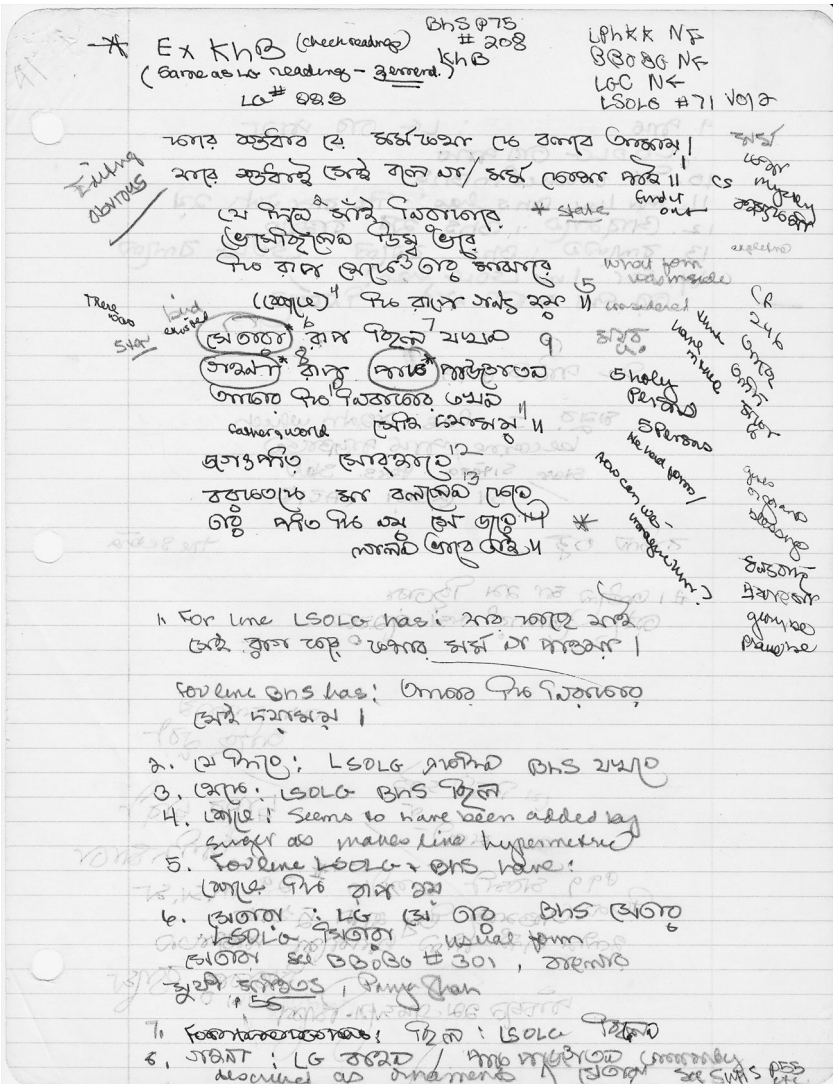
The answer to the question "When the shining star appeared . . . did the Lord have form then or was he formless?" is found in a verse of another song by Lālan (LG no. 202), the first half of which was previously quoted. The entire verse is as follows:

You were a light in the void.
You incarnated in the egg.
In a subtle form you created the world.
Formed, you showed amazing love.

Lālan refers to three stages in the manifestation of the absolute: *nirākār* "formlessness," *sākār* "with a subtle form," and *ākār* "form." When the Lord emerged from the egg as the Creator along with the five Holy People, he was *sākār*—that is, he had a subtle form.

"Barakat" (blessings; auspiciousness) is an epithet of Fatima. She is both the mother and wife of the Lord, as Fakir Cẫd (Śarīph 1973, 81, no. 30) explicitly states: "Fakir Cẫd composed this song. There was no one before mother. It's forbidden to tell the secret. Khodā was her husband and her son." She is the Lord's mother because she was the womb out of which Nirañjan was born. And she is the Lord's wife because creation proceeded from their union. (See also LG no. 153 ["Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā," **68**] for another riddle on the dual role of the Śakti.) A similar notion of cosmogony is found in Tantric Buddhist and Śākta traditions. In Tantric Buddhism, Prajñā is first the wife and then the mother of Buddha, and in the Śāktism, Ādi-Śakti is the mother and wife of Śiva (Das Gupta 1974, 97n5).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 223; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 71; LS no. 27.]



Salomon's MS for "Kāre śudhābo re marmakathā ke balbe āmāy."

42

কাশী কি ম য় যাবি যে মন চল রে যাই

Kāśī ki makkāy ẏābi ẏe man calo re ẏāi

কাশী কি ম য় যাবি মন চল রে যাই
 টানাতে ঘুরলে পথে
স বেলায় উপায় নাই ॥

ম তে ধা খেলে
যেতে চাও কাশী লে
এমনি হালে কাল কাটালে
ঠিক না মানে থা ভাই ॥

নৈবি পাকা কলা
তা দেখে লে লা
সি বিলায় দরগা-তোলা
তাও দেখে মন খলবলায় ॥

চুল পেকে হলে
না পেলে পথের মু
লালন বলে স জেনে
না পেলে জল নদীর ঠঁই ॥

kāśī ki makkāy ẏābi man calo re ẏāi
doṭānāte ghurle pathe
sandhye belāy upāy nāi ॥

makkāte dhākkā khele
ẏete cāo kāśī-sthale
æmani hāle kāl kāṭāle
ṭhik nā māne kothā bhāi ॥

naibidya pākā kalā
tā dekhe bhole bholā
sinni bilāy daragā-bholā
tāo dekhe man khalabalāy ॥

cul peke hale huṛo
nā pele pather muṛo
lālan bale sandhi jene
nā pele jal nadīr ṭhāi ॥

Mind,
are you going to Kashi[1] or Mecca?
Well, come on! Let's go!
If you travel the road
torn by indecision,
you'll be left stranded[2]
when evening falls.

You were pushed around in Mecca,
now you want to go to Kashi.
What's the sense, brother,
of wasting your time
caught in a trap like that?

Hindu offerings of ripe plantains
leave you spellbound.
Offerings of sweets[3] at a pir's tomb
make your heart pound.[4]

Your hair's turned gray.
You've grown old.
But you still haven't found
the end of the road.
Lālan says, You didn't learn the secret
of getting water from the river.

[Salomon's manuscript and annotations for this song are missing. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 10; LS no. 473.]

1. [Kashi (Kāśī) is another name for Benares or Varanasi.]

2. Alt. trans.: "You'll be hard put"; "you'll be in a jam"; "you'll be stranded there"; "you'll be stuck there."

3. Lit. "shinni."

4. Alt. trans. (more literal): "You see Hindu offerings of ripe plantains and you're absolutely spellbound. You see offerings of sweets at a pir's tomb and they make your heart pound."

43

কি করি ে ন পথে যাই

Ki kari kon pathe ẏāi

কি করি ে ন পথে যাই
মনে কিছু ঠিক পড়ে না
ে টানাতে পড়ে ভাবি ঐ ভাবনা ॥

কেউ বলে ম য় যেয়ে
হজ করলে যাবে ে না
কেউ বলে মানুষ ভজে
মানুষ হও না ॥

কেউ বলে পড়লে কালাম পায়
সে আরাম ভে খানা
কেউ বলে ভাই ও সুখের ঠঁই
কায়েম রয় না ॥

কেউ বলে মু দের ঠঁই
খুজলে পাই আধ ঠিকানা
লালন ভেড়ে না বুঝিয়ে
হয় ে টানা ॥

ki kari kon pathe ẏāi
mane kichu ṭhik paṛe nā
doṭānāte paṛe bhābi ai bhābanā ॥

keu bale makkāy ẏeye
haj karle ẏābe gonā
keu bale mānuṣ bhaje
mānuṣ hao nā ॥

keu bale paṛle kālām pāy
se ārām bhestekhānā
keu bale bhāi o sukher ṭhāi
kāyem ray nā ॥

keu bale murśider ṭhāi
khũjle pāi ādh ṭhikānā
lālan bheṛe nā bujhiye
hay doṭānā ॥

What should I do?
Which way should I go?
I can't make up my mind.
I keep mulling it[1] *over,*
torn by indecision.

One says: Make the hajj to Mecca,
and your sins will be washed away.
A second says: Why don't you worship man
and become a proper person?

A third says: Recite the Qur'an
and the comforts of heaven will be yours.
A fourth says: The joys of that place
don't last, brother.

A fifth says: Go to a murshid,
to get the right address.
But that gullible fool Lālan
remains torn by indecision.
He just doesn't catch on.[2]

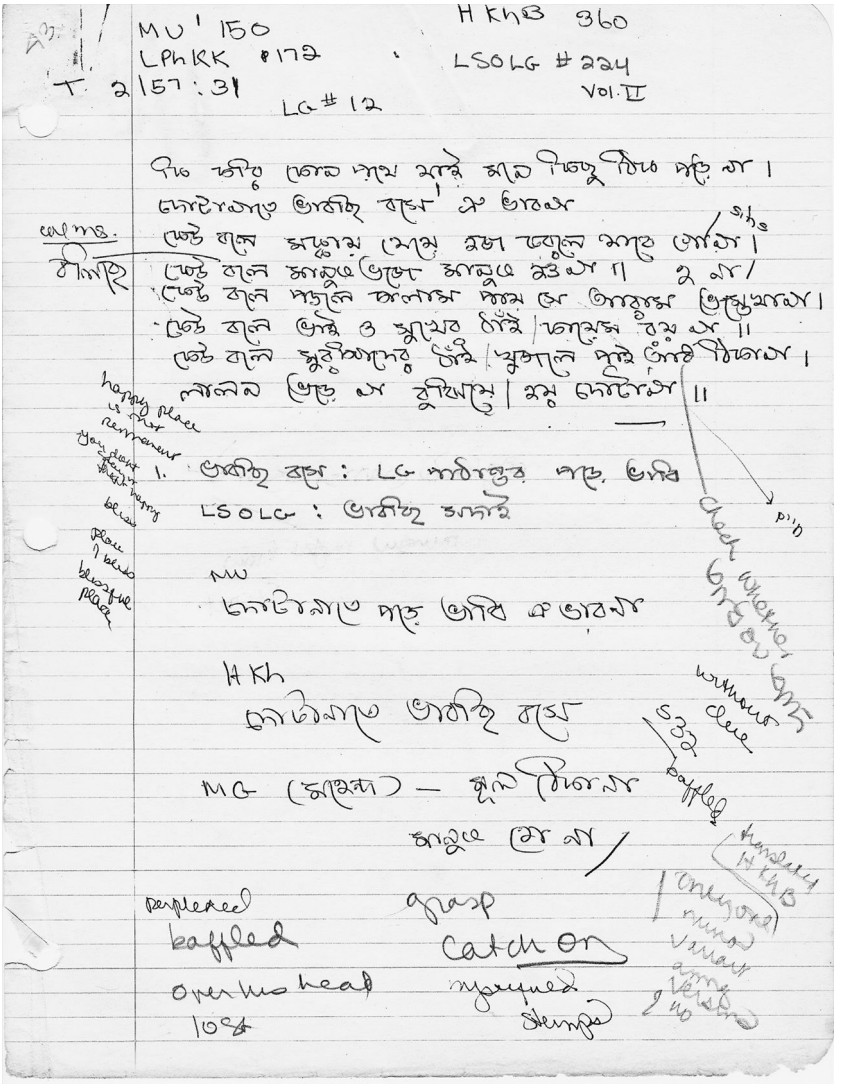
1. [Salomon's manuscript and published editions give the complex vowel *ai* for the pronoun *oi*, which is common in archaic Bengali.]

2. Emendations: The only variant among the versions is in the last line of the refrain. T has: *doṭānāte paṛe bhābi ai bhābanā*. H1 and LG have: *doṭānāte bhābchi base ai bhābanā*. The difference in meaning is slight. Either or both may be original. I have translated the T variant. In the final verse, instead of *ādh ṭhikāna* "half the address" (translated as "you'll be half the way there"), the oral version sung by Mahendranāth Goswāmī has *mūl ṭhikānā*, "main" or "original address."

Ki kari kon pathe ẏāi

On "heaven" as offering only ephemeral pleasure, see also "Ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy" [LG no. 453; **33**]. On Lālan's attitude toward the guru or murshid see the annotations to "Nabir āin kāro bojhā sādhya nāi" [LG no. 209; **78**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 157: 31; LG no. 12; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 224; KhB.]



Salomon's MS for "Ki kari kon pathe yāi."

44

কুলের বউ ছিলাম বাড়ি

Kuler bou chilām bāṛi

কুলের বউ ছিলাম বাড়ি	kuler bou chilām bāṛi
হলাম নাড়ি নাড়ার সাথে।	halām nāṛi nāṛār sāthe ॥
কুলের আচার কুলের বিচার	kuler ācār kuler bicār
আর কি ভুলে সেই ে লাতে ॥	ār ki bhule sei bholāte ॥
ভাবের নাড়ি ভাবের নাড়া	bhāber nāṛi bhāber nāṛā
কুল নাশালাম জগত ে ড়া	kul nāśālām jagat joṛā
করণ তার উল্টো দাড়া	karaṇ tār ulṭo dāṛā
বিধির ফাড়া কাটবে যাতে ॥	bidhir phāṛā kāṭbe ẏāte ॥
হয়েছি নাড়ারও নাড়ি	hayechi nāṛār-o nāṛi
পরনে পরেছি ধড়ি	parane paṛechi dhaṛi
দিব না আচাই কড়ি	dibo nā ācāi kaṛi
বেড়াে চৈত পথে ॥	beṛābo caitanya pathe ॥
আসতে নাড়া যেতে নাড়া	āste nāṛā ẏete nāṛā
দুদিন কেবল ে ড়াে ড়া	dudin kebal joṛājoṛā
লালন কয় আগা ে ড়া	lālan kay āgā goṛā
জেনে মাথা হয় মুড়াতে ॥	jene māthā hay muṛāte ॥

I used to stay at home
playing the role of good wife.
Then I took up with a shaveling man.
The conventions of family life—
They no longer entice me.[1]

We're a shaveling couple filled with love.[2]
I disgraced my family the world over.
Shavelings worship in the reverse way,[3]
to escape from fate's dangers.[4]

I became a shaveling's woman
and put on a plain cloth.[5]
I won't pay the midwife's fee.
I'll travel Caitanya's path.[6]

You're bald when you come
and bald when you go.
You're together just a short time.
Lālan says, You have to shave your head
and know precisely why.

1. Alt. trans.: "beguile"; "delude"; "tempt."

2. *bhāber nāṛi bhāber nāṛā*: lit. "A shaveling woman of love and a shaveling man of love" (cf. the line in "Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay" [LG no. 134; **64**]: *bhāber nāṛā bhāb diye beṛāy*, "The shaveling's a man after love; he gives love wherever he roams").

3. *karaṇ tār ulṭo dāṛā*: lit. "his or her (i.e., the shaveling's) worship is the reverse way."

4. *bidir* [i.e., *bidhir*] *phā̃ṛā*, translated as "fate's dangers," refers to grave danger, possibly resulting in death, that is written in one's fate. *Phā̃ṛā kāṭā* means "to pass over that danger."

5. *dhaṛi*: i.e., *dhoti*, "loincloth."

6. Alt. trans.: "the road to awareness"; "the road to consciousness."

Kuler bou chilām bāṛi

Unlike many of Lālan's songs, this sequel to "Kuler bou haye man" [LG no. 14; **45**][7] expresses success rather than failure and decisiveness rather than ambivalence (see the discussion of Lālan's style in the introduction,[8] and the annotations to "Kuler bou haye man"). As in that song, Lālan takes the persona of the "good wife." In the song under discussion she has renounced householder life and run away with the *nāṛā* (shaveling man), becoming a *nāṛī* (shaveling woman), without any regrets at all.

"Love" in "We're a shaveling couple filled with love" translates *bhāb* (Skt. *bhāva*), a key term in Bāul songs. The state of *bhāb* requires renunciation of *jāti* ("caste," "religion") and *kul* (family); it also requires *sādhanā* (see the discussion of the "the reverse way" below). A married householder couple cannot attain it, since their relationship is characterized by selfish motives (*hetu*) and lust (*kām*, i.e., the ejaculation of semen), which result in procreation. This is the antithesis of the relationship of a couple who has attained *bhāb*. The shaveling woman, like Rādhā and the other gopīs, is another man's wife (*parakīyā*); the illicitness of the couple's relationship automatically puts it outside the "conventions of family life" and the strictures of society. By eloping with the shaveling man, the protagonist has burned her bridges; she has "disgraced her family," thereby irrevocably severing her ties to it.

"The reverse way" (*ulṭa:* [also *ulṭo*] *dhārā*) refers to the haṭhayogic practice of arresting semen and returning it to the *sahasrār* by means of the middle tube, the *suṣumnā*. When the *sādhikā* is menstruating, the *sādhak* draws a drop of menstrual blood into his penis and takes it together with his semen back up to the head. Thus, in reverse of the ordinary sexual process, instead of losing fluids, the male practitioner takes in fluids like the female, and the female, instead of taking in fluids, loses fluids like the male. Not only the direction of flow of sexual fluids but also the usual position of sexual intercourse is reversed; the woman is on top instead of the man, a position termed *biparīt rati* [< Skt. *viparīta-rati*] (reverse intercourse). By making the sexual fluids flow upward (*ujān*) rather than

7. ["Kuler bou haye man" (**45**) is actually the next song in this compilation according to the Bengali alphabetical order adopted for this compilation (cf. note 8 in the annotations of "Kuler bou haye man").]

8. [This introduction is absent from Salomon's manuscripts.]

downward (*bhāṭā*), the practitioner also reverses the procreation process and thereby escapes from "fate's dangers," that is, death.[9]

The "plain cloth" indicates the protagonist's status as a renouncer living simply, without material possessions.[10] (For the significance of the "midwife's fee," see the annotations to the preceding song [i.e., "Kuler bou haye man"].) "Caitanya's path" is a double entendre; Caitanya is the name of the sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava reformer, but here it is also used in its literal sense, "consciousness." Caitanya's path therefore is the "path to consciousness," "awareness," "knowledge."[11]

Lālan's statement "You're bald (*nāṛā*) when you come," that is, when you are born, and "you're bald (*nāṛā*) when you go," that is, when you die, indicates that *nāṛā*, in addition to denoting a particular Vaiṣṇava group, has the metaphorical sense of "alone," "without any associates" or "offspring." As such, it is a synonym of *lāśarik* (see the annotations to Lālan's song "Madināy rasul nāme ke elo bhāi" [LG no. 204; **92**]) and can refer either to an adept who has no children or to the inner *adhar mānuṣ*, as in Lālan's song "Til parimāṇ ek jāygāte ki kudaratimay" [LG no. 134; **64**], where it occurs in the phrase *nāṛā ṭhākur* "the shaveling Lord."[12] In the *bhaṇitā*, Lālan warns practitioners against shaving their heads,[13] meaning taking renunciation, under false pretexts. The false sadhu is a stock figure in Lālan's songs (see for example "Phereb cheṛe karo phakiri" [LG no. 444; **87**]), as in Indian literature in general.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 396; LS no. 751; LPhKK no. 195; KhB.]

9. [This paragraph is followed by four questions that indicate Salomon's intended directions for further research: "What does escaping death mean? Is there a belief that the *sādhak* gains an immutable body different from his physical body, as there is in Nāth tradition? How does woman escape time and death? Does she also practice *ujān sādhanā*?"]

10. [In her manuscript, Salomon adds the following question in parentheses: "Check exactly what a *dhaṛi* is and what Lālan-panthī *phakirānī*s wear."]

11. [As with note 7, she asks: "Check whether this is in fact a double entendre. Is it correct to translate it as Caitanya's path?"]

12. The word *nāṛā* is understood by fakirs today only in its metaphorical sense. Karim explained that a *nāṛā* has nothing and nobody (*tār kichu nei, keu nei*); he is *lāśarik* ("without associates" or "offspring"). Similarly, Sudhīr Cakrabartī writes (1992, 97) that according to the Bāuls he interviewed, Bāul fakirs are termed *nāṛā phakir* because they close off the door to procreation after taking initiation; *nāṛā* means no births (see "Janmer ghare śūnya").

13. In Lālan's songs (see for example the song "Gaur prem athāi āmi jhā̃p diyechi tāy" [LG no. 167; **57**]) shaving the head is a metaphor for renunciation, even though Lālan-panthī fakirs, unlike Vaiṣṇava *bartamān-panthī*s, do not shave their heads when taking initiation.

45

কুলের বউ হয়ে মন

Kuler bou haye man

কুলের বউ হয়ে মন
আর কে দিনে থাকবি ঘরে।
ঘোমটা ফেলে চল না রে
যাই সাধ বাজারে ॥

কুলের ভয়ে কাজ হারাবি
কুল কি নিবি স করে
ও রে প বি শ্মশানে যে দিন
ফেলবে ে রে ॥

দিস নে আর আচাই কড়ি
নাড়ার নাড়ি হও যে রে
থাকবি ভাে স কাে
যাবে দূরে ॥

কুলের ে রব যার হয়
সদায় হয় না তারে
লালন বেড়ায় ফাতরার বেড়ায়
কুল ঢাকে রে ॥

kuler bou haye man
ār kato dine thākbi ghare।
ghomṭā phele calo nā re
ẏāi sādh bājāre ॥

kuler bhaye kāj hārābi
kul ki nibi saṅge kare
o re pastābe śmaśāne ẏe din
phelbe tore ॥

dis ne ār ācāi kaṛi
nāṛār nāṛi hao ẏe re
thākbi bhālo sarbakālo
ẏābe dūre ॥

kuler gaurab ẏār hay
guru sadāy hay nā tāre
lālan beṛāy phātarār beṛāy
kul ḍhāke re ॥

Mind, how much longer
will you stay at home,
playing the role of good wife?[1]
Throw off your veil.
Come on, let's go to the sadhu's market.[2]

For fear of your pedigree,
you'll lose your chance.[3]
Your family can't go with you.
On the day they toss you onto the pyre—
then you'll regret it.

[Don't pay the midwife's fee anymore,
and become a shaveling's woman.
You'll stay happy all the time,
and they will go far away.][4]

The guru shows no compassion
to those who take pride in their birth.[5]
Lālan wanders around,
but he keeps his family concealed
behind a fence of dried banana leaves.[6] [7]

1. "Good wife" translates *kuler bou*, lit. "wife of a good family." The word *kul*, "family" is a leitmotif in the song.

2. "Sadhu" translates *sād*, which is a double entendre. It is both a tadbhava derived from *sādhu* (see also the songs "Ei ki āin nabi karlen jari" [LG no. 208; **24**] and "Pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy" [LG no. 386; **83**], as well as "Ār ki basbo æman sādh bājāre" [LG no. 388] LPhKK, 152) and a semi-tatsama of *sādh* "desire," "choice." Alt. trans.: "sadhu's marketplace." [In the Bengali version provided *sādh* is given for *sād*.]

3. *kāj hārābi*.

4. [The translation of this verse is missing from Salomon's manuscript, and an attempt has been made to reconstruct it from the original Bangla using her annotations and emendations as a guide. Also see Salomon's translation of the second verse of song no. **44**, in which several of the same terms are used.]

5. *kuler gaurab*.

6. The *bhaṇitā* contains a play on the word *beṛāy,* which is used twice in two different senses: "he wanders" and locative instrumental of *beṛā*, "fence." "Dried banana leaves" translates *phātarā*, which is an East Bengali dialectal word used in the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Comilla, Noakhali, and Mymensingh (Shahidullah [1968a], s.v. *phātrā*, def. 4).

7. [The following note is found in Salomon's manuscript, accompanying the exemplar:] The metrical form of the song is unusual. This form is used also in "Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī" **[119]**,

Kuler bou haye man

This song and the following one, which is its sequel,[8] form a connected narrative in which conflicted feelings and indecision regarding renunciation expressed in the first song are resolved in the second one. Neither women of Lālan-panthī nor women of other *bartamān-panthī* groups veil their faces or wear burqas, since they view men and women as equals. Lālan tells the "good wife" to renounce householder life and to leave her family for the "sadhu's market," that is, for the community of sadhus (*sādhu-samāj*; see Lālan's description of the sadhu's market as a place of joy and light in "Ār ki basbo æman sādh bājāre" ([LG no. 388;] LPhKK, 152). Like the medieval Bhakti poets of North India, Lālan stresses the benefits of *sādhu-saṅga*, the company of sadhus, for the adept's progress on the path of *sādhanā*. When Lālan says "You'll lose your chance," he refers to the chance to do *sādhanā*. Householder life only leads to death, and "your family can't go with you" when you die (cf. the line in the song "If only I could get Gaurcā̃d" ["Ẏadi gaurcā̃dke pāi," LG no. 326; **109**]: "You're born, you die. Does your family go with you?"). *Sādhanā* is the only means to escape from the cycle of birth and death and to avoid being tossed onto the pyre. Bāuls, like *sannyāsī*s in general, bury their dead; Openshaw (2002, 136) reports that some Hindu *bartamān-panthī*s are so repelled by the practice of cremation that they take initiation (*bhek*) to avoid it.

"Shaveling" (*nāṛā, neṛā*, or *nyāṛā*, fem. *nāṛī*, etc.) refers to a Bengali Vaiṣṇava group that existed into the nineteenth century but has since

which, probably not coincidentally, is the preceding song in both manuscripts. As in tripadi, each line is divided into three feet with two lines comprising one verse. But, unlike tripadi, the third foot is no longer than the others. The manuscripts indicate the end of a line with a single dari and the end of the verse with a double dari but do not indicate the feet. However, when KhB sang "Kuler bou haye man," they were clearly apparent as he marked the end of each foot with a distinct pause. Although the first two feet of a line usually have end rhyme (note that in line 4 of "Kuler bou haye man" the rhyme is assonantal), they do not always rhyme. For example, the first two feet of each line in the refrain of "Kuler bou haye man" as given in the manuscripts do not rhyme, nor do the first two feet rhyme in the line "adhīn lālan palo tæmani pāke helāy helāy" in "Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī." However, the end of all lines rhyme. The number of syllables in each foot is somewhat flexible, as syllables can be lengthened or shortened when sung. In general, the first foot of the first line of each verse has seven or eight syllables, and the second and third feet each have four syllables. The first and second feet of the second line of every verse have four syllables plus or minus one. The third foot invariably has four syllables.

8. ["Kuler bou chilām bāṛi," song no. **44**. This "sequel" is actually the previous song in this compilation according to (Bengali) alphabetical order.]

disappeared. According to legend,[9] in the sixteenth century Vīrabhadra, the son of Caitanya's close disciple Nityānanda, initiated 1,200 Buddhist Neṛās and 1,300 Neṛīs into Vaiṣṇavism at Khardaha, a few miles north of Calcutta. When R. M. Martin described the Neṛās in 1838 ([vol. 3], 177) they were readily identifiable as a distinct group due to their shaven heads. By the time Aksay Kumar Datta published *Bhāratbarṣīya Upāsak Sampradāy* in 1870, however, it seems that they had discontinued the practice. He remarks [1987, vol. 1, 235–236] that the Neṛā (Vaiṣṇavas) have beards and also long hair that they wear tied up on top of their heads. He further notes that like the Bāuls they worship women (*bāulder nyāy e sampradāyero ti-sādhan pradhān bhajan*). His descriptions of Neṛās and Bāuls are similar in respect to their appearance and practices. The exact historical connection between the Neṛās and the Bāuls is obscure, but they both consider Vīrabhadra a seminal figure. Many Bāuls, whether Hindu or Muslim, mention Vīrabhadra as their *ādiguru,* "original preceptor," who gave legitimacy to their sexual *sādhanā* (BBOBG, 44). Duddu Shah ("Bāul baisṇab dharma ek nahe bhāi," Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 19), quoting Lālan, says that Vīrabhadra knew the practices of the *darbeśī* Bāuls (i.e., Muslim Bāuls).[10] In fact, the term *neṛā* is also used contemptuously to refer to Lālan-panthī fakirs and other groups of fakirs who do not follow the sharī'a and are known to have practices involving bodily substances. It was a choice invective of nineteenth-century reformists for these groups (Ahmed 1981, 33). D. C. Sen (1917, 164) believes that the term applied to Muslim fakirs traces back to the shaven-headed Buddhist monks and nuns who converted to Islam, but there is no evidence, legendary or otherwise, to support this contention.

The word *neṛā* occurs in at least two other songs by Lālan besides this one; its sequel,[11] "Kuler bou chilām bāṛī" [LG no. 396; **44**], and "Til

9. The legend recorded in *Nityānandaprabhur Baṅśa Bistār* attributed to Vrindaban Dās (D. C. Sen 1917, 164n1, and Chakravarti 1985, 154n3). Reference to the story is also found in the early eighteenth-century Sahajiyā work *Ānanda-Bhairava* by Premadāsa [University of Calcutta Library, manuscript no. 3926; critical edition in Dās 1972, 45–111]. A fair was held at Khardaha in commemoration of this event until early 1900, when it was discontinued for lack of funds (D. C. Sen 1917, 165). Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 51) holds that the Buddhist *neṛās* and *neṛīs* who were initiated by Vīracandra were Sahajiyā Buddhists. D. C. Sen identifies the Vaiṣṇava Neṛās with the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās (1917, 165).

10. *darbeśī bāul kriyā bīrabhadra jāne sei dhārā darbeś lālan sā̃ir kathāy, duddu jānāy tāi*. It is interesting to note that *Mādhabbibir kaṛcā* links Vīrabhadra to the Islamic tradition. According to the text, his guru was a Muslim woman named Mādhabbibi (BBOBG, 376).

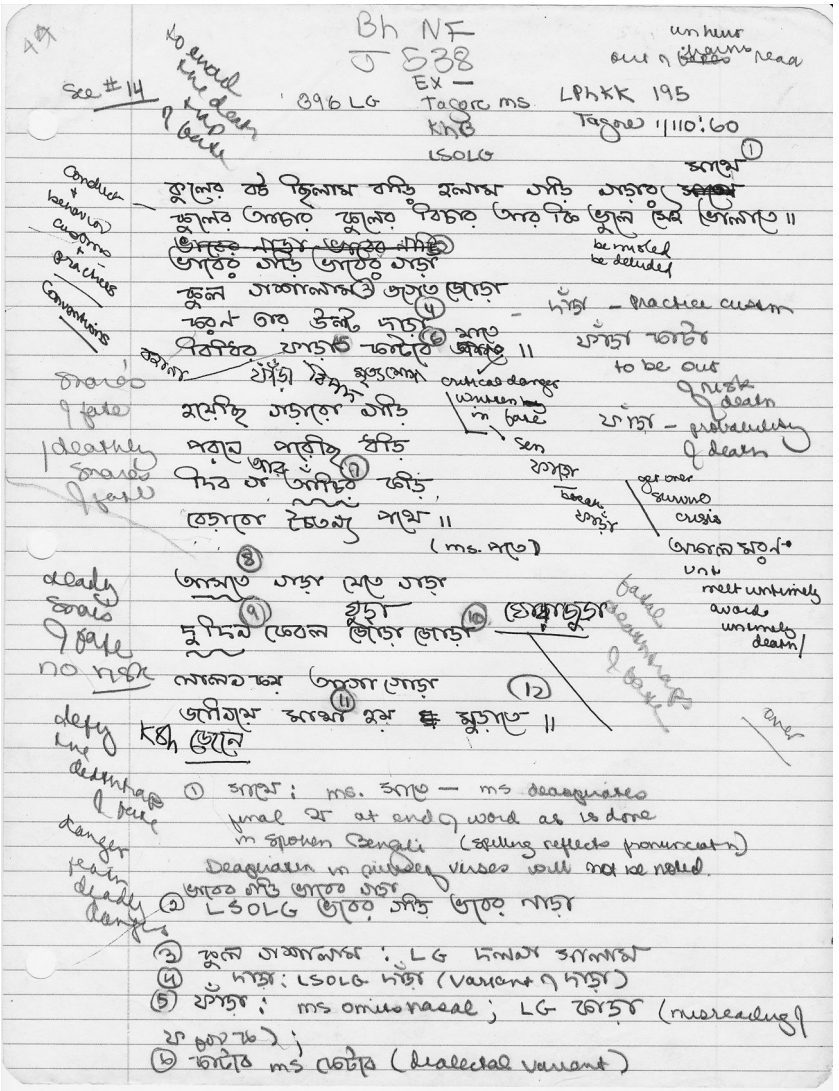
11. [See note 8.]

parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudratimay" [LG no. 134; **64**]. These two songs make it clear that Lālan uses the term also in a metaphorical sense (see the annotations to the sequel).[12] He says that a shaveling's woman does not have to pay the "midwife's fee" because a couple who is successful at the practice of seminal retention does not have children. Lālan evidently takes the role of the shaveling man who is trying to convince his mind, in the persona of the "good wife," to leave her husband and elope with him.

In the *bhaṇitā*, Lālan expresses his inability to make a clean break from his life as a householder and confesses to feeling pulled in two directions. He has renounced but still maintains contact with his home. As a result, he "wanders around," unable to make progress in *sādhanā* or to properly take care of his family. Fences are built to protect the honor (*ijjat*) of the women of the house, but a "fence of dried banana leaves" is of the flimsiest sort; the slightest wind can blow it over.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript (typed exemplar); LG no. 14; LS no. 750.]

12. [See note 8.]



Salomon's MS for "Kuler bou haye man."

46

কে আইজ ে পীন পরা ে রে

Ke āij kopīn parālo tore

কে আইজ ে পীন পরা ে রে।	ke āij kopīn parālo tore।
তার কি দয়ামায়া কিছু নাই অ রে॥	tār kī dayāmāyā kichu nāi antare॥
একা পু তুই রে নিমাই	ekā putra tui re nimāi
অভাগিনীর আর কেউ নাই	abhāginīr ār keu nāi
কি ে ষে আমায় ছেড়ে রে নিমাই	ki doṣe āmāy cheṛe re nimāi
ফকির হলি এমন বয়েসে রে॥	phakir hali æman bayese re॥
মনে এহাই ছিল ে রি	mane ehāi chilo tori
হবি রে নাচের ভিখারি	habi re nācer bhikhāri
তবে কেন বিয়ে ক পরের মেয়ে	tabe kæna biye kalli parer meye
কেমনে আইজ আমি রেক ে তারে॥	kæmane āij āmi rekbo tāre॥
করে পিতে মাতা	tyājya kare pite mātā
কি ধ আইজ জানবি কোথা	ki dharma āij jānbi kothā
মায়ের কথায় চল ে পীন খুলে ফেল	māyer kathāy calo kopīn khule phelo
লালন কয় যে প তার মায়ে কয় রে॥	lālan kay ẏe rūp tār māye kay re॥

Who dressed you in that loincloth?
Has he no mercy at all?

You're my only son, Nimāi.
This unlucky woman has no other.
What sin did I commit that you left me, Nimāi,
to become an ascetic[1] *at such a tender age?*

If it were your intention
to become a beggar on the street,
then why did you take
another man's daughter in marriage?
Now how will I look after her?[2]

For what religion
are you abandoning your parents,
and where are you going?[3]
Listen to your mother.
Take off that loincloth.
Lālan says,
That's what any mother would say.[4] [5]

1. *phakir.*

2. *kæmane āij āmi rekbo ghare*: lit. "How will I keep her at home today. [The Bengali version chosen for this song gives *tāre* for *ghare*, which accords with Salomon's nonliteral translation.]"

3. Lit. "Abandoning your parents, what religion will you practice and where?" Alt. trans.: "and where are you wandering off to?"

4. According to the variant of the line in LSOLG, the line translates: "(Do) as your mother tells you."

5. [Salomon's manuscript of the Bangla exemplar contains the following parenthetical note: "Words given according to nonstandard orthography of the manuscript in order to indicate their pronunciation: *keo, ehāi, bhikari, kandi, rekbo, kotā*." The editors have therefore kept some of these spellings for this song.]

Ke āij kopīn parāle tore

Nimāi, "(bitter) like a neem leaf," is a nickname of Caitanya, given to him in infancy (Caitanya Caritāmṛta 1.13.116; Dimock [1999]) to ward off evil spirits. (Two other examples of unappealing, protective nicknames are mentioned in "Sakali kapāle kare" [LG no. 418; **130**].) The song under discussion concerns a major theme in Bengali Vaiṣṇava poetry about Caitanya: his renunciation of householder life and its devastating effect on his mother and wife. Caitanya, whose given name was Viśvambhar, was the second son of Śacī and Jagannāth Miśra. After their eldest son became a *sannyāsī*, Caitanya's parents tried unsuccessfully to keep their youngest son from following in his brother's footsteps by marrying him at an early age to Viṣṇupriyā. When Viṣṇupriyā died of a snakebite, a marriage was arranged for Caitanya to Lakṣmīpriyā. However, shortly after marrying her, at the age of twenty-four, he was initiated into the Bhāratī *sampradāy* of the Daśānāmī order of Śaṅkara *sannyāsī*s by Keśava Bhāratī of Katwa and received the name Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Although Śacī was unable to prevent Caitanya from leaving Nadīyā, she did convince him to live in nearby Puri rather than in distant Vrindaban so that she could receive news of him from local *bhakta*s who visited him.

In the song under discussion Lālan takes the persona of Caitanya's mother, who is distraught over his *sannyās*, since it requires him to leave home and not return for twelve years (see also "Ki bhāb nimāi tor antare" (LG no. 318), where he also takes the persona of Śacī). The loincloth is a sign of Caitanya's renunciation. Indian renouncers wear it to symbolize celibacy. For the Bāuls, it represents the *sādhak*'s control over semen as well as his feminization (see the annotations to "Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣane" [LG no. 221; **47**]).

In the *bhaṇitā*, Lālan sides with Śacī when he asks Caitanya to take off his loincloth. According to Jhā (1995, 122), the implication is that Lālan supports Caitanya's abandoning *sannyās* and taking up the life of householder.[6] Although, as Openshaw notes (2002, 128–129), not all *bartamān-panthī*s who take *khilāphat* or *bhek* leave householder life, Lālan is adamant that an adept must make a clean break with his or her former life (*pūrvāśram*) and that it is not possible to go back and forth between society (*lokkul*) and the guru's community (*gurukul*). As he puts it in "Kon kūle ẏābi manarāy" (LG no. 441): "Both shores of the Ganges don't stay intact. One remains and

6. *nityānanda sannyās parityāg kare saṃsār karechilen / byāpārṭite lālaner samarthan āche.* "Nityānanda abandoned *sannyās* and became a householder. Lālan is in support of this." Nityānanda was a close companion of Caitanya.

the other collapses."[7] And in "Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe" he remarks: "If you come back [to householder life] you will shame both sides." [At the same time he expresses the difficulty of relinquishing all former ties and confesses to being pulled in two directions. Addressing his own mind, he says in "Kon kūle . . ." to "think it over and choose sides—why do you wander torn by indecision?"][8] Moreover, the song under discussion is not the only one in which Lālan expresses his opinion concerning Caitanya's renunciation. He composed several other songs on the topic, and in each of them he views the incident from a different perspective. In the *bhaṇitā* of "Ki bhāb nimāi tor antare," which is also a lament by Śacī, Lālan attempts to distance himself from her feelings; "What does poor Lālan know about the emotions felt in Nadīyā?" In "Ki kaṭhin se bhārati nā jāni" (Jhā no. 124, 42) the lament is put in the mouths of the women of Nadīyā. There is little that distinguishes it from the two previous songs mentioned until the *bhaṇitā*, which gives it an unexpected twist. In it Lālan wishes he could have met Bhāratī himself, for Bhāratī would have dispelled his delusion.[9] "Dhanya māyer nimāi chele" (LG no. 316) is the only song in the group to celebrate Caitanya's renunciation with any mention of the traumatic effect it has on his mother. In the *bhaṇitā*, Lālan makes no reference to his own feelings. Instead he speaks as a guru, teaching his disciples about the true nature of Caitanya: "Whoever says that (Nimāi) is a *sannyāsī* who is an ordinary creature (or ordinary human)," Lālan says, "lands in trouble."[10]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript and typed exemplar; V² no. 85/87; Jhā, 33; LG no. 320; LS no. 731.]

7. *du kūlo ṭhik ray nā gāṅe ek kūl ray ār ek kūl bhāṅge*. Note that *kul* ("family," "lineage," "society") and *kūl* ("shore," "bank") are homophonous in Bengali and are also not distinguished in the nonstandard orthography of the manuscripts. In some contexts the meanings overlap, and both words are appropriate.

8. [This is a note in the margins of Salomon's manuscript, with an arrow pointing to this line of the song's commentary.]

9. Jhā suggests (1995) that Vaiṣṇava songs by Lālan that do not contain Sirāj Sā̃i's name in the *bhaṇitā* were composed before he met his guru. If Sirāj Sā̃i were Lālan's guru when he composed this *bhaṇitā*, it would be highly unlikely that he would slight him by wishing for another guru. [A note in the margins of Salomon's manuscript indicates that this assertion should be cross-checked "with a fakir."]

10. "Ordinary human" is a free translation of *jīb* [< Skt. *jīva*], literally "sentient being." Openshaw notes (2002, 158) that *bartamān-panthī*s consider a *jīb* to be someone who is born from a womb and suffers death, i.e., discharge of semen as well as physical death. The Caitanya Caritāmṛta (3: 25–26) quotes Caitanya as saying, when he is in the *bhāb* (emotional state) of a servant and does not recognize his own majesty, that he considers himself a *jīb* trapped by *māyā*. Lālan may be responding to this passage.

47

কে ে মায় এ বেশ ভূষণে

Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe

কে ে মায় এ বেশ ভূষণে	ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe
সাজাইল বল নি।	sājāilo balo śuni।
জে দেহে মরার বসন	jendā dehe marār basan
খিরকা তাজ আর ে র ে পিনী ॥	khirakā tāj ār ḍor kopinī ॥
জে মরার ে শাক পরা	jendā marār pośāk parā
আপন ছরাদ আপনি সারা	āpan charād āpani sārā
ভবে কে ধ্বংশ করা	bhabaloke dhvaṃśa karā
নে অস ব করণি ॥	śune asambhab karaṇi ॥
যে মরণের আগের মরে	ẏe maraṇer āger mare
শমনে ে বে না তারে	śamane chōbe nā tāre
নেছি সাধুর রে	śunechi sādhur dvāre
তাই বুঝি করেছ ধ্বনি ॥	tāi bujhi karecho dhvani ॥
সেজেছে সাজ ভালই তর	sejeche sāj bhālo-i taro
মরে যদি ডুবতে পারে	mare ẏadi ḍubte pāro
লালন বলে যদি ফেরে	lālan bale ẏadi phero
দুকূল হবে অপমানি ॥	dukūl habe apamāni ॥

Tell me!
Who dressed you in these clothes?
Dead man's garb,
khirqa,[1] *cap, and loincloth*[2]
on a living man!

Live men wearing dead men's clothes,
doing their own funeral rites,[3]
cutting themselves off from this world—
these look like impossible acts.

Yama won't touch a man
who dies before his death.
So I've heard sadhus say.
Is that why you did this,
you clever fellow?[4]

Your outfit suits you fine,
if you can die before diving.
But if you come back, Lālan says,
you will shame both sides.[5]

1. A long loose garment worn by Sufis.

2. Lit. "waistband and loincloth" (*ḍor-kaupin*) [Salomon's manuscript: *ḍor-kopinī*].

3. Here Lālan uses the word *charād* (spelled *churāt* in J[1], reflecting colloquial or dialectal pronunciation; < Skt. *śrāddha*), the Hindu funeral rite. In another song on the same theme [LG no. 220, "Marār āge male śaman jvālā ghuce ẏāy"] he uses the Muslim equivalent, *jānājā* (Ar. *janāza*).

4. *dhani*. Here the word seems to mean "skillful," "clever" (see BBhA [source unknown, probably the Bangla Academy's *Bāṃlā Bhāṣār Abhidhān*], s.v. *dhanī*, 1, def. 3) rather than "rich," which is its most common meaning. See also LG no. 423 ["Kon sukhe sā̃i karen khelā ei bhabe," **51**] and "That unknown person whom the great sages never find . . ." [LG no. 117; **111**]. [The Bengali version above has *dhvani* "sound" for *dhani*.]

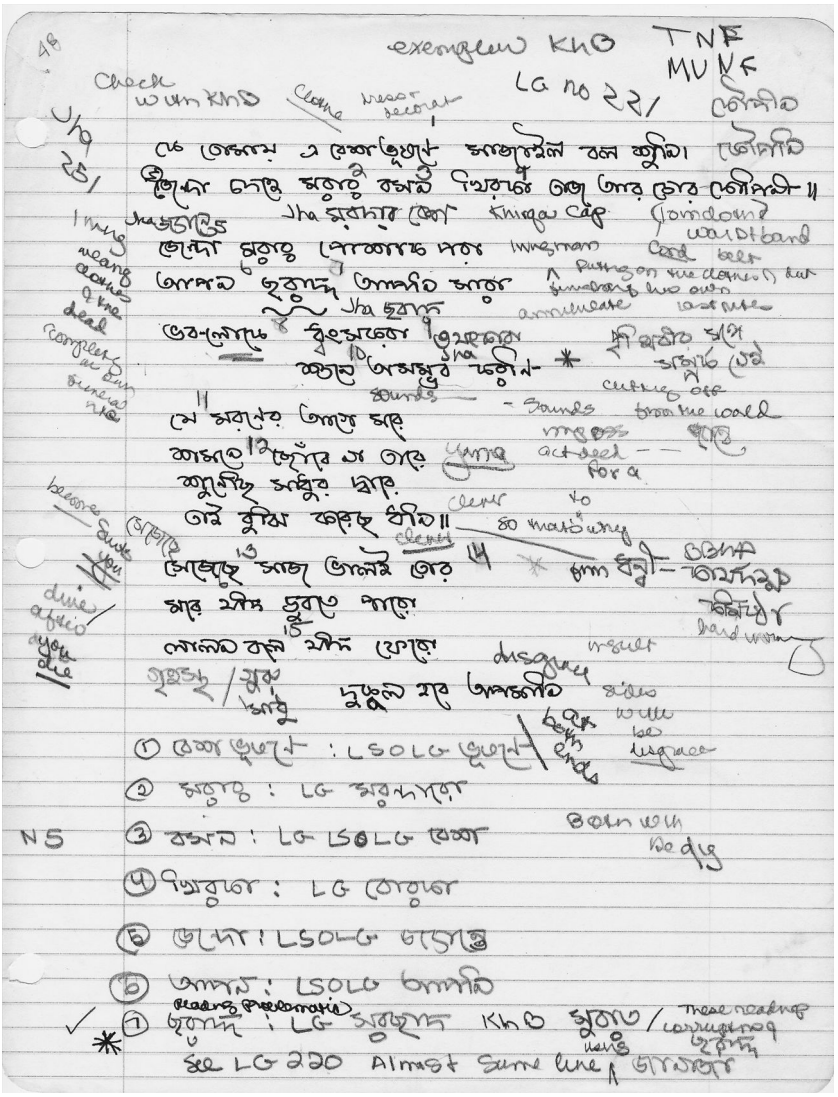
5. [Emendations:] LSOLG: In verse 1 read *dhvaṃśa karā* for *bhaẏaṃkārā*, and in verse 3 *taro* for *to re*.

Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe

This song is sung during the initiation ceremony of the Lālan Shahi fakirs, known as *khilāphat* [< Ar. *khilāfa*, "succession"] or *bhek*. About thirteen years after a preliminary initiation ceremony (*dīkṣā*), when the guru or murshid deems his disciple sufficiently advanced in the performance of Bāul *sādhanā*, the disciple undergoes another initiation ceremony, which symbolizes death to profane existence. On this day, called *jānājār din* "funeral day," the disciple receives a *khirqa*, cap (*tāj*, lit. "crown," actually a piece of cloth tied around the head), and lungi (*tahaban*: see LG no. 220 ["Marār āge male śaman jvālā ghuce ẏāy"]) from the guru and a waistband and loincloth (*ḍor-kaupin*) from the guru's wife, who may perform the entire ceremony if her husband is no longer alive. (A woman can be a guru; however, male gurus are far more common.) A female adept is presented with a sari instead of a lungi. No waistband or loincloth is given to her, as these are symbols of the male adept's control over semen. (On the androgynous symbolism of the *ḍor-kaupin*, see Murase 1991, 29–32. If a child is conceived after the *khilāphat* ceremony, the initiation is no longer valid and the disciple must begin his or her training over again.) These garments, made of plain white cotton and unstitched, are the clothes in which the dead are buried. In addition, the disciple receives a mendicant's shoulder bag (*ācalā*) and a string of beads (*tasbih*). As the guru or guru's wife puts each item on the disciple, he or she whispers a blessing into the disciple's ear. These blessings are composed in Arabic, or in a mixture of Bengali and Arabic, and are said to have come directly from the Prophet Muhammad. The disciple's hands are then tied together to symbolize restraint, and his or her eyes are blindfolded so that he or she will be blind to bad influences. Blessings are also recited for each of these rituals. When a Bāul who has undergone this ceremony dies, no *jānājā* need be performed.

To die before diving means to perform sexual *sādhanā* without lust. The esoteric meaning of to "come back" is to ejaculate semen, to have offspring, or to return to one's family after taking renunciation. "Both sides" refers to worldly and spiritual life (see LG no. 441 ["Kon kūle ẏābi manurāy"]).

[Sources for the Bangla original version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; J[1]; LG no. 221; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 155.]



Salomon’s MS for “Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe.”

48

কে বানালে এমন রঙমহলখানা

Ke bānāle æman raṅmahal-khāna

কে বানালে এমন রঙমহলখানা
হাওয়া দমে দেখ তার আসল বেনা ॥

বিনা তেলে লছে বাতি
দেখতে যেমন মু মতি
জলময় তার চতু তি
  ম থানা ॥

তিল পরিমাণ জায়গা সে যে
হ রং তাহার মাঝে
কালায় ে নে অ দেখে
    ড়ার নাচনা ॥

যে গঠিল এ রংমহল
না জানি তার রং কেমন
সিরাজ সঁই কয় নাই রে লালন
  তার তুলনা ॥

ke bānāle æman raṅmahal-khāna
hāoyā dame dekho tār āsal benā ॥

binā tele jvalche bāti
dekhte ẏæman muktāmati
jalamay tār caturbhiti
  madhye thānā ॥

til parimāṇ jāygā se ẏe
hadda raṃ tāhār mājhe
kālāy śone andha dekhe
  nyāṃṛār nācanā ॥

ẏe gaṭhilo e raṃmahal
nā jāni tār raṃṭi kæman
sirāj sāi kay nāi re lālan
  tār tulanā ॥

Who could have built
a hall of colors like this?[1]
Control your breath
and see his true form.[2]

A lamp burns without oil,
gleams like a pearl.[3]
There's water on all sides
and in the middle, his place.

In a space
the size of a sesame seed,
a myriad of colors.
The deaf hear,
and the blind watch
the lame dance.

I don't know what color he is—
the fellow who built this hall of colors.
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Lālan,
he has no equal.[4]

1. On the translation of *raṅmahal* [also spelt *raṃmahal*] as a "hall of colors," see "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors" ["Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," **120**], text note 1. Alt. trans.: For "hall of colors," "palace." For "a hall of colors like this," "such a hall of colors" / "such a palace." [In "Kæna kācher mānuṣ ḍākcho sor kare" (**49**) the word *raṃmahal* is alternatively translated "pleasure hall."]

2. "True form" translates *benā*. I have found several occurrences of the word in Bāul songs, including one other song by Lālan, "Hujure kār habe re nikāś de nā" [LG no. 433]. According to Hilālī and Haq 1967, *benā* is from Ar. *binā'* and means "foundation," "basis," "source," "origin," "beginning." Karim Shah defined it as *mūl bṛttānto* "fundamental element," and Fakir Anwar Hossain (Montu Shah) as *satya svarūp* "true form," "true nature." It is in these senses that the word seems to be used in Bāul songs. For example, Duddu Shah says ("Nabir āin māphik," Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 170): "sharī'a has five fundamental elements (*pañca benā*): pilgrimage, profession of faith, fasting, prayer, and charity." And Jaharaddīn Shah ("Jante hay nabijīr benā") says: "You have to find out the true nature (*benā*) of the Prophet." Alt. trans.: to see his true form.

3. Alt. trans. (lit.): "looks like a pearl."

4. Emendations: The readings of M and J[1] are virtually identical. Published editions: In verse 1 LSOLG has *courbhiti*, whereas all other versions have *caturbhiti*. LG and LSOLG have *khānā* for *thānā*, the reading of the manuscripts and of Khodā Bakṣ's oral version. In verse 3: LG has *nā jāni tār* for *tār nā jāni* given in all other versions. The third verse diverges somewhat from the rhyme scheme of the song. The first three lines of each verse end in the same

Ke bānāle æman raṅmahal-khāna

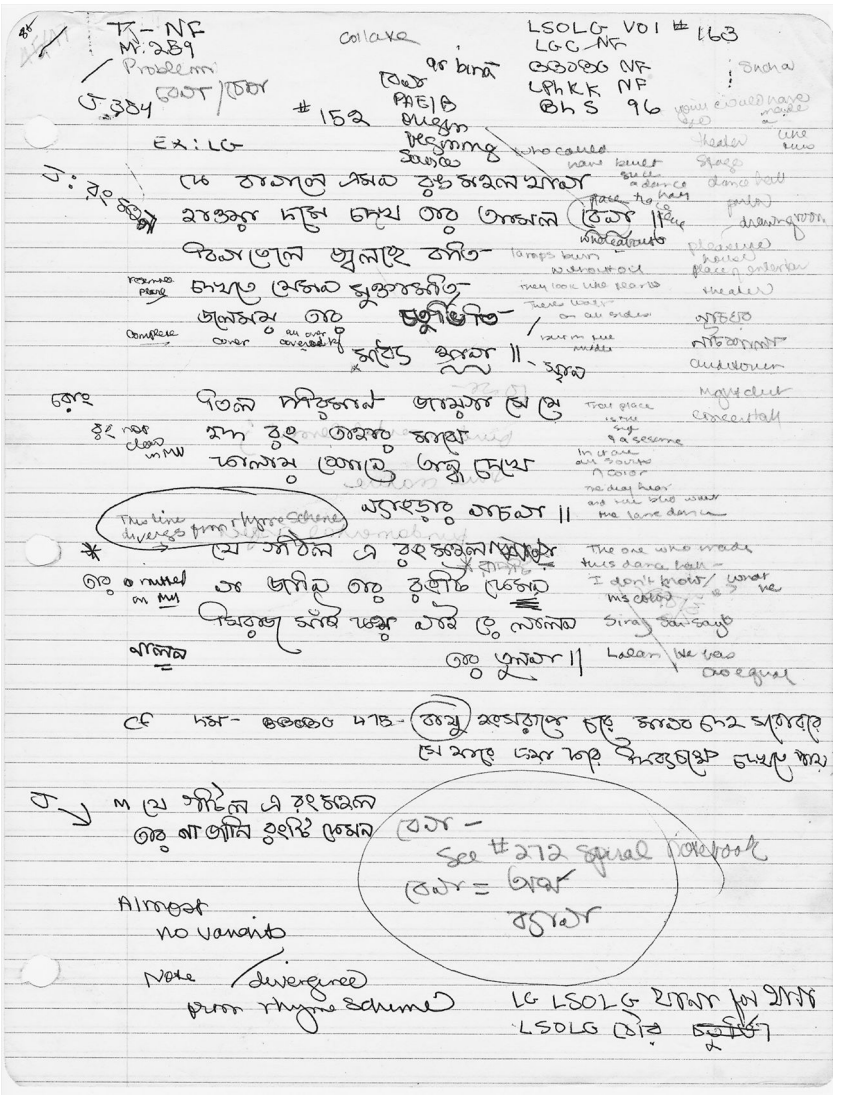
For a discussion of the "hall of colors," see the annotations to "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors" ["Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," **120**]. Lālan admonishes the adept to control his breath in order to "see his true nature" because, as Bhaṭṭācārya explains (BBOBG, 431), "It is by breath control (specifically *kumbhak*, the retention of inhaled air) that the 'Man's' presence can be known." He further notes that the Man of the Heart reigns on the two-petaled lotus, but when the woman has her menstrual period, he descends to the *viśuddha, maṇipur*, and finally the *mūlādhār cakra*. In order to experience his "true nature" (*svarūp*), the *sādhak* must take him upward by means of breath control to his previous place.

As mentioned in the annotations to "He who goes to the golden lotus-river" ["Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy," LG no. 48; **112**]), the "pearl" to which Lālan likens Divine Light is symbolic of the procreative power of water. (In pan-Islamic traditions it represents the luminous, spermatic substance of Muhammad from which creation springs; see Rubin 1975, 115, and Schimmel 1985, 127.)

For a discussion of the "space the size of a sesame seed," see the annotations to "The primal Mecca is in this human body" [Āche ādi makkā ei mānabdehe," LG no. 295; **7**]. The *ulṭa* imagery in the second verse of the song under discussion expresses the paradoxical nature of the ultimate reality as well as the paradoxical state of the adept, who is "dead while alive"; his senses are drawn inward, making him blind and deaf to the phenomenal world.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; M no. 259; J[1] no. 354; LG no. 152; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 163.]

letter, which is usually a vowel but may also be a consonant, and the last lines of each verse rhyme with one another. In the third verse, however, the final letters of the first three lines are *l* (*raṃmahal*), *n* (*kæman*), and *n* (*lālan*).



Salomon's MS for "Ke bānāle æman raṅmahal-khāna."

49

কেন কাছের মানুষ ডাকে শোর করে

Kæna kācher mānuṣ ḍākcho śor kare

কেন কাছের মানুষ ডাকে শোর করে
(আছিস) তুই যেখানে সে ও সেখানে
খুজে বেড়াও কারে রে ॥

বিজলি চটকের য়
থেকে থেকে ঝলক দেয়
সেই রংমহল ঘরে
অহ শি পাশাপাশি
থেকে দিশে হয় না রে ॥

হাতের কাছে যারে পাও
(তারে) ঢাকা দিল্লি খুজতে যাও
ে ন অনুসারে
এমনি বু হীন হলি মন রে
তুই এই সংসারে ॥

ঘরের ম ঘরখানা
খুজে দে মন এই খানা
ঘরে কে বিরাজ করে
সিরাজ সঁই কয় দেখ রে লালন
তুই কি প সে কি প রে ॥

kæna kācher mānuṣ ḍākcho śor kare
(āchis) tui ẏekhāne se o sekhāne
khũje beṛāo kāre re ॥

bijali caṭaker nyāy
theke theke jhalak dey
sei raṃmahal ghare
aharniśi pāśāpāśi
theke diśe hay nā re ॥

hāter kāche ẏāre pāo
(tāre) ḍhāka dilli khũjte ẏāo
kon anusāre
æmani buddhihīn hali man re
tui ei saṃsāre ॥

gharer madhye gharkhānā
khũje dekho man ei khānā
ghare ke birāj kare
sirāj sãi kay dekh re lālan
tui ki rūp se ki rūp re ॥

Why are you shouting
at the top of your lungs
for someone[1] *nearby?*
Wherever you are, he is.
So who do you roam around
searching for?

Now and then,
like a flash of lightning,
he lights up the pleasure hall[2]*.*
You live with him
day and night, side by side,
but you haven't a clue.

Why travel to Dhaka and Delhi
to search for someone
close at hand?
My mind, in this life,
you've taken leave of your senses.

There's a house within a house.
Find out who lives there.
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
how do you look
and how does he?[3]

1. *mānuṣ.*

2. *raṃmahal.*

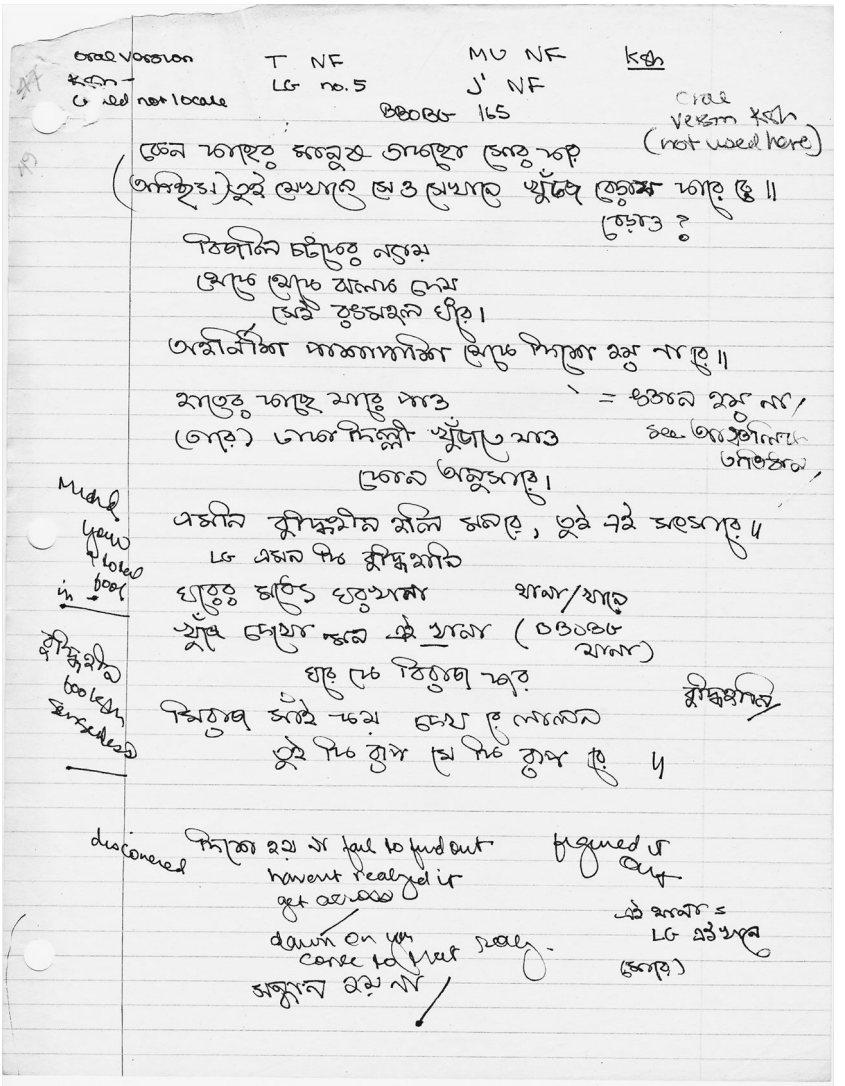
3. Emendations: I have no manuscript source for the song. There are only two significant variants among the versions given in BBOBG and LG. At the end of verse 1, instead of the BBOBG and LSOLG reading *nā re*, LG has *more,* which is clearly an error as it makes no sense in the context. In the last verse BBOBG has *ei thānā,* and LG and LSOLG *eikhāne. Khānā* (Pers. *khāna*, "house") would make better sense in the context than the BBOBG reading *thānā*, "station." Since *th* and *kh* are paleographically similar and are often confused, it is possible that *thānā* is a misreading of *khānā*. The LG reading *eikhāne*, "here," makes sense, but violates the rhyme scheme.

Kæna kācher mānuṣ ḍākcho śor kare

This is another song about man's search for God, who is immanent in the human body, a belief common to all three major religious traditions—Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam—that influenced the Bāuls. This song in particular bears striking similarity to Indian Sufi poetry composed in Persian that depicts the Sufi as the lover and God as the beloved residing in his own body. For example (quoted in Haq 1975, 79): "Day in and day out He is within me, but I am stupefied in His quest." But it also contains a simile reminiscent of the Upaniṣads. Like Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.3.6, it compares the Supreme to a flash of lightning.

On the symbolic meaning of the "palace" (*raṃmahal*), see the annotations to "Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy" [LG no. 35; **120**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 5; LS no. 191; BBOBG no. 165.]



Salomon's MS for "Kæna kācher mānuś ḍākcho śor kare."

50

কোন দেশে যাবি মনাই চে দেখি যাই

Kon deśe ẏābi manāi calo dekhi ẏāi

ে ন দেশে যাবি মনাই চে দেখি যাই
ে থা পির হও তুমি রে
তী যাবি সেখানে কি
পাপী নাই রে ॥

নারী ছেড়ে জ লেতে যায়
ে ষ কি হয় না সেথায়
আপন মনের বাঘে যারে ধরে খায়
(তখন তার) কে ঠেকায় রে ॥

বিবাদী ে র দেহে সকল
অহ শি করছে রে ে ল
যথায় যাবি তথায় পাগল
করবে ে রে ॥

মিয়ে বা বসে তে
তাও ে সদায় নে ফে
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় লালন ে ে
বু নাই রে ॥

kon deśe ẏābi manāi calo dekhi ẏāi
kothā pir hao tumi re
tīrthe ẏābi sekhāne ki
pāpī nāi re ॥

nārī cheṛe jaṅgalete ẏāy
svapna-doṣ ki hay nā sethāy
āpan maner bāghe ẏāre dhare khāy
(takhan tār) ke ṭhekāy re ॥

bibādī tor dehe sakal
aharniśi karche re gol
ẏathāy ẏābi tathāy pāgal
karbe tore ॥

bhramiye bāro base tero
tāo to sadāy śune phero
sirāj sāi kay lālan toro
buddhi nāi re ॥

What land
will you go to, my mind?
Come on, let's see
where you become a saint.
So you want to go on a pilgrimage?
No sinners there, you say?

Some men swear off women
and retreat to the jungle.
But do you think
they don't have wet dreams?
When the tiger
of your own mind
is devouring you
who can stop him?

Your adversaries
are all inside you.
They make trouble
night and day,
drive you crazy
wherever you go.

Traveling or staying put—
it's six of one, half dozen of the other.[1]
This you've heard over and over.
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Lālan,
You're such an idiot![2]

1. *bhramiye bāro base tero*: lit. "Traveling is twelve, staying put is thirteen." Cf. the analogous expression *jā̃hā bāhānna tā̃hā tippānno*, "Where there's fifty-two, there's fifty-three" (i.e., fifty-two is no different from fifty-three).

2. Emendations: J[1] verses 1 and 2 are in the reverse order in LG and LSOLG. In Mahendranāth Goswāmī's version, however, the verses occur in the same order as in LG and LSOLG. Either order is possible. I have translated these verses in the order given by Mahendranāth Goswāmī, LG, and LSOLG. LG and LSOLG give totally different readings for the last two verses of the song, and neither of these versions bears any resemblance to the corresponding verses in J[1] no. 113 and Mahendranāth Goswāmī's oral version, which differ only in the order of the verses. The version of the song given in BBOBG diverges significantly from the manuscript and oral versions only in the last verse. LSOLG also has

Kon deśe ẏābi manāi calo dekhi ẏāi

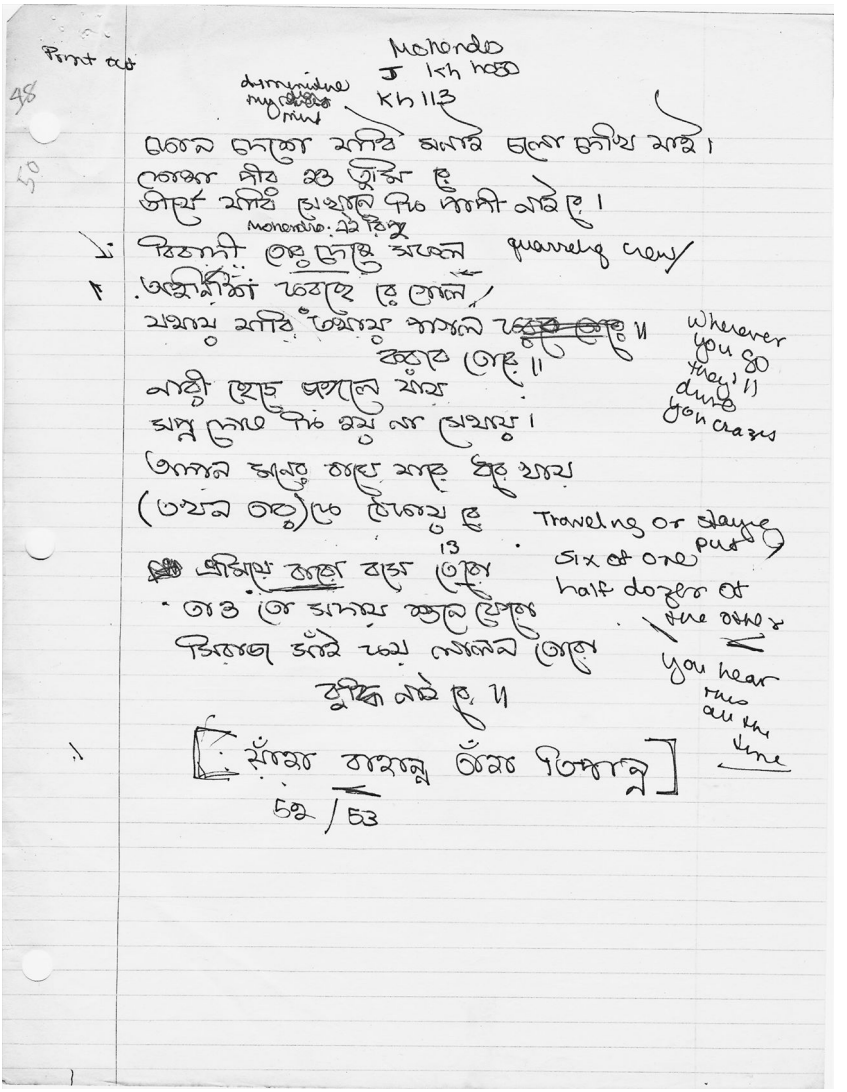
In this song Lālan ridicules pilgrimage and withdrawal from the world to practice celibacy. Lālan, comparing the mind to a tiger, says that if it is not brought under control, no matter where you go your "adversaries" (i.e., "the six enemies") will "drive you crazy."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: J[1] no. 113; LG no. 9; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 227; BBOBG no. 182.]

two additional verses not in any of the other versions. For verses 2 and 3 in the published texts read:

bibādī tor (Mahendranāth Goswāmī: ei) dehe (Mahendranāth Goswāmī: ripu) sakal
aharniśi karche re gol
ẏathāy ẏābi tathāy pāgol karbe tore //

bhramie (J[1] bhimare) bāro base tero
tāo to sadāi śune phero /
sirāj sāi kay lālan toro
buddhi nāi re.



Salomon's MS for "Kon deśe ẏābi manāi calo dekhi ẏāi."

51

কোন সুখে সঁ ই করেন খেলা এই ভবে

Kon sukhe sãi karen khelā ei bhabe

ে ন সুখে সঁ ই করেন খেলা এই ভবে	kon sukhe sãi karen khelā ei bhabe
আপনি বাজায় আপনি বাজে	āpani bājāy āpani bāje
আপনি মজে সে রবে ॥	āpani maje se rabe ॥
নাম নি লা-শরিকালা	nāmṭi śuni lā-śarikālā
সবের শরিক সেই একেলা	saber śarik sei ekelā
আপনি তর আপনি ভেলা	āpani taraṅga āpani bhelā
আপনি খাবি খায় ডুবে ॥	āpani khābi khāy ḍube ॥
জগতের যে রায়রা	tri-jagater ẏe rāyarāṅgā
তার দেখি ঘরখানি ভা	tār dekhi ghar-khāni bhāṅgā
হায় কি মজার আজব ে	hāy ki majār ājab roṅgā
দেখায় ধনি ে নভাবে ॥	dekhāy dhani kon-bhābe ॥
আপনি ে র হয় আপন বাড়ি	āpani cor hay āpan bāṛi
আপনি নেয় সে আপন বেড়ি	āpani ney se āpan beṛi
লালন বলে এ নাচাড়ি	lālan bale ei nācāṛi
কৈ (কই) না থাকি চুপচাপে ॥	kai (ka-i) nā thāki cup-cāpe ॥

What pleasure does the Lord get
from playing in this world?[1]
Just look! He makes the music
and he gets caught up in the sound.

They call him[2]
the one who has no partner.
Everyone has a partner;[3]
only he is alone.
He is the wave
and he is the raft.
He goes under,
gasping for breath.

The fellow
who's emperor of the three worlds—[4]
I see his house is run-down.
My goodness! What a strange amusing show
this clever man stages somehow.[5]

He robs his own house
and he puts himself in chains.
Lālan says, This showman keeps quiet.[6]
He doesn't breathe a word.[7]

1. Lit. "For what pleasure does the Lord play in this world?"

2. Lit.: "His name is the one who has no partner (*lā-śarikālā*)."

3. Alt. trans.: "everybody."

4. *rāyarāṅgā*.

5. "clever man": *dhani*. See LG no. 221 ["Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe," **47**].

6. "showman": *nācāṛi*, an obscure term occurring in only one other song, LG no. 458 ["Phero palo tor phakirite," **86**]. The translation is highly tentative. Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 1051) gives the dialectal variant *lācāṛi*, which he takes to mean "mysterious doctrine" (*rahasyajanak tattva*). Since he gives no explanation of how he arrived at this definition, it seems that he merely guessed at the meaning from the context.

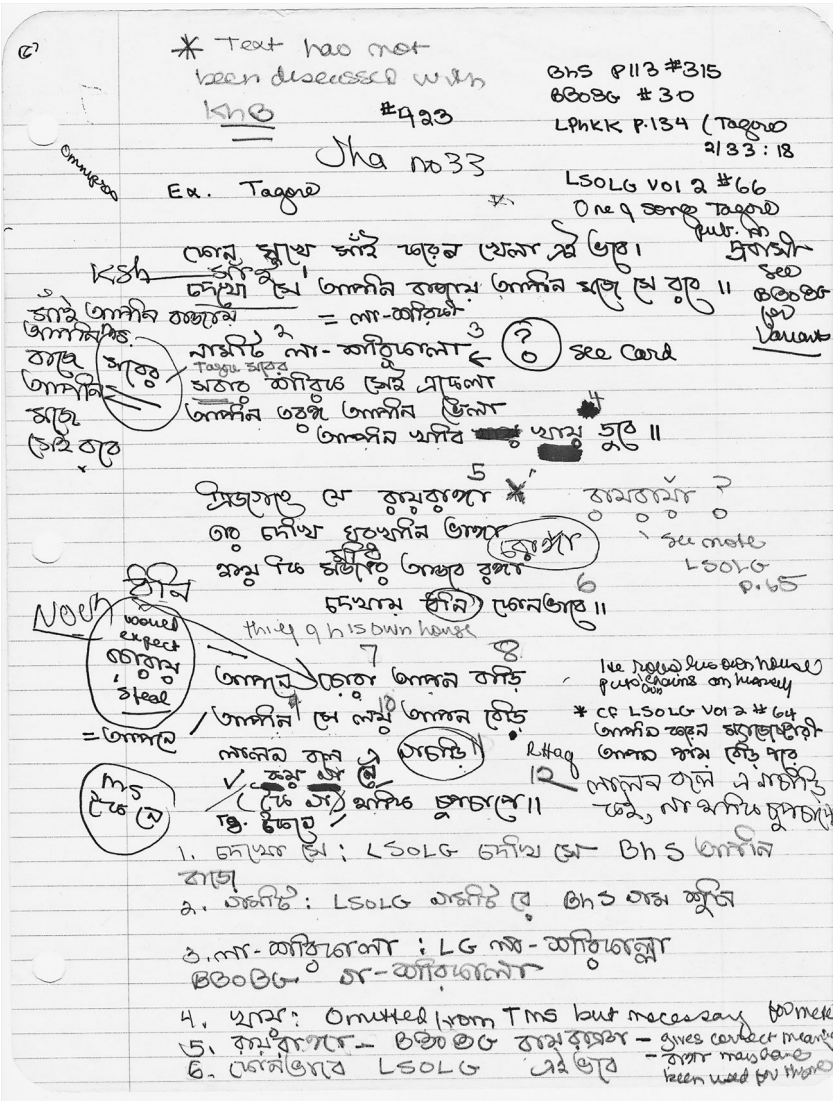
7. In the Bengali text, the two sentences of the *bhaṇitā* are in the reverse order. The verbs are in the first person: *kai nā* (Tagore manuscript [gives] *ne*) "I don't speak" and *thāki cup-cāpe*, "I keep quiet." The subject of the sentence, however, seems to be *e nācāṛi*, "This showman." I have therefore translated the verbs as if they were in the third person: *kay nā* and *thāke cup-cāpe*.

Kon sukhe sãi karen khelā ei bhabe

The Lord is the Creator and is in everything he creates. He not only directs the show, but he is also all the actors in it and all the objects on the stage. He is *sarbamay* (all-pervading [< Skt. *sarvamaya*]), *sarbabyāpī* (omnipresent [< Skt. *sarvavyāpin*]), and *sarbabhūte* (present in all created beings [< Skt. *sarvabhūte*]).

Lālan says that he "keeps quiet" and "doesn't breathe a word," for he is beyond the range of ordinary sense perception.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V^1: 18; V^2: no. 33; J no. 31b; LG no. 423; LS no. 550.]



Salomon's MS for "Kon sukhe sãi karen khelā ei bhabe."

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52

খাকি আদমের ভেদ সে ভেদ প কি ে ঝে

Khāki ādamer bhed se bhed paśu ki bojhe

খাকি আদমের ভেদ	khāki ādamer bhed
সে ভেদ প কি ে ঝে।	se bhed paśu ki bojhe।
আদম কালেবে ে দে ে দা বিরাজে ॥	ādam kālebe khode khodā birāje ॥
আদম শরীর আমার	ādam śarīr āmār
ভাষায় বলেছে	bhāṣāy baleche
অধর সঁ ই নিজে	adhar sā̃i nije
নইলে কি আদমকে ছেজদা	naile ki ādamke chejdā
ফেরে য় সাজে ॥	pherestāy sāje ॥
নি আজাজিল খাসতন	śuni ājājil khāsatan
খাকে আদম তন	khāke ādam tan
গঠন গঠেছে	gaṭhan gaṭheche
আবার সেই আজাজিল শয়তান হলো	ābār sei ājājil śaytān halo
আদম না ভজে ॥	ādam nā bhaje ॥
আব খাক আতশ বাদের ঘর	āb khāk ātaś bāder ghar
ঘটে জান মালেক	ghaṭlo jān mālek
মু র ে ন চিজে	muktār kon cije
লালন বলে এ ভেদ জানলে	lālan bale e bhed jānle
সব জানে সে যে ॥	sab jāne se ẏe ॥

The mystery of Adam who was made from clay—
is it a mystery an animal can understand?
Khodā himself lives in Adam's body.

Adam's body is my body,
said the Uncatchable Lord himself[1]
in plain words.
Otherwise, would it have been right
for the angels to bow down to him?

I hear 'Azazil had a pure body,
while Adam's was shaped from clay.
Yet 'Azazil became Satan because he didn't worship him.[2]

The master and redeemer[3]
built the house
out of earth, air, fire, and water.
But from what material of his did he make the soul?[4]
Lālan Sā̃i says,
He who knows this mystery
knows all.[5]

1. [Salomon's manuscript contains the footnote: "Is 'himself' too repetitive? Should I omit it?"]

2. Alt. trans.: "for not worshipping Adam"; "because he didn't worship him."

3. *mālek muktār*.

4. The first half of the verse literally translates: "He built the house from water, earth, fire, and air. From what material (*kon cije*) of the master and redeemer is the soul (*jān*)?" Lālan asks the same question in "Jānte hay ādam saphir ātmakathā" [LG no. 286] but using Skt. *ātmā* instead of Persian *jān*. *Ruhu* (Ar. *rūḥ*) is another term in Lālan's songs for soul (see, for example, "Æman din ki habe [re] ār" [LG no. 252]).

5. [Emendations:] The manuscripts have only two minor variants. In verse 1, T has *pherestā*, whereas M[1] has *pherestār*. In verse 3, T has *muktār*, a variant pronunciation of M's reading *moktār* (genitive of *moktā* "redeemer"). Published editions: In the refrain LG has *khode khodā* for *khodā khode*. In verse 1, LG gives *ādamke* for *ādam ke*. In verse 2, LG has *gaṭhan* for *gaṭhio* and omits *moktār* after *mālek*. LSOLG and KSh's oral version have *sā̃i nije* for *kon cije*. LG and LSOLG have *e bhed jānle*, whereas the manuscripts have *jenle e bhed*.

Khāki ādamer bhed se bhed paśu ki bojhe

On the Qur'anic story of 'Azazil, see the annotations to "Go and search! Where did 'Azazil fail to bow down?" [**74**]. Lālan believes that the soul is the divine essence in man. Like the Sufis, he reasons that the angels, who bow down to no one but God, would not have bowed down to Adam had he just been made of clay.

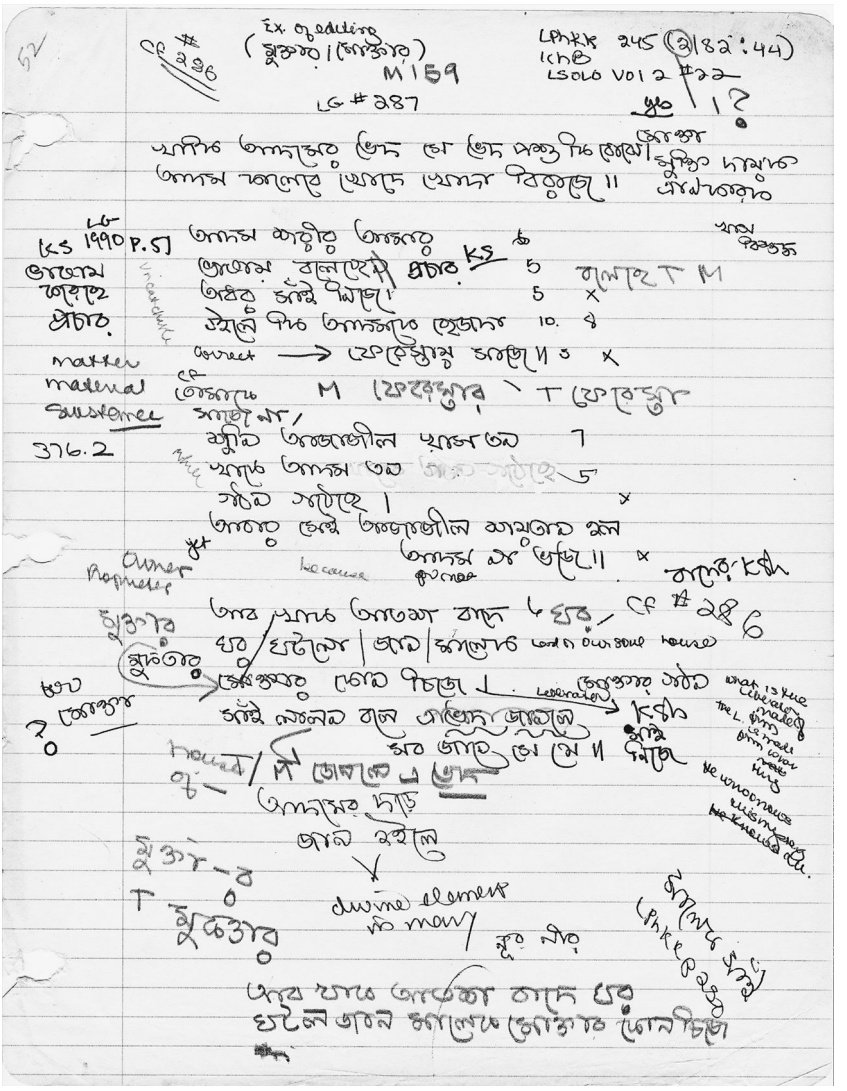
When I asked Khodā Bakṣ to answer the question Lālan asks at the end of the song, "From what material of his did he make the soul (*jān*)?," he replied that it was breath (*dam*), since the Qur'an (15:29) says "I breathed into him [i.e., Adam] from my Spirit (*rūḥ*)." Pāñja Śāh in *Chahi Iski Chādekī Gaohor* gives another answer:

> Allah mixed light (*nūr*) and water (*nīr*) together and made Adam's spirit from that. He made Adam's body from clay. Then he himself placed his spirit in Adam's body. He left the light and water in Adam's trust (*āmānat*) and told him to worship with it (*sādhan karite*).

Jaharuddin gives still another answer in his song "Jānte hay nabijir benā": "The soul was made from the seed of the Father."

These three answers are complementary rather than contradictory. As we have seen, the godhead is equated with spirit, breath, light, and semen. Although it is androgynous, made up of a single substance containing two elements, *nūr* ("light"; a code word for semen) and *nīr* ("water"; a code word for menstrual blood), it is often identified with semen and the male. Thus Pāñja Śāh, on the one hand, can say that the soul is composed of *nūr* and *nīr*, while Jaharuddin, on the other, can say that it is made from the seed of the Father.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: T^2: 44, no. 82; M^1 159; LG no. 287; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 22; KhB; KSh.]



Salomon's MS for "Khāki ādamer bhed se bhed paśu ki bojhe."

53

খুলবে কেন সে ধন ও তার গাহেক বিনে

Khulbe kæna se dhan o tār gāhek bine

খুলবে কেন সে ধন
ও তার গাহেক বিনে
কত মণি মু রেখেছে সে ধনী
বঁ ধাই করে তার ে কানে ॥

সাধু মহাজন যারা
মালের মূ জানে তারা
মূ দিয়ে লন
অমূ রতন
সে ধন জেনে নে তারাই কেনে ॥

মাকাল ফলের বরণ দেখে
যেমন ডালে নাচে কাকে
তেমনি আমার মন
চটকে বিমন
মন তুই দিন ফুরালি দিনে দিনে ॥

মন ে মার ণ জানা গেল
পিতল কিনে ে না বল
অধীন লালন বলে মন
চিনলি নে সে ধন
মন তুই মূল হারালি নিজের ণে ॥

khulbe kæna se dhan
o tār gāhek bine
kata maṇi muktā rekheche se dhanī
bā̃dhāi kare tār dokāne ॥

sādhu mahājan ẏārā
māler mūlya jāne tārā
mūlya diye lan
amūlya ratan
se dhan jene śune tārāi kene ॥

mākāl phaler baraṇ dekhe
ẏeman ḍāle nāce kāke
temani āmār man
caṭke biman
man tui din phurāli dine dine ॥

man tomār guṇ jānā gelo
pital kine sonā balo
adhīn lālan bale man
cinli ne se dhan
man tui mūl hārāli nijer guṇe ॥

When she has no customers
why should she display her treasures?
That rich lady keeps a huge stock
of pearls and precious stones
tied up in bundles in her store.

Expert merchants[1]
know the value of their merchandise.
They pay the price and get priceless jewels.
They know all the tricks of the trade.[2]

As a crow sitting on a branch
sees the bitter apple
and starts to dance,
so my mind, you waste your days
distracted by tinsel.

News of your skill has spread.
You buy brass and call it gold instead.
Poor Lālan says: My mind, by your great skill,
you squandered your capital.[3]

1. *sādhu mahājan:* The compound is a double entendre; it can mean "saints" or "merchants."

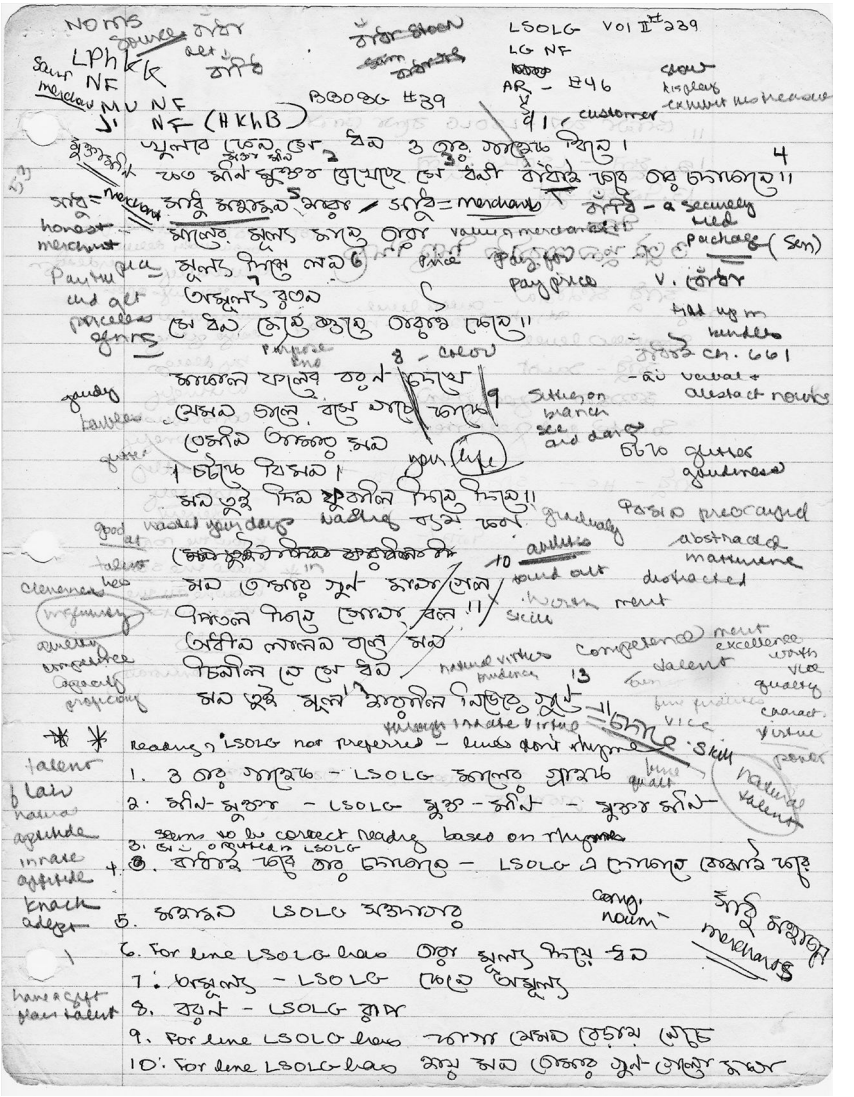
2. *se dhan jene śune tārāi kene:* lit. "They buy these treasures, knowing what they're doing."

3. Emendations: I have neither a manuscript nor oral source for this song at the present time. Another version with significant variants is given in LSOLG vol. 2, no. 239. Both published versions of the song have obvious corruptions. In the absence of an authoritative version, the translation is only tentative. The variants in the song given in LSOLG that substantially affect the meaning are as follows: For the second half of second line of the refrain, instead of the reading given in BBOBG, *bā̃dhāi kare tār dokāne* "tied up in bundles in his store," LSOLG has *e dokāne bojhāi kare,* "crammed into his store." According to the latter variant, the entire line translates: "That rich man keeps his store crammed full of pearls and precious stones." For the first two lines of verse 2 instead of the reading given in BBOBG, *mākāl phaler baraṇ dekhe, yeman ḍāle base nāce kake,* "as a crow sitting on a branch sees the color of the bitter apple and starts to dance." LSOLG has *mākāl phaler rūp dekhe, kāgā yeman beṛāy nece,* "like a crow when he sees a bitter apple and starts to dance around." Neither reading is entirely satisfactory. The line is hypermetric in BBOBG, whereas in LSOLG the rhyme scheme is violated; the last words of each line should end in the same consonant and vowel (BBOBG: *dekhe, kāke* (the rhyming of *khe* with *ke* probably indicates that the *khe* was pronounced without aspiration), but LSOLG: *dekhe, nece*). Finally, for the last line of the last verse BBOBG has *man tui mūl hārāli nijer guṇe,* "My mind, by your great skill you squandered your capital," whereas LSOLG gives *o tui kūl hārāli dine dine,* "Day by day you are losing the shore." This reading does not make any sense.

Khulbe kæna se dhan o tār gāhek bine

The song compares Bāul *sādhanā* to trading in jewels. On the symbolism of "pearls and precious stones" see the annotations to "Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy," [LG no. 48, **112**]. The "rich lady" is the Supreme, and the "expert merchants" are *sādhak*s who have succeeded in Bāul *sādhanā*. Lālan laments that he was attracted to the trappings of the material world like a "crow" to a "bitter apple" (see "Āmi ki doṣ dibo kāre re" [LG no. 197; **17**]) and as a result "squandered his capital"—spilled his semen.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; BBOBG no. 39; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 239; LS no. 393.]



Salomon's MS for "Khulbe kæna se dhan o tār gāhek bine."

গ

54

ণে পড়ে সারলি দফা

Guṇe paṛe sārli daphā

ণে পড়ে সারলি দফা
করলি রফা ে লেমালে
চিনলি নে মন
ে থা সে ধন
ভাজলি বে ন
পরের তেলে ॥

guṇe paṛe sārli daphā
karli raphā golemāle
cinli ne man
kothā se dhan
bhājli begun
parer tele ॥

করলি ব পড়া না
কাজে কামে ঝলসে কানা
কথায় ে চিড়ে ভেজে না
জল কি বা দুধ না দিলে ॥

karli bahu paṛāśunā
kāje kāme jhalse kānā
kathāy to ciṛe bheje nā
jal kiṃbā dudh nā dile ॥

আর কি হবে এমন জনম
লুটবি মজা মনের মতন
বাবার ে টেল ভা বে যখন
খাবি তখন কার বা শালে ॥

ār ki habe æman janam
luṭbi majā maner matan
bābār hoṭel bhāṅgbe ẏakhan
khābi takhan kār bā śāle ॥

হায় কি মজা তিলেখাজা
খেয়ে দেখলি নে মন কেমন মজা
লালন কয় বেজাতির রাজা
হয়ে রইলি একইকালে ॥

hāy ki majā tilekhājā
kheye dekhli ne man kæman majā
lālan kay bejātir rājā
haye raili ek-i-kāle ॥

You fell in with bad company,[1]
ruined your life,
made the wrong decisions.

Mind, you didn't recognize[2]
where the treasure lies.
You fried your eggplant
in a stranger's oil.

You studied assiduously,
but when it came to work,
you could barely see.[3]
Words can't wet rice flakes
if you don't add water or milk.

Will you get a life like this again?
Enjoy it to your heart's content.
But when Pop's Hotel collapses,
whose kitchen are you going to eat in?

Oh, sesame candy is so good.
Mind, you haven't tried it
to see how good it could be?[4]
Lālan says, You're absolutely
the king of bastards.[5]

[No annotations for this song have been found. Salomon's manuscript, however, notes that an oral version from KhB was the exemplar for her translation, which could refer to an audio recording she made by Manaora Begum that survives. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; LS no. 177.]

1. *guṇe paṛe*: meaning of the words is unclear. *Guṇ* = *ẏoni*.

2. Alt. trans.: "realize."

3. *jhalse kānā*: "purblind," half-blind."

4. Could also be a statement.

5. *bejātir rājā*.

55

র দয়া যারে হয় সেই জানে

Gurur dayā ẏāre hay sei jāne

র দয়া যারে হয় সেই জানে
যে পে সঁই বিরাজ করে
এ দেহ-ভুবনে ॥

জলের বি আলের উপর
অখ লয়ের মাঝার
বি তে হয় সি র আকার
ধারা বয় ণে ॥

শহরে সহ পাড়া
তিন পথ তার এক মহড়া
আলেক ে য়ার পবন ে ড়া
ফিরছে সেইখানে ॥

হাতের কাছে আলেক শহর
রং বেরংএর উঠছে লহর
সিরাজ সঁই কয় লালন রে ে র
সদাই ে র মনে ॥

gurur dayā ẏāre hay sei jāne
ẏe rūpe sā̃i birāj kare
e deha-bhubane ॥

jaler bimbu āler upar
akhaṇḍa pralayer mājhār
bindute hay sindhur ākār
dhārā bay triguṇe ॥

śahare sahasra pāṛā
tinṭi path tār ek mahaṛā
ālek soyār paban ghoṛā
phirche seikhāne ॥

hāter kāche ālek śahar
raṃ beraṃer uṭhche lahar
sirāj sā̃i kay lālan re tor
sadāi ghor mane ॥

Only he on whom the guru has mercy
knows what form the Lord takes
in the world of the body.

High up, beyond the border,[1]
a drop of water, indestructible
through dissolutions. In the drop,
an ocean of three currents.[2]

There's a city up there
with a thousand districts,
three roads, and one intersection.
An invisible rider rides around
on a horse of wind.

Near at hand, an invisible city
where waves of many colors surge.
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
you're always in the dark.[3]

1. *āler upar*: lit. "on the ridge." For a discussion of the meaning of *āl* in Bāul songs, see the annotations to this song.

2. *dhārā triguṇe*: lit. "with currents of three qualities."

3. [Emendations:] I did not find a manuscript source for the song. The following emendations to the LSOLG version are based on an oral version sung by Khodā Bakṣ (KhB). LSOLG: In verse 1 for *jale dimba* read *jaler bimba*, and for *hay sindhur ākār* read *sindhu tāhār*. In verse 3 for *hacche* read *uṭhche*. Other minor differences between the two versions that do not alter the meaning are as follows: In the refrain, instead of *sãir līlā khela* KhB has *sãi birāj kare*. In KhB verses 1 and 2 are reversed, and in verse 2 instead of *gali* KhB has *path*.

Gurur dayā ẏāre hay sei jāne

"In the world of the body" the Lord takes the form of semen. "Border" translates *āl*, "a ridge marking the boundary of a field." It signifies the top of the void where the Lord in the form of "a drop of water" floated before creation. In *dehatattva* terms *āl* seems to refer to the *sahasrār*. Thus the phrase *āler upare*, "beyond the border," is puzzling, since the *sahasrār*, located at the top of the head or even above the head, is itself the highest *cakra* and already represents transcendent space. Could "beyond the border" refer to a place that is even above the thousand-petaled lotus? Several Bāul songs I have come across appear to support this interpretation. For example, Duddu Shah sings (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 236): "Take a good look above the thousand-petaled lotus. He is floating in the void in the form of a drop" (*sahasra daler pare dekho nā najar kare / nirākāre bindu rūpe se jan-i bhāse re*). Similarly, the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā text *Āśray Siddhānta Candroday bā Svarūp Damodār Gosvāmīr Kaṛcā* ([Svarūp Damodār Gosvāmī], not dated, 110) states: "The Supreme is in the void above the *sahasrār*" (*sahasrār ūrddhe śūnye paramātmā ron*).

"The drop of water" is the seed of creation. It is the *paramabindu*, the primal drop of semen that is the source of the universe. In Bāul and Mārfati songs this *bindu* is often named Lord Nirañjan, as in the opening line of a song composed by Fakir Mastakin that I collected from Hiru Shah, a fakir belonging to the Chishti order from Birbhum, West Bengal: "When no one existed, my Lord Nirañjan floated in the form of a drop" (*ẏakhan keu chilo nā, bindurūpe bhāslen āmār sāi nirāñjan*). The primal drop of semen is uncreated and eternal; although, according to Hindu cosmology, the universe is destroyed at the end of each of the four ages, it remains, as Lālan puts it, "immutable through dissolutions" (*akhaṇḍa pralayer mājhār*). The *bindu* is referred to as male, but is actually both male and female. "The ocean of three currents" (*triguṇ*; lit. "three qualities") contained within the *bindu* signifies Prakṛti, the female principle, which consists of the three qualities *sattva* "goodness," *rajas* "passion," and *tamas* "darkness." In *dehatattva* terms the three currents signify the menstrual blood of the three days a woman is said to menstruate.

"The city" with "a thousand districts" refers to the *sahasrār*. It is often termed *ālek śahar*, "the invisible city" (LG no. 109 ["Cā̃d āche cā̃d gherā," **59**]), and *āl-khānār śahar*, "the city at the border" [or "the original city"] (LG no. 153 ["Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā," **68**]). The "three roads," as explained previously, are the three *nāṛis*, *iṛā*, *piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā*, and

the "intersection" symbolizes the place in the *ājñā-cakra* where they are joined. Lālan says that "an invisible rider," namely, the Lord, "rides around on a horse of wind" (*paban ghoṛā*) because it is in breath that semen is believed to move around the body, and it is on breath that the *parama-bindu* rests, as in a song ["Damer upar āsan tār"] attributed to Lālan (LSOLG vol. 1, no. 264): "He sat on breath when there was no sky and no earth. In the void in the form of a drop he (rested) on breath." It is because semen moves in breath that control of semen depends on control of breath.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; LG no. 139; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 69; BhS, 85, no. 234.]

56

গেড়েই গা রে পা

Geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā

গেড়েই গা রে পা
হাপুর পুর ডুব পাড়িলে
এ বার মজা যাবে ে ঝা
কা কে উলানির কালে ॥

কুতবি যখন কফের লায়
তাবিজ তাগা বঁ ধবি গলায়
তাতে কি ে র হবে ভালায়
ম কের জলে ষ্ক পলে ॥

বঁ ই চালা দেয় ঘড়ি ঘড়ি
ডুব পাড় গে ে ড়া ে ড়ি
বাড়বে ধু কফের নাড়ি
যাতে হানি জীবন মূলে ॥

খা দাও ঝঁ পই খেলা
শা হও রে ও মন ে লা
লালন কয় গেল বেলা
দেখলি নে মন চক্ষু মেলে ॥

geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā
hāpur hupur ḍub pāṛile
e bār majā ẏābe bojhā
kārtike ulānir kāle ॥

kūtbi ẏakhan kapher jvālāy
tābij tāgā bā̃dhbi galāy
tāte ki tor habe bhālāy
mastaker jale śuṣka pale ॥

bā̃i cālā dey ghaṛi ghaṛi
ḍub pāṛo ge dauṛādauṛi
baṛbe śudhu kapher nāṛi
ẏāte hāni jīban mūle ॥

khānta dāo jhā̃p-i khelā
śāsta hao re o man bholā
lālan kay gelo belā
dekhli ne man cakṣu mele ॥

Madman,
you keep diving[1] *into the ditch*[2]
without a break.[3]
You'll pay for it[4] *in Kārtik,*
the time diseases strike.[5]

When you moan and groan,
miserable from a cold,
you'll tie charms[6] *around your neck.*
But will it do you any good
if the water in your head dries up?

Breathing heavily,[7]
you rush to dive in.[8]
It only aggravates[9] *the phlegm,*[10]
cuts at the root of your life.

Stop all your diving games.[11]
Calm down, forgetful mind.[12]
Lālan says, It's late.[13]
Mind, you didn't open your eyes and look.

1. Alt. trans.: "plunging."

2. *geṛei gāṅge: geṛe* means "waterhole," and *gāṅg* (locative, *gāṅge*; < *gāṅgā* "Ganges") "river." Here, however, it is probably used as a synonym of *geṛe*. The two words are used together for alliterative effect.

3. Alt. trans.: "nonstop."

4. *majā ẏābe bojhā*.

5. *ulānir kāle*: The meaning of *ulāni* in this context is not clear. Khodā Bakṣ suggests that it means *byādhi* "sickness," "disease." According to AA [most likely *Añcalik bhāṣār abhidhān* (Shahidullah 1968a)], the term may mean either "a mosquito-like insect" or "joy" (*ullās*). The latter definition is clearly inappropriate here. The term may also be related to the verb *ulā* "to come down," "to have diarrhea."

6. *tāgā* is more usually worn around the arm than around the neck.

7. *bãi cālā dey ghaṛi ghaṛi*: lit. "constantly circulating your breath."

8. Alt. trans.: "plunge in."

9. Alt trans.: "increases."

10. Lit. "Only the channel carrying the phlegm (*kapher nāṛi*) will expand.

11. Alt. trans.: "diving."

12. Alt. trans.: "Be calm."

13. Alt. trans.: "Your time's run out."

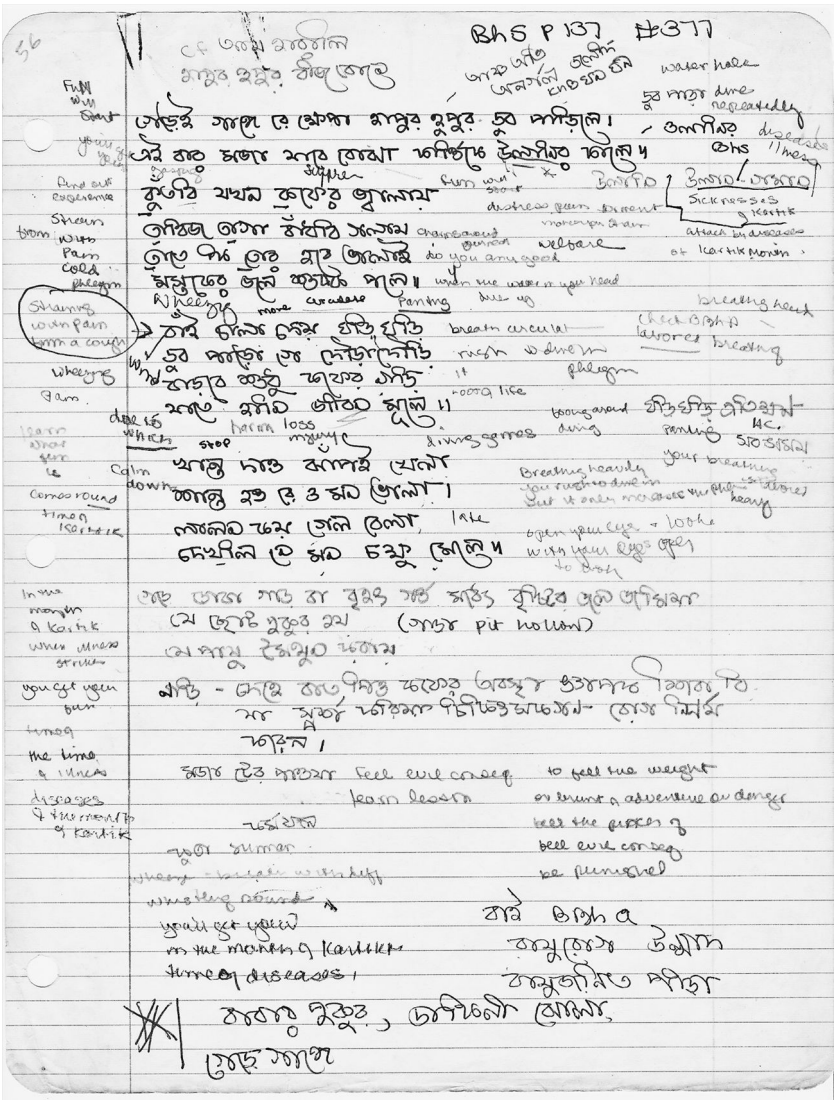
Geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā

"Diving into the ditch without a break" signifies overindulging in sex ending in ejaculation. According to Khodā Bakṣ, the spilling of semen leads to an excess of phlegm, which causes colds, especially during the month of Kārtik (October-November).

"The water" is semen, believed to be stored in the head. Semen is associated with life, and its ejaculation (*śukrakṣay*) with bodily decay and death.

"Breathing heavily" indicates that the breath control necessary for seminal retention is not being practiced. "The root of life" (*jīvan-mūl* [or *jīban mūl*]) also signifies semen, as does *mūl* when used by itself in the exoteric sense of "principal," "capital." For example, see songs LG no. 424 ["Man ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā"] (the emended text), and BBOBG nos. 25 ["Man āmār āj paṛli phere," **94**] and 39 ["Khulbe kæna se dhan o tār gāhek bine," **53**]; both the terms *jīvan-mūl* and *mūl* appear in Kabīr's poems (e.g., Śabda nos. 36 and 74), but it is unclear whether they ever have the same esoteric significance as in Lālan's songs.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; BhS, 137, no. 377; LS no. 221.]



Salomon's MS for "Geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā."

57

ে র ম অথাই আমি ঝঁ প দিয়েছি তায়

Gaur prem athāi āmi jhā̃p diyechi tāy

ে র ম অথাই আমি ঝঁ প দিয়েছি তায়	gaur prem athāi āmi jhā̃p diyechi tāy
এখন আমার ণ বঁ চা ভার	ækhan āmār prāṇ bā̃cā bhār
করি কি উপায় ॥	kari ki upāy ॥
ই বারি শাসিত করে	indra bāri śāsita kare
উজান ভাটা বাইতে পারে	ujān bhāṭā bāite pāre
সে ভাব আমার নাই অ রে	se bhāb āmār nāi antare
ে ট সাধি কথায় ॥	koṭ sādhi kathāy ॥
একে সে ম নদীর জলে	eke se prem nadīr jale
থাই মেলে না ে ঙর ফেলে	thāi mele nā noṅar phele
বে শারি নাইতে গেলে	behū̃śāri nāite gele
কাম কুমিরে খায় ॥	kām kumire khāy ॥
ে র মের এমনি লেঠা	gaur premer æmani leṭhā
আসতে কঁ টা যেতে কঁ টা	āste kā̃ṭā yete kā̃ṭā
না বুঝে মুড়ালাম মাথা	nā bujhe muṛālām māthā
অধীন লালন কয় ॥	adhīn lālan kay ॥

The waters of Gaur's love run deep,[1]
yet I plunged right in.
Now I'll be lucky to escape
with my life.
Where's the way out?

Whoever dams Indra's waters[2]
can row in high and low tide.[3]
I don't have what it takes.[4]
I keep my promises,
but only with words.

Throw an anchor into the water
of Gaur's river of love—
it will not touch the bottom.
And what's more,[5]
go for a dip without watching your step—
the crocodile of lust eats you up.

Gaur's love is guaranteed trouble.[6]
Snags when you come,
and snags when you go.
Poor Lālan says,
When I shaved my head,
I just didn't know.[7]

1. Lit. "Gaur's love is deep (*athāi*)." In the Bengali text "water" is understood, since *athāi* generally describes a body of water. Alt. trans.: "are deep."

2. *śāsita kare.*

3. *ujān bhāṭā*: synonym of *joẏār bhāṭā*. It may also mean "up- and downstream." (See the line "*bhāṭi ujān dhāy āpani*" in LG no. 37 ["Dhyāne ẏāre pāy nā mahāmuni"].)

4. *se bhāb nāi āmār* [or *āmār nāi*] *antare:* Alt. trans. (more literal): "But that would be out of character for me"; "But that's out of character for me"; "But that's not my nature."

5. The Bengali verse begins with *eke* "on the one hand," "in the first place," but does not contain the correlative conjunction.

6. Alt. trans.: "automatic trouble."

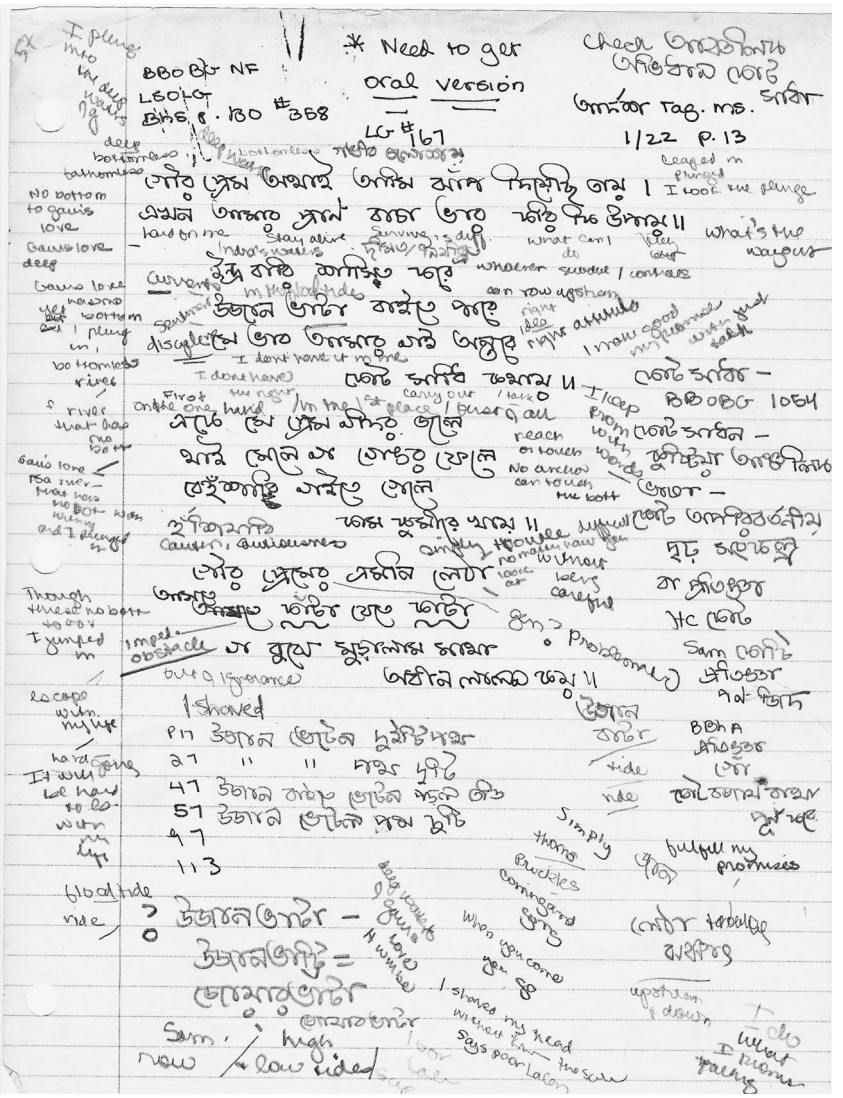
7. Lit. "I shaved my head without understanding."

Gaur prem athāi āmi jhā̃p diyechi tāy

Lālan again warns of the dangers of diving into Gaur's (i.e., Caitanya's) river of love (engaging in sex during menstruation) without proper training. "Damming Indra's waters" is yet another metaphor for seminal retention.

Lālan often mentions the practice of tonsure in songs with Vaiṣṇava imagery. Since shaving the head is a Vaiṣṇava and not a Bāul practice, it seems that Lālan is just using the image to symbolize entrance into the religious life.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 167; LS no. 250; BhS, 130, no. 358; T^1: 22, 13.]



Salomon's MS for "Gaur prem athāi āmi jhāp diyechi tāy."

চ

৫৪

চল দেখি মন কে ন দেশে যাবি

Calo dekhi man kon deśe ẏābi

চল দেখি মন কে ন দেশে যাবি
অবি স হলে কে থায় কি পাবি ॥

এ দেশ ভূত পে বলে
সারে পে ফয়তা দিলে
পে র ভূত কে ন দেশে গেলে
মু পায় কিসে ভাবি ॥

মন কে ঝ না তী করা
মিছামিছি হেটে মরা
পে র কাজ হয় পিড়েই সারা
নি হয় মন য পি ॥

বার ভা বা লা জুড়ে
একই মা আছে পড়ে
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় লালন ভেড়ে
ঠিক দাও আপন নসিবি ॥

calo dekhi man kon deśe ẏābi
abiśvās hale kothāy ki pābi ॥

e deś bhūt peto bale
sāre peṛo phaytā dile
peṛor bhūt kon deśe gele
mukti pāy kise bhābi ॥

man bojh nā tīrtha karā
michāmichi hēṭe marā
peṛor kāj hay piṛe-i sārā
niṣṭhā hay man ẏadyapi ॥

bār bhāṭi bāṃlā juṛe
ek-i māṭi āche paṛe
sirāj sãi kay lālan bheṛe
ṭhik dāo āpan nasibi ॥

Come on, my mind.
What land will you go to?
If you don't believe
what will you get?
Where will you get it?[1]

If you say a prayer[2] *in Peṛo*
for the ghosts and spirits in this land,[3]
you're cured of them.[4]
But where do you go
for the ghosts in Peṛo?[5]
How are they set free, I wonder?

Mind, you don't understand.
Pilgrimage is just walking for nothing
till you're ready to drop.
The job in Peṛo
you can do on your own porch.[6]

Twelve rivers cross Bengal,
but the earth beneath's the same.[7]
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Lālan, you coward,[8]
take account of your fate.[9]

1. Alt. trans. for the last two lines of the verse: "You'll get nothing, nowhere."

2. *phaytā*: (Ar. *fatiha*) The opening chapter of the Qur'an, which is recited to cure the sick and to intercede for the souls of the departed.

3. *e deś(e) bhūt peto bale, sāre pero phaytā dile.*

4. Alt. trans.: "You're rid of them" (*sāre*; see note 2).

5. *Peṛor bhūt kon deśe gele mukti pāy kise bhābi*: lit. "What land did the ghosts of Pero go to?"

6. A variant of the proverb *pire base peṛor khabar* ("News comes from Pero while you sit on your veranda"). Lālan uses this proverb again in slightly different forms in LG no. 106 ["Sāmānya ki marma jānā ẏāy"] (*pīre peṛor khabar pāy*) and in LG no. 134 ["Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay," **64**] (*peṛor khabar pīṛey pāy*).

7. *ek-i māṭi āche paṛe.*

8. *bheṛe.*

9. *ṭhik dāo āpan nasibī* [or *nasibi*]. Alt. trans.: "Figure out your fate"; "Figure out what's in the cards"; "Figure out what's in store for you"; "Take stock of your fate"; "Take your fate into account."

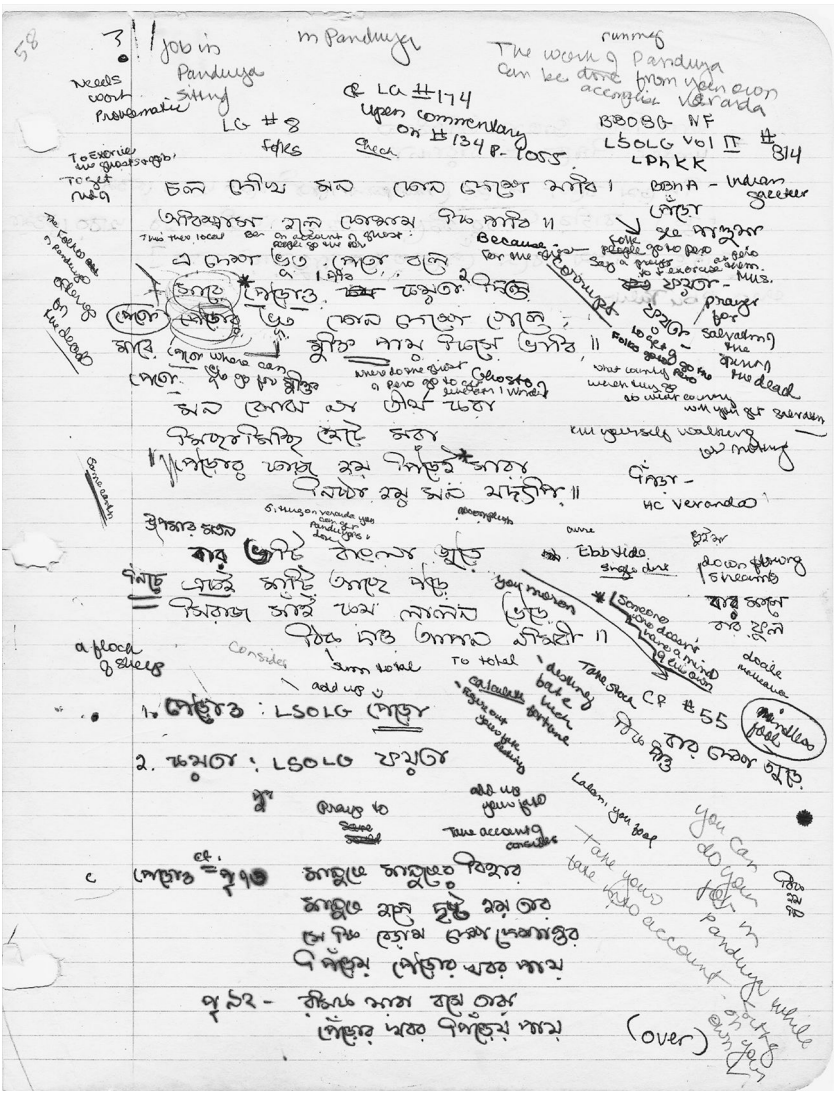
Calo dekhi man kon deśe ẏābi

Another song expressing the futility of external rituals and of looking outside for what lies within.

According to Khodā Bakṣ, Peṛo (Pāṇḍuyā [in modern West Bengal, India]) used to be considered an efficacious place for exorcising ghosts. Compare LSOLG vol. 2, no. 285 ["Peṛor bhūt ẏe janā"]:

peṛor bhūt ẏe janā
śon re munā mukti se kon deśe pāẏ
phaẏtā dile bhūt cheṛe ẏāẏ
pẽṛor daragāẏ.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 8; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 314.]



Salomon's MS for "Calo dekhi man kon deśe ẏābi."

59

চাঁদ আছে চাঁদ ঘেরা

Cā̃d āche cā̃d gherā

চাঁদ আছে চাঁদ ঘেরা	cā̃d āche cā̃d gherā
আজ কেমন করে সে চাঁদ	āj kæman kare se cā̃d
ধরবি ে ে রা ॥	dharbi go torā ॥
ল ল চাঁদে করেছে ে ভা	lakṣa lakṣa cā̃de kareche śobhā
তাহার মাঝে অধর চাঁদের আভা	tāhār mājhe adhar cā̃der ābhā
একবার দৃ করে দেখি	ek-bār dṛṣṭi kare dekhi
ঠিক থাকে না আঁখি	ṭhik thāke nā ākhi
পের কিরণে চমকে পারা ॥	rūper kiraṇer camake pārā ॥
পের গাছে চাঁদ-ফল ধরেছে তায়	rūper gāche cā̃d-phal dhareche tāy
থেকে থেকে ঝলক দেখা যায়	theke theke jhalak dekhā ẏāy
ও সে চাঁদের বাজার দেখে	o se cā̃der bājār dekhe
চাঁদ ঘুরনি লাগে	cā̃d ghurani lāge
দেখিস দেখিস পাছে	dekhis dekhis pāche
ে সনে নহারা ॥	hosne jñān-hārā ॥
আলেক নামে শহর আজব কুদরতি	ālek nāme śahar ājab kudarati
রেতে উদয় ভানু দিবসে বাতি	rete uday bhānu dibase bāti
যেজন আলের খবর জানে	ẏejan āler khabar jāne
দৃ হয় নয়নে	dṛṣṭi hay nayane
লালন বলে সে চাঁদ দেখেছে তারা ॥	lālan bale se cā̃d dekheche tārā ॥

The moon is surrounded by moons.
So how are you going to catch
that moon today?

The radiant beauty of millions of moons
and in the middle the uncatchable moon's brilliant light—
Just glance at that mass of moons
and they start to spin.
Be careful! Be careful!
Make sure you don't black out!

Moon fruit grow
on the tree of beauty.
Every now and then
you can see them flashing.
I try to take a look,
but my eyes fail me.
The rays of beauty are dazzling.

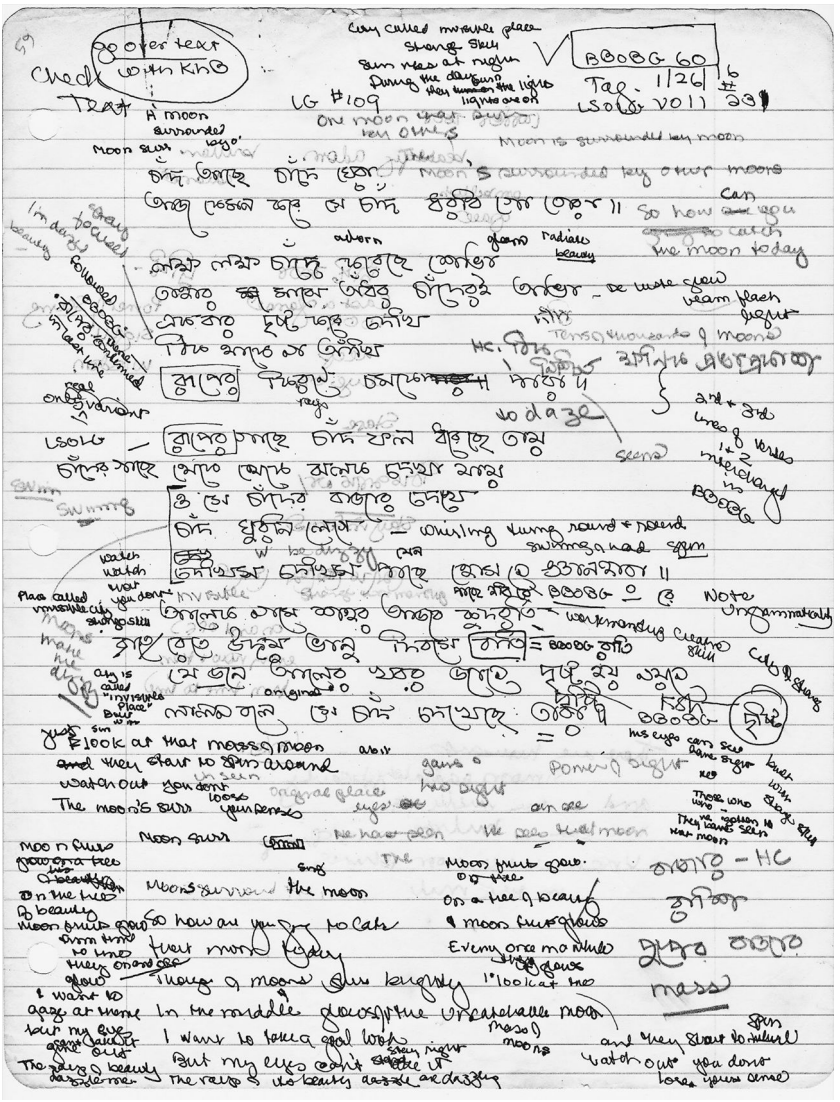
This city called "invisible"
is built with strange skill.
At night the sun rises.
By day lamps burn.
Those who know
about the beginning of the world[1]
have eyes that see.
Lālan says, They have seen the moon.

1. Alt. trans. "the beginning of time."

Cā̃d āche cā̃d gherā

This is one of several songs that use stunning, surreal light imagery to describe the Bāuls' Supreme, the "uncatchable moon." The "tree of beauty," like the tree in LG no. 183 ["Dekhlām ki kudratimay," **70**], is on the macrocosmic level the cosmic tree representing the universe, and on the microcosmic level the human body. (Note that the word *rūp* "beauty" also means "form.") The "fruit" that grow on the tree represent offspring. They are described as "moon fruit" because the Supreme, conceived of as a moon, dwells in the body of each person. By knowing about "the beginning of the world," Lālan means not only about the origin of the universe but, since ontology recapitulates cosmogony, also about human birth and how to reverse the process of creation to achieve reintegration into the primal unity. A person who is able to succeed at this *sādhanā* "has eyes that see." For him, the "invisible city" becomes visible.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 109; BBOBG no. 60; LS no. 105; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 23; T^1: 26, no. 16.]



Salomon's MS for "Cãd āche cãd gherā."

60

চিরকাল জল ছেঁচে

Cirakāl jal chẽce

চিরকাল জল ছেঁচে	cirakāl jal chẽce
আমার জল মানায় না এই ভা নায়	āmār jal mānāy nā e bhāṅgā nāy
এক মালা জল ছেচতে গেলে	ek mālā jal chẽcte gele
তিন মালা ে গায় তেতালায় ॥	tin mālā jogāy tetālāy ॥
ছু ে র বেটার কার সাজিতে	chutor beṭār kār sājite
মানব তরির সাধ মারা নাই	mānab tarir sādh mārā nāi
আগে পিছে ত ভাল	āge piche taktā bhālo
মেজেল কাঠ গড়েছে তলায় ॥	mejel kāṭh gaṛeche talāy ॥
আগা নায়ে মন স ণ	āgā nāye man sarbakṣaṇ
বসে বসে ে ে ম খেলায়	base base cokom khelāy
আমার দশা তলা ফঁ সা	āmār daśā talā phÃsā
জল ছেচি সার দড়ি গলায় ॥	jal chẽci sār gudaṛi galāy ॥
মহাজনের অমূ ধন	mahājaner amūlya dhan
হারাইলাম ডাকনী ে লায়	hārāilām ḍāknī jolāy
ফকির লালন বলে অ ম কালে	phakir lālan bale antim kāle
কি হবে নিকাশের বেলায় ॥	ki habe nikāśer belāy ॥

I've been bailing water for ages.
I can't plug the leak in this broken-down boat.[1]
I bail out one begging bowl of water,[2]
and three more collect on the lower deck[3].

I was duped by the fellow who built the boat.
The seams of this human boat aren't sealed.[4]
Though the planks on the sides are cedar,[5]
the bottom's made of porous wood.[6]

The whole time, my mind
sits at the bow, playing games.[7]
Then there's my sad state:
the bottom's dropping out of the boat,[8]
and I bail away in a fakir's patchwork coat.[9]

The merchant's priceless treasure[10]
died[11] *in the witch's gorge.*
Fakir Lālan says, Now how will I fare
on auditing day?

1. More literally, "The water won't leave."

2. *mālā*: a bowl made of coconut shell.

3. *tetalā* [or *tetālā*]: lit. "the third floor." Some Bāul songs such as "Gharkhānā hay tintalā" divide the body into three floors or sections: the head, the chest, and the genital region. Presumably, here the third floor refers to the genitals.

4. Translated according to KhB's variant.

5. *Saral* is a name for a *śāl* or *debdāru* tree. [This word is absent from the alternative Bengali version provided above, which substitutes the line *āge piche taktā bhālo* "In front and behind the planks are good" for LG *tarīr aśepāśe kaṣṭa saral*, part of which Salomon renders in her translation.]

6. *mejel:* the term is obscure. According to Ahmad Śarīph, *mejel* is a kind of wood that grows in the Sundarbans. Khodā Bakṣ says it is wood that has knotholes. Alt. trans: "knotty wood."

7. *cokom*: the word is obscure. According to Khodā Bakṣ, *cokom khelā* refers to the game of hide and seek.

8. Lit. "My state: my bottom's dropped out."

9. *sār gudaṛi*. Alt. trans. "my beloved patchwork coat."

10. [KhB's oral version has *ṣolo ānā* (lit. "sixteen annas," i.e., "entire wealth") for *amūlya dhan* "priceless treasure."]

11. Alt. trans.: "went down."

Cirakāl jal chẽce

This is another song about a false fakir (see "Phereb cheṛe karo phakiri" [87] and "Phero palo tor phakirite" [86]). Here, however, Lālan himself takes the persona of the fakir, who makes a show of being one by dressing in a patchwork coat (*gudaṛi*) and carrying a begging bowl (*mālā*), but who lacks the crucial skill of being able to prevent ejaculation. The "water" signifies semen, and the "broken-down boat" that fills with water faster than it can be bailed out and that has practically no bottom left symbolizes the body unable to retain semen. "To die" is a common metaphor in Bāul songs for "to spill semen" (see Openshaw [2002] and Das [1992]) and "the merchant's priceless treasure" is yet another metaphor for semen. *Dhan*, "treasure," is used euphemistically in Bengali to mean "penis." No doubt, Lālan had this sense of the word in mind too. He points out that as long as the unsteady mind that "sits at the bow, playing games" is not brought under control, "the merchant's priceless treasure" will die, that is, semen will be ejaculated, in the "witch's gorge," that is, the vagina, and the penis will lose its erection. Derogatory words for "woman" such as *ḍāknī* "witch" found only occasionally in Bāul songs are more typical of literature by the Nāths, a tradition that influenced the Bāuls and from which they drew some of their imagery (see [Das Gupta 1969, 189–255]).[12]

[Salomon's typescript also contains the following note in addition to the annotations for this song:]

[The] problem in translating allegorical songs is that while throughout most of the song an image is used metaphorically to refer to the body, in some places the metaphor is dropped and the hidden meaning, albeit expressed cryptically, breaks through the outer covering. For example, in line 3 of verse 2, no boat is mentioned in the Bengali, although the word has been added to the translation for consistency with the rest of the song. It is interesting to note that in the last verse

12. [There is a traditional account of an incident between Mīnanāth (or Matsyendranātha) and Gorakhnāth (or Gorakṣanātha) over the former's relationships with women, in which Gorakhnāth appears as a dancing girl to save his guru from sensuality. Mīnanāth is faulted for taking too much enjoyment in the "land of women" (*kadalī*), a legend that could have contributed to the spread of negative views of women in Nāth literature that Salomon refers to in her annotations. Cf. Hess and Singh 1983, 182, 87.1, and Das Gupta 1969, 201. For more contemporary English-language scholarship on the Nāth Siddhas or Jogīs over the past two decades, including debates over the way they are framed in scholarship, see the work of David Gordon White, James Mallinson, Gordan Djurdjevic, and Shaman Hatley.]

J replaces *mārā gelo*, "died," which if taken in its literal meaning is an inappropriate verb to pair "the merchant's priceless treasure" with *hārāilām*, "I lost."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; LG no. 428; BhS, 145, no. 399; LPhKK, 156, no. 23 (T^2:42).]

জ

61

জান গা নূরের খবর যাতে নির ন ঘেরা

Jān gā nūrer khabar ẏāte nirañjan gherā

জান গা নূরের খবর যাতে নির ন ঘেরা	jān gā nūrer khabar ẏāte nirañjan gherā
নূর সাধিলে নির নকে যাবে রে ধরা ॥	nūr sādhile nirañjanke ẏābe re dharā ॥
নূরে নবির জ হয়	nūre nabir janma hay
নূর গঠলেন অটলময়	nūr gaṭhlen aṭal-may
ছিল কা রা	chilo kāṅgurā
নূরেতে ে কাম ম ল উ ল করা ॥	nūrete mokām mañjil ujjval karā ॥
আছে নূরের নূর	āche nūrer śreṣṭha nūr
জানে সদায় সচতুর	jāne sadāy sacatur
জীব যারা	jīb ẏārā
সে নূর হি লে ব হয় নূর জহরা ॥	se nūr hillole barta hay nūr jaharā ॥
নিভলে নূরের বাতি	nibhale nūrer bāti
এসে ঘিরবে কাল তি	ese ghirbe kāl dyuti
ে মহড়া	cau maharā
লালন বলে থাকবে পড়ে	lālan bale thākbe paṛe
খাকের পি রা ॥	khāker piñjarā ॥

Go and learn
about the light that surrounds Nirañjan.
Worship that light and you'll catch him.

The Prophet was born from light.
The Steady One at the top created light.[1]
Stages and stations[2] *are illumined by light.*[3]

But the best light of all
only those who are clever know.
That light moved in waves[4]
and Zohura's light arose.

As soon as the light in the lamp goes out,
Death's messengers will surround
your four-room house.
Lālan says, Then your earthen cage
will go empty.

1. *nūr gaṭhlen aṭal-may* [Salomon's manuscript adds: *chilo*] *kāṅgurā*.

2. Alt. trans.: "stages and stations."

3. Lālan uses the rhetorical device of anaphora to emphasize the importance of light. In the original, each of the three lines of the verse begins with the word *nūr*, "light." Alt. trans: "The places and stations"; "All the places and stations."

4. *se nūrer hillole:* lit. "From the surging of that light." Alt. trans.: "When that light undulated, Zohura's light was created"; "When that light surged, Zohura's light emerged."

Jān gā nūrer khabar

Nirañjan (the Stainless One) is the Creator, and the "light" surrounding him represents the Śakti. This light has liquid form. (On the liquidity of light, see the notes to LG no. 239 ["Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy," **106**].) Several of Lālan's songs on cosmogony describe Nirañjan as floating in an egg on the primordial waters, which also signify the Śakti. On the creation of the Prophet from the light of God, see translation notes to LG no. 206 ["Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy, **76**]. "The Steady One at the top" represents the Lord in his unmanifest state.

The "stations" (*mokām*; Ar. sing. *maqām*) and "stages" (*mañjil*; Ar. sing. *manzil*) are the stages on the journey toward union with God. There are four *mokām*s: *nāsut* (Ar. *nāsūt*, "human nature"), *mālkut* (Ar. *malakūt*, "the heavenly world"), *jabrut* (Ar. *jabarūt*, "spiritual power"), and *lāhut* (Ar. *lāhūt*, "divine nature"). Each of the *mokām*s is located in a specific part of the body in one of the yogic *cakra*s and corresponds to one of the four *mañjil*s: *śarīyat* (Ar. *sharī'a*, "Islamic law"), *tarikat* (Ar. *ṭarīqa*, "path"), *hakikat* (Ar. *ḥaqīqa*, "truth"), and *māraphat* (Ar. *ma'rifa*, "gnosis"). They are also associated with the four elements, with the angels Azrael, Israfel, Michael, and Gabriel, among other things. (Note the similarity of this set of associations with that of the *cār piyālā*). The set of associations differs somewhat according to the source. Many Bāul songs refer to a fifth *mokām*, the *lā mokām* where God resides. Pāñja Śāh (1890, 20) mentions yet another *mokām* called *hāhut* ("divine essence" Ar. *hāhūt*. [See] MDI [Schimmel 1975], 270). Although he describes the *mokām*s and *mañjil*s in more detail than any other Bāul poet, his discussion is difficult to follow, as he sometimes fails to mention which *mokām* he is referring to. The following chart lists some of the correspondences enumerated in the Sufi yogic text *Yogakalandar* (Śarīph [1969], 94–101 and 103–107):

Mokām	**Cakra**	**Location**	**Angel**	**Mañjil**	**Door**	**Element**
nāsut	*mūlādhār*	*tin tiharī* (sacrum)	Azrael	*śarīyat*	ears	fire
mālkut	*maṇipur*	navel	Israfel	*tarikat*	nose	wind
jabrut	*ājñā*	skull	Michael	*hakikat*	eyes	water
lāhut	*anāhata*	heart	Gabriel	*māraphat*	mouth	earth

Salomon's chart of associations from *Yogakalandar*[5]

"The best light of all" refers to the *ādi nūr* (primal light). This primal substance was actually made up of two elements, light and water. When the light and water were separated by churning, Zohura's light (i.e., the light of the Śakti) was produced from the water. (See my paper "Cosmogonic Riddles . . ." [Salomon 1991].) Lālan's reference to light "moving in waves" probably refers to this act of churning.

"The light in the lamp" is the divine light in the body of each person. The "four-room house" signifies the body divided into four *mokām*s. (It is likely that the Bāul and Bengali Sufi yogic conception of the *mokām*s was influenced by the Tantric Buddhist notion of four *kāya*s or *cakra*s.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 226; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 84; MG; KhB; LS 348.]

5. [Apart from Śarīph's Bengali recension, there is also an English translation of *Yogakalandar* given in the appendix of Haq 1975, 378–396. A French translation of the published editions with commentary was published in a more recent article by France Bhattacarya (2003). A more recent English translation was also appended to a master's thesis by Keith E. Cantú entitled "Theurgy and the Snake: The Yoga Kalandar and Bengali Sufism." The majority of the text's surviving manuscript copies are held by the University of Dhaka.]

62

জান রে মন সেই রাগের করণ

Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ

জান রে মন সেই রাগের করণ
যাতে কৃ বরণ হল ে র বরণ ॥

শত ে টি ে পী স
কৃ ম রসর
ও সে টলের কা নয় অটল না বলায়
সে বা কেমন ॥

রাধাতে কি ভাব কৃ র
কি ভাবে বশ ে পিকার
সে ভাব না জেনে সে স কেমনে
পাবে ে ন জন ॥

মরসের উপাসনা
না জানিলে রসিক হয় না
লালন বলে সে যে নিগূঢ় করণ
জে অকৈতব ধন ॥

jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ
ẏāte kr̥ṣṇa baraṇ halo gaur baraṇ ॥

śatakoṭi gopī saṅge
kr̥ṣṇa prem rasaraṅge
o se ṭaler kārẏa nay aṭal nā balāy
se bā kæman ॥

rādhāte ki bhāb kr̥ṣṇer
ki bhāb baśa gopikār
se bhāb nā jene se saṅga kæmane
pābe kon jan ॥

śyāma-raser upāsanā
nā jānile rasik hay nā
lālan bale se ẏe nigūṛh karaṇ
braje akaitab dhan ॥

Mind,
find out about the act of love[1]
that turned black to white.

Krishna played at love
with a billion gopīs—
No feat for a man who isn't steady,
nor even for one who is, they say.
Then what kind of feat is it?

What love did Krishna feel for Rādhā?
By what love did he charm the gopīs?
Who can unite as they did,
without knowing that love?

He who doesn't know
the worship of Sambu's nectar[2]
is not a true lover.
Lālan says, That secret act in Braj—
love like that's a genuine treasure.[3]

1. [Salomon's manuscript also gives an oral variant from KSh for the first line: *āge jāno ge ẏā se mahārāger karaṇ.*]

2. [Saymon Zakaria has emended *sāmbu-ras* "Sāmbu's nectar" to *śyāma-ras* "Śyāma's nectar," which is reflected in the Bengali version supplied for this song. It remains unclear, however, which variant is earlier.]

3. "A genuine treasure": *akaitab dhan*. "Love like . . . treasure": lit. "a genuine treasure."

Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ

The change of black (*kṛṣṇa baraṇ*) to white (*gaur baraṇ*) refers to the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa (Krishna) as Gaur (an epithet of Caitanya). Gauṛiya Vaiṣṇavas consider Caitanya the dual incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. His white color, symbolic of perfection, is said to result from the fusion of the divine pair. Concerning "the act of love" that precipitated the transformation, Lālan says elsewhere (LG no. 187 ["Amṛta bāri se bāri anurāg naile ki ẏābe dharā"]): "He became a woman, performed the ritual of the water, and turned into immortal Gorā." In still another song Lālan says (LG no. 173 ["Jāni man premer premī kāje pele"]): "Hari performed rituals of love with the three nectars, and his black body turned white." "The act of love" therefore refers to *sādhanā* during the first three days of a woman's menstrual period. By identifying himself with a woman, the *sādhak* is able to experience *niṣkām prem*, "lustless love" (on "becoming a woman" see notes to LG no. 443 ["Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sẽi," **13**]). Kṛṣṇa's success at this *sādhanā* results in his incarnation as the androgynous Caitanya in whom the divine being, who split into male and female in order to create the world, is reconstituted.

According to the Bāuls, Kṛṣṇa was able to make love to numerous gopīs (Lālan stretches the number somewhat; the traditional count is sixteen thousand) during *rās līlā* because he practiced seminal retention. When Lālan describes Kṛṣṇa's prowess as "no feat for a man who's unsteady (*ṭal*) nor even for one who is steady (*aṭal*)," he means that it cannot be accomplished if semen is completely immobilized, for then it will not be possible for the *sādhak* to experience the bliss of sexual union, nor if semen is highly agitated, because it will be beyond the *sādhak*'s power to prevent ejaculation. In another song Lālan states (LG no. 361 ["Se bhāb sabāi ki jāni"]): "Unsteady, you're a human, steady, a god. Either way, can you be a true lover?" The Bāuls seek to attain a state that lies in between *ṭal* and *aṭal* and which they term *suṭal*.

The meaning of "Sambu's nectar" (*sāmbu ras*) is obscure.[4] In Karim Shah's opinion it refers to the blood of a girl's first few menstrual periods (see notes to LG no. 168, "Śuddha prem-rāge sadāy thākre āmār man," **128**). Khodā Bakṣ, however, believes it signifies the blood of the third day of menstruation. I have not found occurrences of the term other than in the songs of Lālan (see also, for example, LG nos. 127 ["Mukher kathāy ki

4. [See note 2.]

se cā̃d dharā ẏāy"] and 190 ["Ogo jyānte marā se prem-sādhane tā ki pārbi torā"]). As for the word *sāmbu*, it seems to be a form of the name Sāmba ("-u" being a diminutive affix found especially in names), which can denote either Śiva or a son of Kṛṣṇa. The significance of the name in the present context is also unclear.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[2]: 69, no. 130 (LPhKK, 179); KhB; KSh; LG no. 143; LS no. 597.]

63

জানে হে এই পাপী হইতে

Jānbo he ei pāpī haite

জানে হে এই পাপী হইতে।	jānbo he ei pāpī haite।
যদি এে হে ে র	ẏadi eso he gaur
জীবকে তারিতে ॥	jībke tārite ॥
নদীয়া নগরে যতজন	nadīyā nagare ẏatajan
সবারে বিলালে মধন	sabāre bilāle premadhan
আমি নর অধম না জানি মরম	āmi nar adham nā jāni maram
চাইলে না হে ে র আমার পানেতে ॥	cāile nā he gaur āmār pānete ॥
ে মারি সু মের হাওয়ায়	tomāri supremer hāoyāy
কা র পুতলি নলিন হয়	kāṣṭher putali nalin hay
আমি দীনহীন ভজন-বিহীন	āmi dīn-hīn bhajan-bihīn
অপার হয়ে বসে আছি এ পথে ॥	apār haye base āchi e pathe ॥
মলয় প তেরি উপর	malay parbateri upar
যত বৃ সকলি হয় সার	ẏata bṛkṣa sakali hay sār
কেবল যায় জানা বঁ শে সার হয় না	kebal ẏāy jānā bā̃śe sār hay nā
লালন পেল তেমনি মশূ চিতে ॥	lālan pelo tæmani prem-śūnya cite ॥

Hey Gaur,
I'll find out from this sinner
if you really came to save mankind.

You gave out the treasure of love
to everyone in the city of Nadīyā.
Well I'm a rotten fellow[1]
and don't know what love's all about.[2]
Hey Gaur, you didn't even glance at me.

The touch of your pure love
can make a wooden puppet come alive.[3]
I'm worthless and wretched[4]
and I never worship God.
I just keep sitting on the wrong side
of a bad road.[5]

Nearly all the trees
on the Malaya Mountains
have heartwood.
Everyone knows only bamboo trees
are hollow.[6]
Lālan has a heart like bamboo—
empty of love.

1. *āmi nar adham*: Alt. trans.: "vile"; "base"; "despicable."

2. *nā jāni maram*.

3. *tomāri supremer hāoyāy kāṣṭher putali nalin hay*: lit. "In the air of your good love, a wooden doll becomes new."

4. *dīn-hīn*.

5. Alt. trans.: "So I just sit."

6. Alt. trans.: "only bamboo trees don't."

Jānbo he ei pāpī haite

Lālan expresses conventional Vaiṣṇava humility in portraying himself as a sinful devotee. The Malaya Mountains are known for their sandalwood trees, the scent of which can penetrate all but bamboo trees. (See Kabīr, Sākhī [no.] 49 and note 1 to the verse on p. 186 of Hess and Singh's translations [1983].) The use of the metaphor of hollow bamboo to express heartlessness is also typical of Vaiṣṇava literature. See also Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī [(Mukhopādhyāy 1980], 78): *man mor ār nāhi lāge gṛha kāje / . . . antare asār bā̃śī bāhire saral*: "I can't keep my mind on my work anymore. . . . Inside the flute is hollow (*asār*, "without heartwood"), and outside straight and simple."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 412; LS no. 787; BBOBG no. 10.]



Salomon's MS for "Jānbo he ei pāpī haite."

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64

তিল পরিমাণ জায়গাতে কি কুদরতিময়

Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay

তিল পরিমাণ জায়গাতে কি কুদরতিময়
একজন নাড়া জগৎে ড়া
সেইখানেতে বারাম দেয় ॥

আমি বলে কি সেই নাড়ার ণ বিচার
চার যুগে তার প নব কৈে র
অমাব নাই সে দেশে
দী কারে সদাই রয় ॥

ভাবের নাড়া ভাব দিয়ে বেড়ায়
যে যা ভাবে তাই হয়ে দাঁড়ায়
রসিক যারা বসে তারা
পে র খবর পিড়েয় পায় ॥

শতদল সহ দলের দল
নাড়া ঠাকুর নাড়ছে সদায় কল
লালন বলে জানি কবে
কল ফেলিয়ে নাড়া যায় ॥

til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay
ek-jan nāṛā jagaṯ-joṛā
seikhānete bārām dey ॥

āmi balbo ki sei nāṛār guṇ bicār
cār ẏuge tār rūp naba kaiśor
amābasyā nāi se deśe
dīptākāre sadāi ray ॥

bhāber nāṛā bhāb diye beṛāy
ẏe ẏā bhābe tāi haye dāṛāy
rasik ẏārā base tārā
peṛor khabar pīṛey pāy ॥

śata-dal sahasra-daler dal
nāṛā ṭhākur nāṛche sadāy kal
lālan bale jāni kabe
kal pheliye nāṛā ẏāy ॥

A space the size of a sesame seed—
how marvelous!
That's where the shaveling
who spreads over the world
holds court.

How can I describe
the virtues of this shaveling?
Throughout the four ages
he remains a teenager.[1]
No new-moon night in that land.[2]
It's always dazzling bright.

The shaveling's a man after love.[3]
He gives love wherever he roams.
He is whatever you think he is.[4]
A true lover sits on his porch
and gets news from Peṛo.

From the thousand-petaled lotus
and the hundred-petaled lotus[5]
my Lord the shaveling
shakes the machine to motion.[6]
Lālan says, I don't know when
he'll abandon the machine
and take off.[7]

1. *naba kaiśor:* lit. "early adolescence." Alt. trans: "He remains in his early teens."

2. Alt. trans.: "There's no new moon night in that land."

3. Alt. trans.: "a man of love."

4. Alt. trans.: "He is just as you think he is."

5. Alt. trans.: "From the thousand and the hundred-petaled lotuses."

6. *nāṛā ṭhākur nāṛche sadāy kal:* Lālan plays on the words *nāṛā* "shaveling" and *nāṛā* "to shake."

7. [Emendations:] M1 and KhB's oral version are identical. Published editions: In the refrain LSOLG and LG have tatsama *parimāṇ*, whereas M1 has tadbhava *pramāṇ*. For *ekjan nāṛā jagaṯ-joṛā* LSOLG has *jagaṯ-joṛā ekjan nāṛā*. In verse 1 LG has *nara keśab* for *naba kaiśor*. In verse 2 LG has *din sekhāne* for *dīptākāre* and *se ẏā bhābe* for *ẏe ẏā bhābe*. In verse 3 LSOLG gives *beṭā* for *ṭhākur* and *base nāṛāy* for *nāṛche sadāy*. LG gives *phal* for *kal*.

Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay

[For an explanation of the shavelings (Neṛā), see the annotations to "Kuler bou hoye man ār kato dine," **45**.][8]

On the location of the "space the size of a sesame seed" in either the *sahasrār* or *ājñā-cakra*, see the annotations to "The primal Mecca is in this human body" ["Āche ādi makkā ei mānabdehe," **7**].

The eternal "teenager" (*kaiśor* "adolescence" actually applies to the ages of ten to fifteen or sixteen) is Kṛṣṇa, who sports with his beloved Rādhā in eternal Bṛndāban, forever an adolescent. Bāuls and Vaiṣṇavas regard adolescence as the ideal age because they consider adolescent love to be the purest form of love, free from lust and always new.

"The hundred-petaled lotus" does not appear in the standard tantric enumerations of the seven *cakra*s. It is, however, referred to in Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava literature, but at least two different locations are mentioned. *Ātmanirūpaṇ* (quoted in BBOBG, 338) even explains it in both ways within the space of a few lines:

> The hundred-petaled lotus is in the temple of the heart.
>
> [He] comes from the thousand-petaled lotus to sport there.
>
> Below the navel is the hundred-petaled lotus.

It is interesting to note that in Bengali literature in general the first interpretation prevails. A folksong (quoted in BBhA [source unknown, probably the Bangla Academy's *Bāṃlā Bhāṣār Abhidhān*], s.v. *śatodal*) has the following couplet: "The hundred-petaled lotus is in the heart. When the lotus blooms, it secretes the nectar of love." Rabindranath Tagore (1969, 239) also uses the hundred-petaled lotus as a metaphor for the heart.

As in Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts, so in Bāul songs there is probably no single interpretation of the hundred-petaled lotus; Duddu Shah locates it in the heart (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 297, "Srīguru gosãi ẏe rūp dekhāy"): "If your eyes open/are opened by the grace of the guru, then the hundred-petaled lotus of the heart will open too." But another Bāul poet seems to imply

8. [Salomon's typescript of the annotations contains a note to remove discussion of the shavelings (Neṛā) found in this song's annotations and instead refer the reader to their more complete description in "Kuler bou haye man,"**45**. Her explanation of the shavelings in that song appears to be more complete; therefore the duplicate material has been truncated in accordance with the note.]

that the hundred-petaled lotus is not equivalent to the lotus of the heart, although he leaves its location an enigma (Śarīph 1973, 125, no. 12): "Puruṣ and Prakṛti are in the hundred-petaled lotus. That lotus is in a secret spot (*nirjane*). The bee is in the heart lotus." Lālan gives few hints as to where in the body he thinks it is. As in the song under discussion, he usually pairs it with the thousand-petaled lotus (cf. "Āpnār āpni re man nā jāno ṭhikānā" [LG no. 6] and "Ki śobhā dvidal pare" [LG no. 232]). In a verse of "Ki śobhā dvi-dal pare" he describes several lotuses in descending order, beginning with the hundred- and thousand-petaled lotuses and followed by the two-petaled and six-petaled lotuses. This seems to place the hundred-petaled lotus above the two-petaled one and thus above the heart. In "Paṛo ge nāmāj jene śune" [LG no. 294] he says that "the Lord sits on the throne of the void in the hundred-petaled lotus." Elsewhere, Lālan uses the term "void" (*śūnya*) to describe the city or mountain of the Lord in the *sahasrār* or possibly *ājñā-cakra* (see the annotations to "Some people are lucky enough to see that moon" ["Anek bhāgyer phale se cā̃d," LG no. 110; **2**]). These clues suggest that according to Lālan's view, the lotus may be above, in, or below the *sahasrār*, but without further evidence this is purely speculation.

The "machine" that "the shaveling shakes to motion" is the body.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; M^1 no. 322; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 24; LG no. 134.]

65

ে মার মত দয়াল ব আর পা ে না

Tomār mata dayāl bandhu ār pābo nā

ে মার মত দয়াল ব আর পা ে না	tomār mata dayāl bandhu ār pābo nā
দেখা দিয়ে ওহে রাসুল ছেড়ে যেও না ॥	dekhā diye ohe rāsul cheṛe ẏeo nā ॥
তুমি হে ে দার ে	tumi he khodār dosta
অপারের কা রি স	apārer kāṇḍāri satya
ে মা বিনে পারের ল	tomā bine pārer lakṣya
আর ে দেখি না ॥	ār to dekhi nā ॥
আমরা সব মদিনাবাসী	āmrā sab madīnābāsī
ছিলাম যেমন বনবাসী	chilām ẏeman banabāsī
তুমি এসে ন পেয়েছি	tumi ese jñān peyechi
আছি সা না ॥	āchi sāntvanā ॥
আসমানি এক আয়েন দিয়ে	āsamāni ek āyen diye
আমাদের সব আনলে রাহে	āmāder sab ānle rāhe
আজকে ে দের ফঁ কি দিয়ে	ājke moder phā̃ki diye
ছেড়ে যেও না ॥	cheṛe ẏeo nā ॥
তোমা বিনে এ প শাসন	tomā bine erūp śāsan
কে করবে আর দীনের করণ	ke karbe ār dīner karaṇ
লালন বলে আর ে এমন	lālan bale ār to æman
বাতি লবে না ॥	bāti jvalbe nā ॥

We'll never get another friend
as compassionate as you again.
You revealed yourself, oh Prophet.
Don't desert us now.

You're God's companion,
the true pilot to the other shore.
Without you we will never see
our destination.[1]

We people of Medina
were like exiles in the forest.[2]
You made us wise.
We are content.[3]

You gave us the divine law
and brought us to the path.
Don't sneak out on us today.[4]

Who but you
can govern this way,
O herald of religion?[5]
Lālan says, A light like this
will never shine again.

1. "destination": *pārer lakṣya*, lit. "the goal of the other shore."

2. The "forest" symbolizes *saṃsāra* (Hess [and Singh 1983], 182 [note 87.1]).

3. The usual meaning of *sāntvanā* is "consolation," "solace." In this context, however, it evidently has the extended meaning of "peace of mind," "contentment."

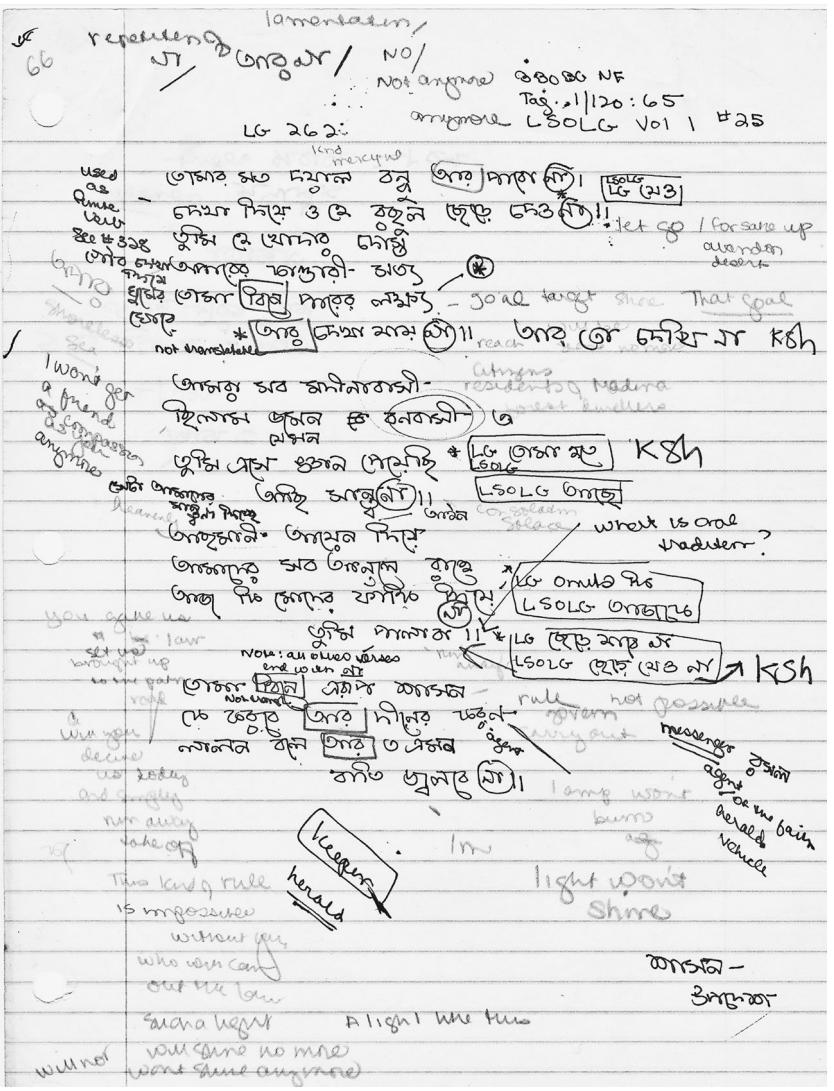
4. *āj[ke] moder phā̃ki diye cheṛe ẏeo nā.*

5. Herald is a free translation of *karaṇ*," instrument," "agent." It may also be translated here as "source."

Tomār mato dayāl bandhu ār pābo nā

This dirge for Muhammad, who died in Medina on June 8, 632 CE, is spoken by the people of the city. Note the similarity of this song with Lālan's songs that are elegies for Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa (i.e., LG nos. 332 ["Ār ki gaur āsbe phire"] and 352 ["Ār ki āsbe sei kele śaśī, **20**]).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 262; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 25; T^1: 120, no. 65.]



Salomon's MS for "Tomār mato dayāl bandhu ār pābo nā."

66

তোমরা আর আমায় কালার কথা বে না

Tomrā ār āmāy kālār kathā balo nā

ে মরা আর আমায় কালার কথা বে না।	tomrā ār āmāy kālār kathā balo nā।
ঠেকে শিখলাম ে কা প	ṭheke śikhlām lo kālo-rūp
আর হেরে না ॥	ār herbo nā ॥
পরলাম কল র হার	parlām kalaṅker hār
তবু ে কালার	tabu to kālār
মন পালাম না	man pālām nā
যমন প কালা	ẏaman rūp kālā
তমনি উহার মন কালা ॥	tamani uhār man kālā ॥
মের কি এই শি	premer ki ei śikṣe
বেড়ায় ন চেখে	beṛāy byañjan cekhe
ল গেল না	lajjā gelo nā
ঘৃণায় মরে যাই	ghṛṇāy mare ẏāi
এমন ম আর করে না ॥	æman prem ār karbo nā ॥
যমন চ বলী	ẏaman candrābalī
তমনি রাখাল অলি	tamani rākhāl ali
থাক সে দুই জনা	thāk se dui janā
নে রাধার ে ল	śune rādhār bol
লালনের ে ল সরে না ॥	lālaner bol sare nā ॥

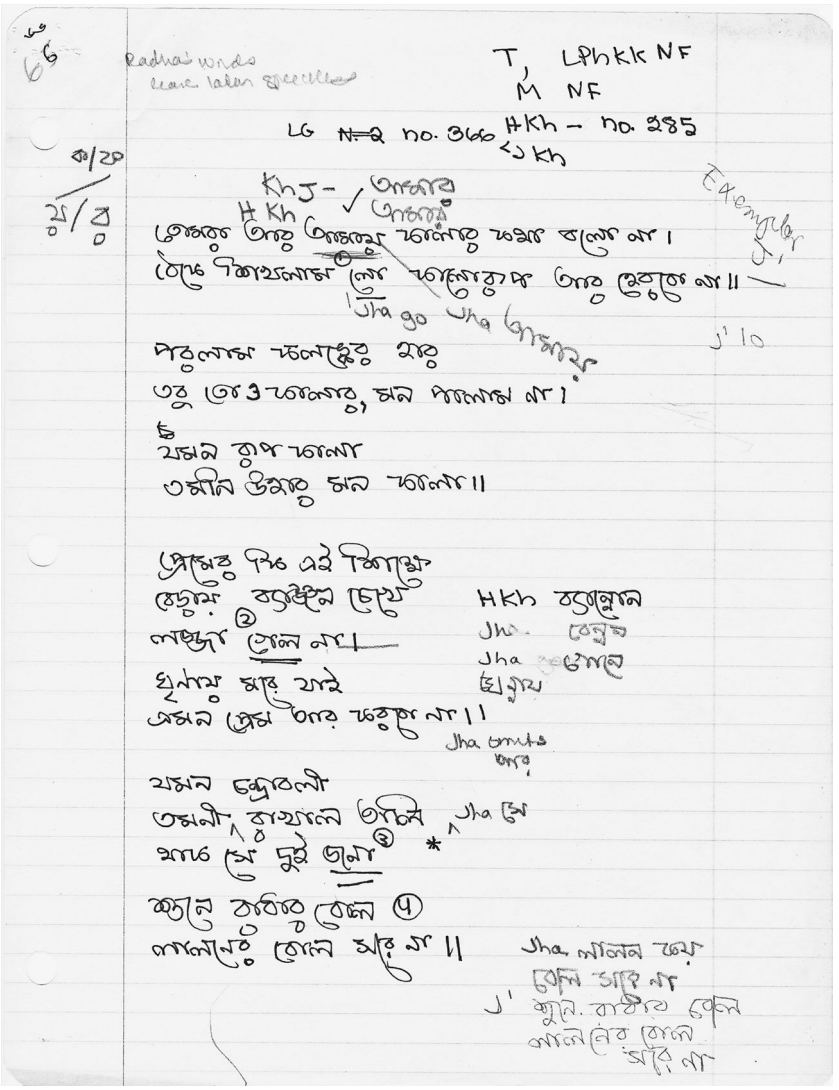
Don't mention Kālā to me anymore.
I learned from experience.
I'll never lay eyes on his black body again.
I wore the necklace of disgrace,
but I never won Kālā's heart.
It's black as he is.
Is this the lesson love teaches?
He roams around sampling curries
and feels no shame.
I could die of humiliation.
I'll never love this way again.
Candrāvalī and that cowherd
who stings like a bee—
they're two of a kind.
They can have each other.
Rādhā's words leave Lālan speechless.[1]

1. The Bengali text consists of a refrain and three verses. I did not retain this form in the English translation, however, because it interfered with the flow of the monologue. [Emendations:] Verse 2: read *gelo* for *gaṇe*. Verse 3: For *thāk se dui janā sane / lālan kay rādhār bol sare nā* read *thāk se dui janā / śune rādhār bol lālaner bol sare nā*. (The emendations are based on the text given in manuscript J^1. The readings of this manuscript are better in terms of rhyme, meter, and meaning than those in LG.)

Tomrā ār āmāy kālār kathā balo nā

Kālā is another of Kṛṣṇa's epithets, which means "dark," "black" (see ["Sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche," LG no. 309; **135**]). This song concerns one of the typical themes in the story of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa: Rādhā's *mān*, her anger and hurt pride at Kṛṣṇa's infidelity with her rival Candrāvalī.

[Sources for the Bangla original include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1]; Jhā no. 314; LG no. 366; H no. 285.]



Salomon's MS for "Tomrā ār āmāy kālār kathā balo nā."

67

তোরা কেউ যাস নে ও পাগলের কাছে

Torā keu ẏās ne o pāgaler kāche

ে রা কেউ যাস নে ও পাগলের কাছে
তিন পাগলে হলে মেলা নদেয় এসে ॥

একটা পাগলাে করে
ে ল দেয় জাত অজাতেরে
ে ড়িয়ে যেয়ে
ও তার নাই জেতের ে ল
এমন পাগল কে দেখেছে ॥

একটা নারে লের মালা
তাতে জল খাওয়া ফেলা
কর সে
আবার হরি বলে পড়ছে ঢলে
ধূলার মাঝে ॥

দেখতে যে যাবি পাগল
সেই ে হবি পাগল
বুঝবি শেষে
ছেড়ে ে র ঘর দুয়ার
ফিরবি নেচে ॥

পাগলের নাম কেমন
বলিতে অধীন লালন
হয় তরাসে
চৈতে নিতে অদৈ পাগল
নাম ধরেছে ॥

torā keu ẏās ne o pāgaler kāche
tin pāgale hale melā nadey ese ॥

ekṭā pāgalāmo kare
kol dey jāt ajātere
dauṛiye ẏeye
o tār nāi jeter bol
æman pāgal ke dekheche ॥

ekṭā nārakoler mālā
tāte jal khāoya phelā
karaṅga se
ābār hari bale paṛche ḍhale
dhūlār mājhe ॥

dekhte ẏe ẏābi pāgal
sei to habi pāgal
bujhbi śeṣe
cheṛe tor ghar duyār
phirbi nece ॥

pāgaler nāmṭi kæman
balite adhīn lālan
hay tarāse
caite nite adai pāgal
nām dhareche ॥

Don't any of you go near those madmen![1]
The three of them have teamed up in Nadīyā.

How madly they carry on!
They run to embrace
the high- and low-born.
They pay no heed to caste.
Who has ever seen such madmen?[2]

They scoop up water
in a coconut shell[3]
and then throw it away.
As if that's not enough,[4]
they shout "Hari"
and collapse in the dust.

If you just go see those madmen
you'll go mad too.
You'll understand eventually.[5]
You'll roam around dancing,
deserting home and family.

What are the names of the madmen?
Poor Lālan's afraid to utter them.
Caite, Nitye, Advai—
that's what those madmen are called.[6]

1. Alt. trans. (more literal): "No one go near those madmen."
2. Alt. trans.: "Who has ever seen madmen like that?"
3. *ekṭā nārakoler mālā, tāte jal khāoyā phelā, karaṅga se.*
4. Alt. trans.: "And what's more . . ."
5. Alt. trans.: "ultimately"; "Eventually, you'll understand."
6. Alt. trans.: "Those are the names they go by."

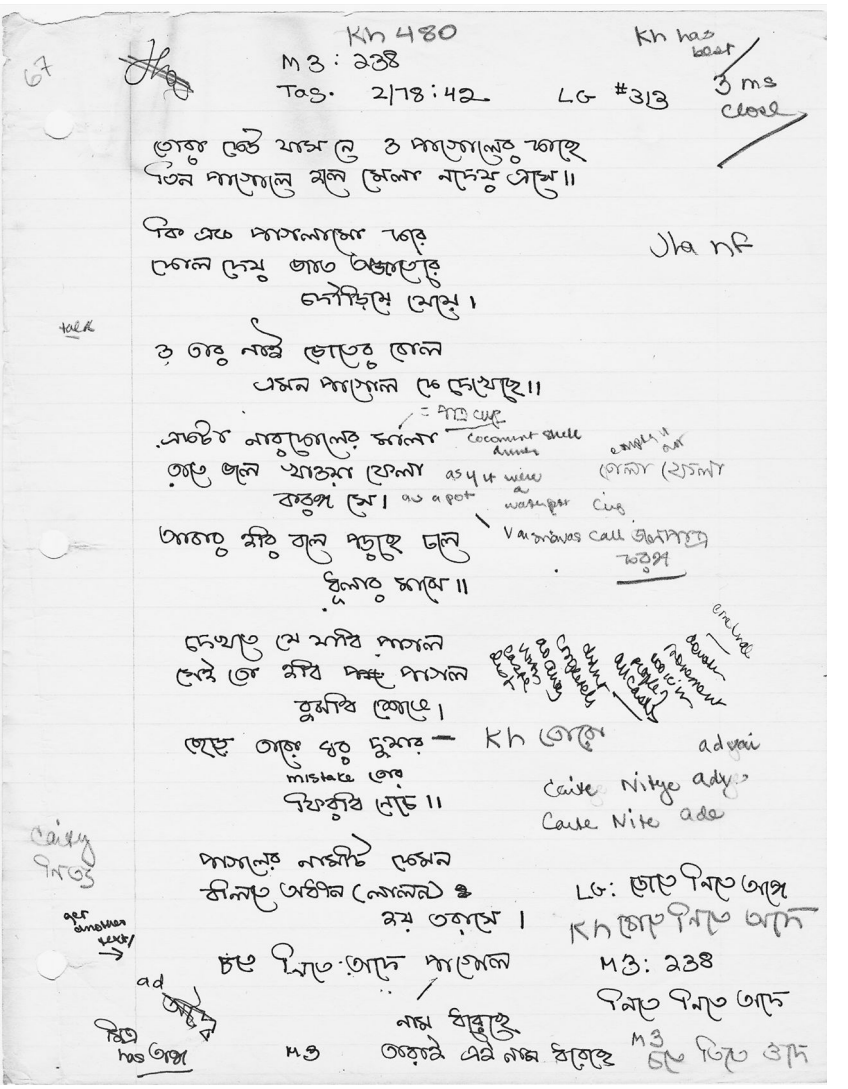
Torā keu ẏās ne o pāgaler kāche

Caitanya (Caite), the leader of the sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava revival in Bengal known as Gauṛiya Vaiṣṇavism, and his two associates Nityānanda (Nitye), and Advaita (Advai [or Adai]) are the "three madmen" of the song. Vaiṣṇavas are frequently described as "mad" because their worship of Kṛṣṇa (Hari) is characterized by intense devotional ecstasy. In the Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj's great biography of Caitanya, Caitanya is quoted as saying: "If a Vaiṣṇava acts like a madman, singing and dancing, it is Kṛṣṇa in his heart that makes him act so."

The Gauṛīya Vaiṣṇava movement is open to people of all castes, although it does not advocate the total rejection of caste that other traditions, such as the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās and Bāuls, do. These traditions also consider Caitanya as their *ādi guru* (original guru).

A bowl made of coconut shell (*karaṅka* [or *karaṅga*]) and a patchwork cloth (*kãthā*) are the only possessions of a Vaiṣṇava ascetic (*bairāgī* [< Skt. *vairāgya*]), who traditionally follows a life of poverty.

[Sources for the Bangla original include: M^2 78, no. 42; M^3, no. 238; LG no. 313.]



Salomon's MS for "Torā keu ẏās ne o pāgaler kāche."

দ

68

দিল দরিয়ায় ডুবে দেখ না

Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā

দিল দরিয়ায় ডুবে দেখ না
অতি অজান খবর যাবে জানা ॥

আলখানার শহর ভারি
তাহে আজব কারি রি
উ রায় পানি নাই ভিটে ে বে ভাই
(নলে) কি তাবি এ কারখানা ॥

বেণীর পিছল ঘাটে
বিনে হাওয়ায় ে জা ে টে
ে বায় কথা কয় কালায় নতে পায়
আধলাতে পরখ করছে ে না ॥

কহিবার ে নয় সে কথা
সাগরে ভাসে জগৎমাতা
লালন বলে সে মার উদরে পিতা
জ প র দু খেলে সে না ॥

dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā
ati ajān khabar ẏābe jānā ॥

āl-khānār śahar bhāri
tāhe ājab kāriguri
uttarāy pāni nāi bhiṭe ḍobe bhāi
(śunle) ki pratābi e kār-khānā ॥

tribeṇīr pichal ghāṭe
bine hāoyāy mojā choṭe
bobāy kathā kay kālāy śunte pāy
ādhalāte parakh karche sonā ॥

kahibār ẏogya nay se kathā
sāgare bhāse jagaṯmātā
lālan bale se mār udare pitā
janme patnīr dugdha khele se nā ॥

Just dive
into the Ocean of the Heart and you'll see.
You can learn the deepest secrets.

The original city[1]
is an extraordinary place,
built with astounding skill.
There's no water in the lakes,
but the land is flooded.
Would you believe such strange business[2]
if you just heard about it?

At the slippery quay of the Triveṇī
waves surge without wind.
The dumb speak, the deaf hear,
and a half pice, tested on a touchstone,
proves to be gold.[3]

This story is not fit to be told.
The mother of the world floats on the sea.
Lālan says, The father
is in her belly,
and when he is born,
he drinks his wife's milk.

1. *āl-khānār śahar. āl-khānā: āl* < *āul* "first" (Arabic *awwal*) + *khānā* "place" (Persian *khān*, "house").

2. *kār-khānā*: lit. "factory," an idiom for unusual goings on (cf. "what a zoo!").

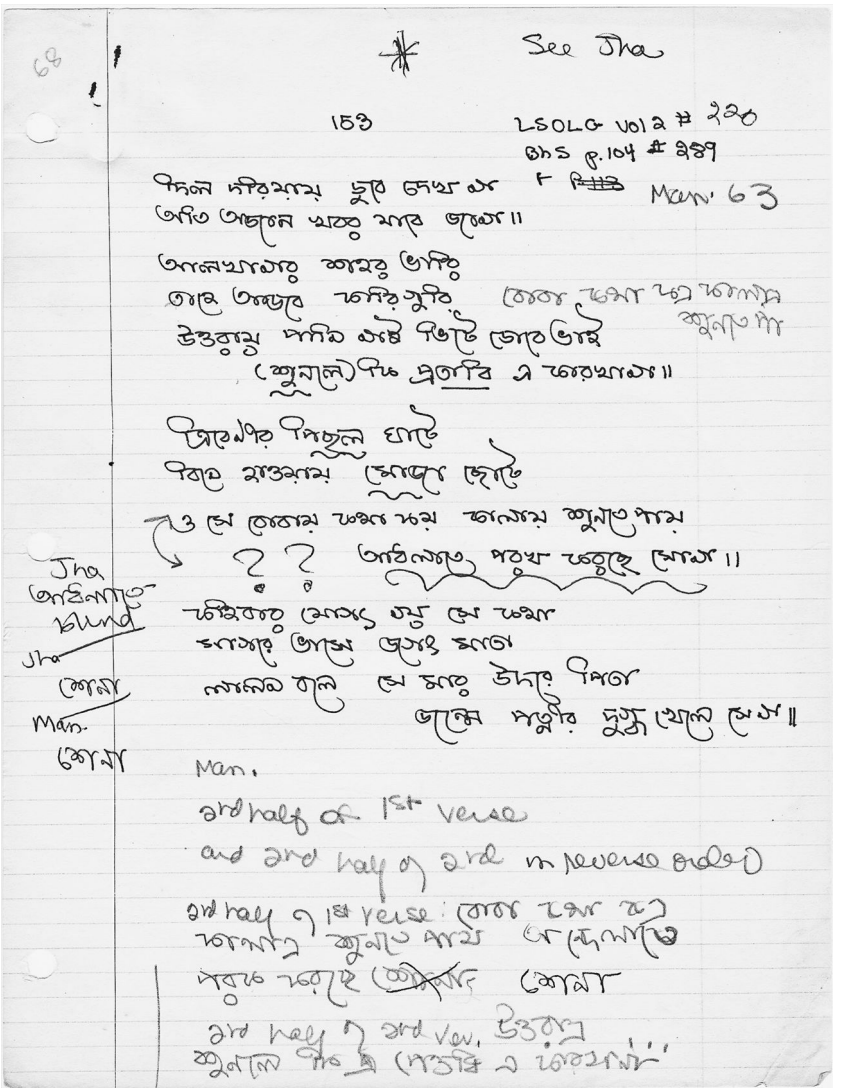
3. *ādhalāte parakh karche sonā:* lit. "A piece of broken brick tests as gold." The implication is that the brickbat was tested on a touchstone (*kaṣṭi-pāthar*).

Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā

A *dehatattva* (doctrine of the body) song with *ulṭa* (upside-down) imagery. The original city (*āl-khānār śahar*) refers both to the transcendent primal point from which the universe came into being and also to the *sahasrār-cakra*, the center at the top of the head where the Supreme resides. The *triveṇī* [Bng. *tribeṇī*] is the juncture of the three *nāṛīs* (channels) *iṛā, piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā*, where the *sahaj mānuṣ* unites with the Śakti.

In the riddle in the last verse, "The mother of the world floats on the sea" refers on the macrocosmic level to the Śakti in the primal waters, who was the receptacle for the *ādi bindu*, the original seed from which the world sprang. In *dehatattva* terms the line signifies the Śakti in the form of a flower that floats in menstrual blood. "The father" is semen, both the *ādi bindu* in the case of the primal Śakti and semen ejaculated into the vagina. Since a baby is produced from semen, it is also mentioned as "the father." (Cf. LG no. 42 ["Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye," 72].)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 153; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 220; Jhā; BhS, 104, no. 289.]



Salomon's MS for "Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā."

69

দেখ না এবার আপনাে ঘর ঠাওরিয়ে

Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye

দেখ না এবার আপনাে ঘর ঠাওরিয়ে
আঁখির ে ণায় পাখির বাসা
যায় আসে হাতের কাছ দিয়ে ॥

সবেতে পাখি একটা
সহ কুঠরি ে ঠা
আছে আড়া পাতিয়ে
নি মে তার মূল এক ঘর
অচিন হয় সেথা যেয়ে ॥

ঘরের আয়না আঁটা ে পাশে
মাঝখানে পাখি বসে আছে
আন ত হয়ে
দেখ না রে ভাই ধরার ে নাই
সামা হাত বাড়িয়ে ॥

পাখি দেখতে যদি সাধ কে
স নী চিনে ধর
দিবে দেখায়ে
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় লালন ে মায়
ে ঝাতে দিন যায় বয়ে ॥

dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye
ãkhir koṇāy pākhir bāsā
ẏāy āse hāter kāch diye ॥

sabete pākhi ekṭā
sahasra kuṭhari koṭhā
āche āṛā pātiye
nigume tār mūl ekṭi ghar
acin hay sethā ẏeye ॥

gharer āynā ãṭā caupāśē
mājhkhāne pākhi base āche
ānandita haye
dekh nā re bhāi dharār jo nāi
sāmānya hāt bāṛiye ॥

pākhi dekhte ẏadi sādh karo
sandhānī cine dharo
dibe dekhāye
sirāj sãi kay lālan tomāy
bojhāte din ẏāy baye ॥

This time
search your own house.
The bird's nest is in the corner
of your eye.
He comes and goes[1]
right by your hands.

In every house,
one bird:
he perches in the apartment
with a thousand rooms.
His main room is unreachable.[2]
You cannot know him[3]
when he goes there.

In the middle of a room
framed by mirrors the bird sits,
full of joy.[4]
Brothers, can't you see?
You'll never catch him
if you just put out your hands.[5]

If you desire to see the bird,[6]
find someone who knows the way.
He will show him to you.
Darvesh Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
it is taking days
to make you understand.[7]

1. The Bengali does not indicate the gender of the bird. Alt. trans.: "It . . ."

2. *nigume*: lit. "in an inaccessible" or "unreachable place."

3. *acin hay*: lit. "becomes unknown."

4. Alt. trans.: "filled with joy."

5. Alt. trans.: "just by stretching out your hands."

6. *pākhi dekhte ẏadi sādh karo*. Alt. trans.: "If you want to see the bird."

7. M^1 is the exemplar for this song. Emendations to the manuscripts: In verse 1 M^1 gives *nigom tāre* for *nigume tār*. T has *sabete* for *sabe to*. In verse 2, T has *mājāre* for *mājhkhāne* and *paki rāse* for *pākhi base*. M^1 and T omit *darbeś* from the *bhaṇitā*, which is necessary for the meter, and give *tomār* for *tomāy*, which is necessary for the rhyme. LPhKK: In verse 1 read

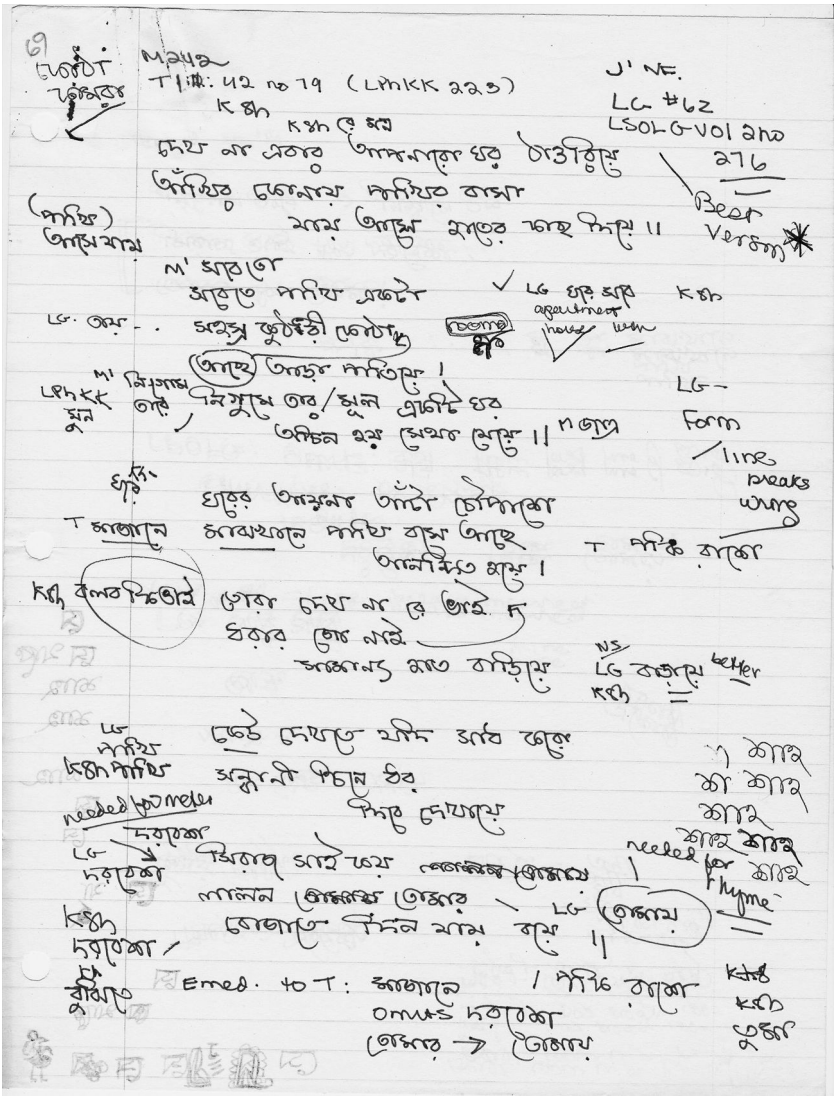
Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye

This song tells of the various places in the "house" of the human body that the soul bird occupies. The "corner of the eye" where the bird builds his nest does not correspond to any of the *cakra*s—the *ājñā-cakra* is between the eyes rather than in the eye. (See also Lālan's song "Paṛo ge nāmāj jene śune" [LG no. 294]: "He makes the fourteen worlds go round. His sign flashes in the corner of your eye.") It is interesting to note that similar imagery is found in the Upaniṣads where the eye is spoken of as the abode of the *ātman* (self), which is the Supreme in man. For example, Cāndogya 4.15.1 says: "That person who is seen in the eye—he is the Self (*ātman*)."

The apartment with a thousand rooms is the *sahasrār-cakra*, the thousand-petaled lotus. The bird's "main room" in an "unreachable place" (*nigume*), probably somewhere in this *cakra*, is the microcosmic equivalent of the central point from which creation began (see the annotations to "Nā jāni kæman rūp se" [LG no. 135; **79**]). Lālan says that when the bird goes there, "you cannot know him," because in that place the Supreme is the *aṭal īśvar*, the "calm God," who is without any qualities or form; here the duality between enjoyer and enjoyed does not exist and the Bāul cannot feel the bliss of his presence. The "room framed by mirrors," like the "city of mirrors" ("I have not seen him even once" ["Āmi ekdin-o nā dekhilām tāre," LG no. 18; **16**]) and the "hall of mirrors" ("In a marvelous hall of mirrors inlaid with gems" ["Ājab āynā mahal maṇi gabhīre," LG no. 52; **12**]), is a metaphor for the *ājñā-cakra*. In this *cakra* the Supreme has the nature of bliss and can be known with the help of "one who knows the way," the guru or murshid who teaches the Bāul the difficult *sādhanā* for realizing the Supreme within his body.

[Sources for the original Bangla version includes: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 42, no. 79 (LPhKK, 223); M^1 no. 242; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 276; LG no. 62; KSh; LS no. 430.]

mūl for *mun*. Other versions: In verse 1 LG has *ghare sabe to*, which makes the line hypermetric, whereas KSh has *ghare sabe*, and the manuscripts and LSOLG have *sabe to*. LG has several additional words, *tāy* preceding *sahasra* and *o tār* preceding *nigume* In verse 2 LG gives *tāy* for *bhāi*. In verse 3 LG and KSh's oral version have *pākhi*, whereas the other versions give *keu*. KSh has *bujhite* instead of *bojhāte*. LSOLG omits *baye*, the last word of the song.



Salomon's MS for "Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye."

70

দেখলাম কি কুদরতিময়

Dekhlām ki kudaratimay

দেখলাম কি কুদরতিময়
বিনা বীজে আজগবি গাছ
চাঁদ ধরেছে তায় ॥

নাই সে গাছের আগাে ড়া
শূ ভরে আছে খাড়া
ফল ধরে তার ফুল ছাড়া
দেখে ধাঁধা হয় ॥

বলে কি সে গাছের কথা
ফুলে মধু ফলে সুধা
ে রভেতে হরে ক্ষুধা
দরি তা যায় ॥

জানলে গাছের অ বাণী
চেতন বটে সেহি ধনি
বলে তারে মানি
লালন ফকির কয় ॥

dekhlām ki kudaratimay
binā bīje ājagabi gāch
cā̃d dhareche tāy ॥

nāi se gācher āgāgoṛā
śūnya-bhare āche khāṛā
phal dhare tār phulṭi chāṛā
dekhe dhā̃dhā hay ॥

balbo ki se gācher kathā
phule madhu phale sudhā
saurabhete hare kṣudhā
daridratā ẏāy ॥

jānle gācher arthabāṇī
cetan baṭe sehi dhani
guru bale tāre māni
lālan phakir kay ॥

What a miraculous thing I saw—
a strange tree that sprouted from no seed
with moons growing on it![1]

The tree has no top and no roots.
It stands straight up in the sky.
Fruits ripen without flowers.
Just a peek dazzles the eye.

What can I say about this tree?
There's honey in its flower,
nectar in its fruit.
Its scent satisfies hunger,
and wipes out poverty.

That blessed man is enlightened, indeed,
who knows the meaning of the tree.
He is the one I revere
as my guru, says Lālan Fakir.

1. "Moons" could also be translated as "moon," since singular and plural with general reference are not distinguished in Bengali.

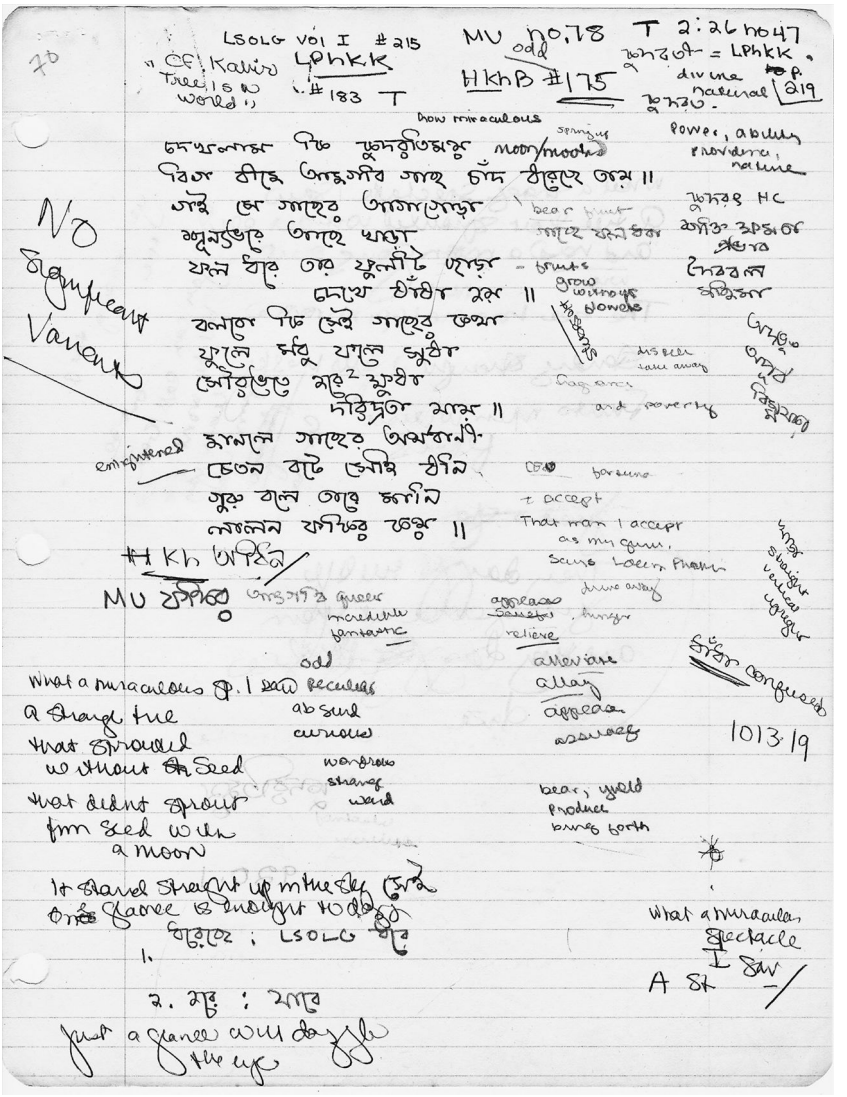
Dekhlām ki kudrati-may

This is another song full of *ulṭa* imagery (see "Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā" [LG no. 153; **68**]). It uses the stock Indian metaphor of the tree for the microcosmic body, a metaphor that can be traced at least as far back as the Upaniṣads (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 3.9.28). This metaphor first appears in Bengali literature in the opening line of Carya, song no. 1: "The body is a tree with five branches." Several paradoxical images describing the tree of the body included by Kabīr in one of his poems (Śabda 24 [Hess and Singh 1983, 49–50]) bear a striking resemblance to those contained in Lālan's song.

The surrealistic image of a tree with "moons growing on it," also occurs in another song by Lālan "Cā̃d āche cā̃de gherā" [LG no. 109; **59**]: "Moon fruit grow on the tree of beauty." In the song under discussion, as in "Cā̃d āche cā̃d gherā," "the moons" (or moon) might stand for any or all of the following: the twenty-four and a half moons of the body (see the annotations to "E ki āsamāni cor" [LG no. 103; **25**]), the Supreme, semen, or the four bodily substances termed the "four moons" (*cāri candra*: feces, urine, semen, and blood).

Lālan creates paradoxes not only within imagery but across imagery too, emphasizing the fact that the microcosmic tree cannot be understood logically. The "tree," like the one in Kabīr's poem, bears fruit (offspring) without flowers, yet has "honey in its flower" (menstrual blood, the female agent of procreation) and "nectar in its fruit" (here, semen, the male agent of procreation). One who knows its meaning is "enlightened," since he has penetrated the meaning of the cosmos itself; knowledge of *dehatattva* (the truth in the body) holds the key to conquering death and attaining liberation.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 183; KhB; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 215; T^2: 26, no. 47; Mitra, no. 219; LS no. 401.]



Salomon's MS for "Dekhlām ki kudratimay."

ধ

71

ধ ধ বলি যারে

Dhanya dhanya bali ẏāre

ধ ধ বলি যারে	dhanya dhanya bali ẏāre
বে ছে এমন ঘর	bendheche æman ghar
শূ র উপর ে করে ॥	śūnyer upar postā kare ॥
ঘরে সবে মা দুই খু	ghare sabe mātra duiṭi khūṭi
খু র ে ড়ায় নাই রে মা	khūṭir goṛāy nāi re māṭi
কিসে ঘর রবে খাঁ	kise ghar rabe khāṭi
ঝড়ি তুফান হলে পরে ॥	jhaṛi tuphān hale pare ॥
ঘরে মূলাধার কুঠরি নয়টা	ghare mūlādhār kuṭhari nayṭā
তার উপরে চিলে ঠা	tār upare cilekoṭhā
তাহে এক পাগলা বেটা	tāhe ek pāgalā beṭā
বসে একা একে রে ॥	base ekā ekeśvare ॥
(ঘরের) নিচে উপর সারি সারি	(gharer) nice upar sāri sāri
সাড়ে নয় দরজা তারি	sāṛe nay darajā tāri
লালন কয় যেতে পারি	lālan kay ẏete pāri
ে ন দরজা খুলে ঘরে ॥	kon darajā khule ghare ॥

I've got to hand it to the one[1]
who built a house like this,
with its foundation up in the sky!

The house has just two pillars, no more,
and their bases aren't attached to the floor.
How will this house stay in one piece,
when it's battered by a raging storm?

It has a basement and nine rooms,
even an attic at the very top.
There a madman sits,
in solitude, the sole Lord.

Upstairs and downstairs,
one after the other,
are nine and a half doors.
Lālan asks, So which one
do I open to get in?[2]

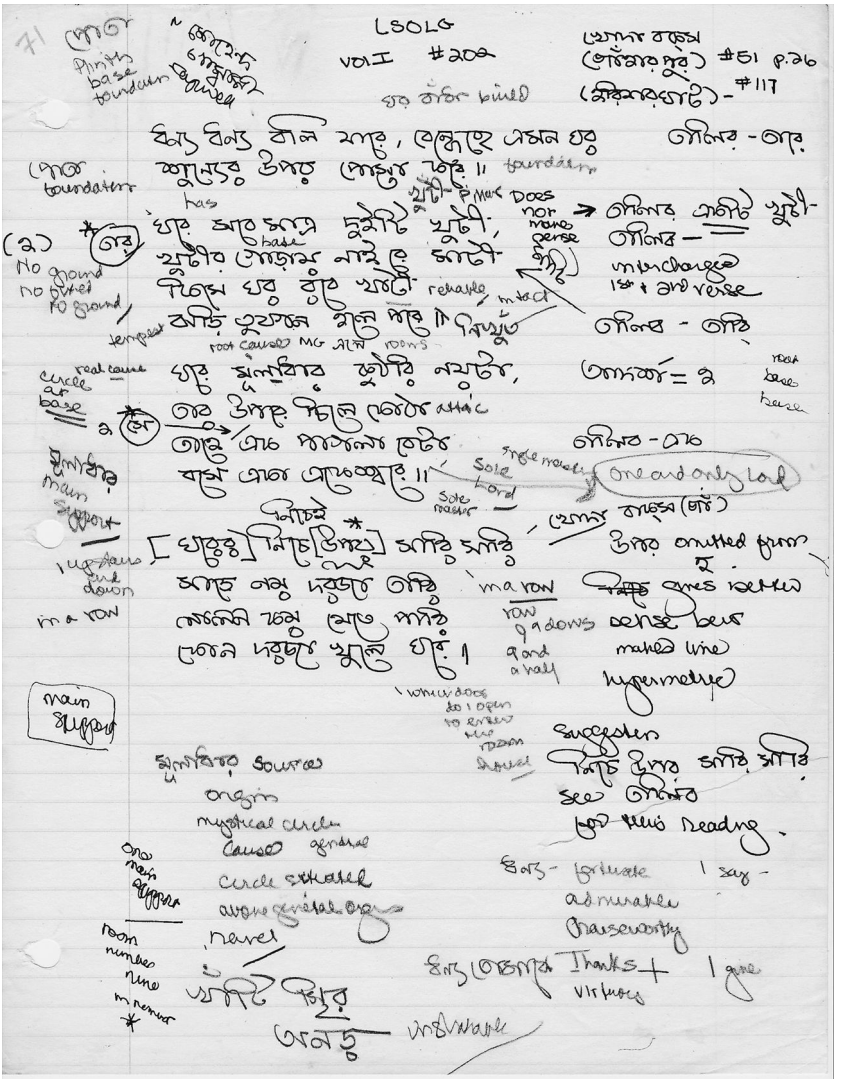
1. [*ẏāre*: Salomon's typescript also notes the popular variant *tāre*.]

2. Alt. trans.: "Which door do I open to go inside?"

Dhanya dhanya bali ẏāre

The upside-down "house," a variant of the common upside-down tree metaphor, represents the microcosmic body, and the "sky" signifies the *sahasrār-cakra*, the abode of the Absolute, who is described as the "foundation" of the universe. The "two pillars" are the legs, and what I have translated as "basement" (*mūlādhār*) is the lowest *cakra*, located at the base of the spinal column between the anus and the genitals. The meaning of the "nine rooms" is unclear. Other songs (i.e., LG no. 299, "Khā̃cār bhitar acin pākhī") mention only eight rooms, such as the eight limbs of the body, or the eight *candra*s, "moons." (See the commentary to "Bhajo re jene śune," LG no. 246 [**90**].) The "attic" where the "mad fellow sits" is, again, the *sahasrār-cakra*. Instead of "nine and one half doors," Lālan's song "The primal Mecca is in this human body" ("Āche ādi makkā ei mānabdehe," LG no. 295 [7]) refers to the more usual ten doors. (See the commentary to this song for a discussion of their symbolic import.) It is possible that the "half door" is just another term indicating the tenth door, although, as indicated in the aforementioned commentary, even its meaning is open to interpretation. At any rate, whether the "half door" refers to the *brahmadvāra* (door of *brahman*), the opening to the *suṣumnā*, which is the *nāṛī* (channel) that leads to the *sahasrār*; or to the *ājñā-cakrā*, or *sahasrār* itself; or even to the *ẏoni* or *mūlādhār*, it is most likely this door that Lālan must "open to go inside" (lit. "to go inside the house"), for these are all abodes of the Absolute; the *sahasrār* is his permanent abode, the *ājñā-cakra* is where he manifests himself, and the *mūlādhār* is where he holds court. (On half numbers in Bāul songs, see the commentary to "Bhajo re jene śune" [LG no. 246; **90**].)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 202; notebook from Hariarghāṭ, no. 117; J, 26, no. 51; LG no. 202; LS no. 153. The song is notably absent from LG and V^2.]



Salomon's MS for "Dhanya dhanya bali ẏāre."

72

ধর রে অধর চাঁদেরে অধরে অধর দিয়ে

Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye

ধর রে অধর চাঁদেরে অধরে
অধর দিয়ে
ে দে মৈথনের ধারা
ধে রে রসিক নাগরা
যে বসেতে অধর ধরা
দেখ রে সচেতন হয়ে ॥

অরসিকের ে লে ভুলে
ডুবিস না কূপ নদীর জলে
কারণ বারির ম লে
ফুটেছে ফুল অচিন দলে
চাঁদ-চে রা তাহে খেলে
ম বাণে কাশিয়ে ॥

নি ভেবে নি থে
লীলার দেশে যেও নাে
সে দেশেতে মহা লয়
মায়েতে পু ধরে খায়
ভেবে বুঝে দেখ মনরায়
সে দেশে ে র কাজ কি যেয়ে ॥

প বাণের ছিলে কেটে
ম ভজ পের হাটে
সিরাজ সঁ ই বলে রে লালন
বৈদিক বাণে করিস নে রণ
বাণ হারায়ে পড়বি তখন
রণ ে লাতে বড়ি খেয়ে ॥

dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare
adhar diye
kṣīrode maithaner dhārā
dharo re rasik nāgarā
ẏe basete adhar dharā
dekho re sacetan haye ॥

arasiker bhole bhule
ḍubis nā kūp nadīr jale
kāraṇ bārir madhya-sthale
phuṭeche phul acin dale
cā̃d-cakorā tāhe khele
prem bāṇe prakāśiye ॥

nitya bhebe nitya theko
līlār deśe ẏeo nāko
se deśete mahāpralay
māyete putra dhare khāy
bhebe bujhe dekh manarāy
se deśe tor kāj ki ẏeye ॥

pañcabāṇer chile keṭe
prem bhajo svarūper hāṭe
sirāj sā̃i bale re lālan
baidik bāṇe karis ne raṇ
bāṇ hārāye paṛbi takhan
raṇ kholāte hubaṛi kheye ॥

Put your lips to hers
and catch the uncatchable moon.[1]
In the current of the churned milk ocean
nab that rake.[2]
Keep your eyes on the liquid
where he can be caught.

Don't be enticed by false lovers
to dive into stagnant pools.[3]
In the middle of the waters of creation,
a flower blooms on an unknown branch.
The moon and cakora birds play there,[4]
shooting arrows of love.

Always think,
and always be patient.
Don't go there just for fun.
You'll end up in a land
of utter devastation[5]
where mother devours son.
Use your head,[6] *king of my mind.*
What's the use of going to a land like that?

Cut the bowstring
to the five arrows.
Worship love
in the market of your true nature.
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
don't fight with Vedic[7] *arrows.*
When they run out,[8]
you'll fall on the battlefield
flat on your face.

1. Lālan puns on the words *adhar* "lip," *adhar* "uncatchable," and *dharā* "to catch."

2. *dharo re rasik nāgarā.*

3. "stagnant pools": *kūp nadīr jale. Kūp* literally means "well," and *nadī* "river." Lālan uses the compound *kūp-nadī* in the same sense as *kūp-jal*. See notes to LG no. 453 ["Ebār ki sādhane śaman jvālā ẏāy," **33**].

4. Birds who are said to subsist on moonbeams.

5. Lit. "In that land there is utter devastation."

6. Alt. trans.: "Think it over."

7. i.e., orthodox.

8. [One oral variant is *hārāle,* which would change the translation of this phrase to "If they run out."]

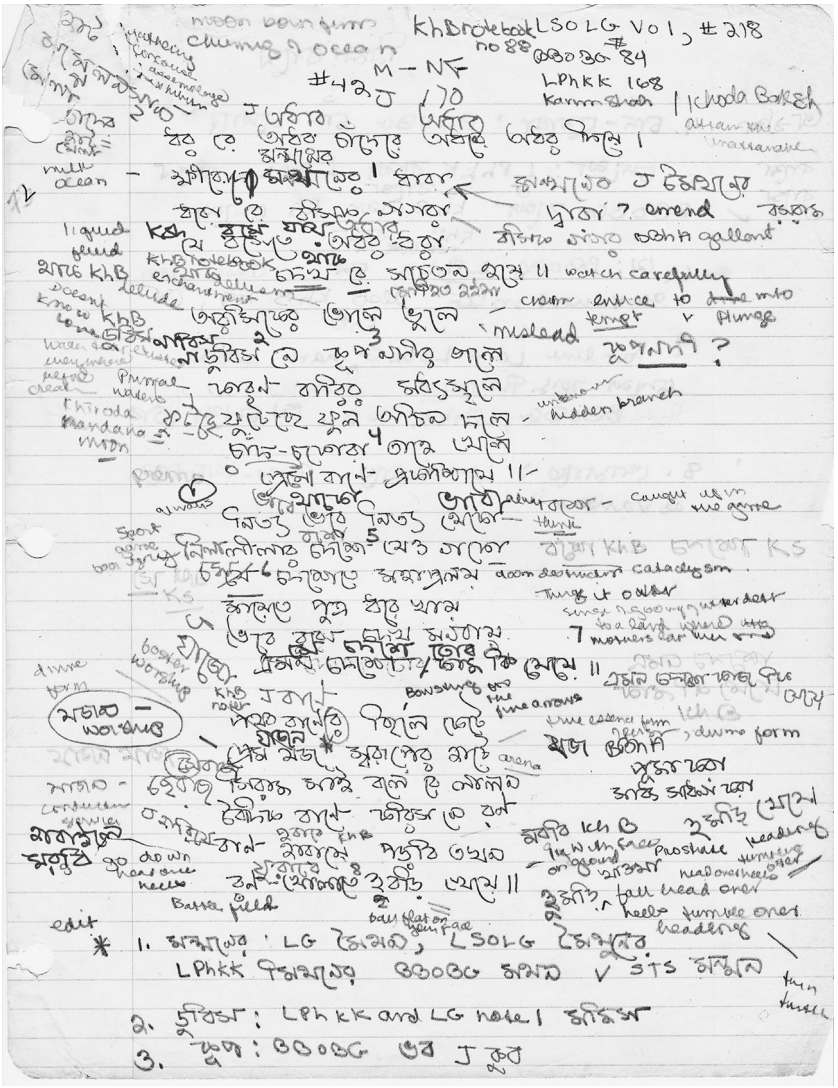
Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye

Another song about the appearance of the "uncatchable moon" (*adhar cā̃d*) in menstrual blood and of the dangers of giving way to lust and losing control of semen. According to Karim Shah, the line "put your lips to hers" (*adhare adhar diye*) refers to the rite of ingesting menstrual blood. (The *sādhak* takes the blood orally from the *sādhika* and then places some in her mouth.)

"The milk ocean," "the liquid where he can be caught," "stagnant pools," and "the waters of creation" all signify menstrual blood. "The son" is semen and the "mother" is the *ẏoni*. Lālan warns against being "enticed by false lovers" and engaging in sex "just for fun" because it will result in "a land of utter devastation where mother devours son," namely, the ejaculation of semen into the vagina.

"The five arrows" are the arrows of the god of love, Kāma: *madan* (enchantment), *mohan* (excitement), *śoṣaṇ* (absorption), *stambhan* (stupefaction), and *sammohan* (infatuation), which incite lust. "Vedic arrows" signifies conventional sex motivated by lust and desire for offspring. "The battlefield" is the *ẏoni*.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 42; J no. 170; KhB notebook, no. 88; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 218; BBOBG no. 84; LPhKK no. 168; LS no. 100.]



Salomon's MS for "Dharo re adhar cãdere adhare adhar diye."

73

ধ ে র হাওয়ার ঘরে ফঁ দ পেতে

Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phā̃d pete

ধ ে র হাওয়ার ঘরে ফঁ দ পেতে
সে কি সামা ে রা
ধরবি ে না-কা তে ॥

পাতালে ে রের বহর
দেখায় আসমানের উপর
তিন তারে হ খবর
ভা ভ ে গমতে ॥

ে থা ঘর কি বাসনা
কে জানে তার ঠিক ঠিকানা
হাওয়ায় তার বারামখানা
হাওয়া মূলাধার তাতে॥

চোর ধরে রাখবি যদি
দ-গারদ কর গে খঁ
লালন কয় খু না
থাকতে কি ে র দেয় ছুঁতে॥

dharo cor hāoyār ghare phā̃d pete
se ki sāmānya corā
dharbi konā-kāñcite ॥

pātāle corer bahar
dekhāy āsamāner upar
tin tāre hacche khabar
śubhāśubha ẏog-mate ॥

kothā ghar ki bāsanā
ke jāne tār ṭhik ṭhikāna
hāoyāy tār bārāmkhāna
hāoyā mūlādhār tāte ॥

cor dhare rākhbi ẏadi
hṛd-gārad karo ge khā̃ṭi
lālan kay khuṭināṭi
thākte ki cor dey chũte ॥

Lay[1] *a trap*
in the house of wind
to catch the thief.
You think he's an ordinary thief[2]
you catch in some nook or cranny?[3]

The thief's gang[4]
lurks in the underworld,[5]
but he shows up in the sky.[6]
Three wires telegraph the news
whether the time is right.[7]

Where's his house?
What's his aim?[8]
Who knows his permanent address?
His court is in the wind—[9]
in the wind at the root.[10]

If you want to catch the thief,
clean the prison of your heart.
Lālan says, If so much as a speck remains,[11]
will the thief let you touch him?

1. Alt. trans.: "Set."

2. Alt. trans.: "He's no ordinary thief."

3. *konā kāñcīte* [or *konā-kāñcite*].

4. The meaning of *bahar* is unclear. The term commonly has the sense of "ship," "fleet of boats," "navy." PAEIB [Hilālī 1967] also gives the definition "train of people." I have taken Khodā Bakṣ's suggestion that in this context the word means *dal* "group," "gang."

5. *pātāle corer bahar:* lit. "In the underworld is the thief's gang."

6. The subject of the clause is unstated in the original and is therefore unclear. I have taken it to be the thief, but it may also be the thief's gang.

7. *śubhāśubha ẏog-mate*: lit. "According to auspicious or inauspicious time." Alt. trans.: "Whether the time is right or wrong."

8. *bāsanā*.

9. "court": *bārāmkhāna*.

10. "root": *mūlādhār* (see commentary). Alt. trans.: "in the wind in the lotus at the root."

11. "speck": *khuṭināṭi:* lit. "slight flaw." Alt. trans.: "As long as a speck remains"; "As long as there's a speck."

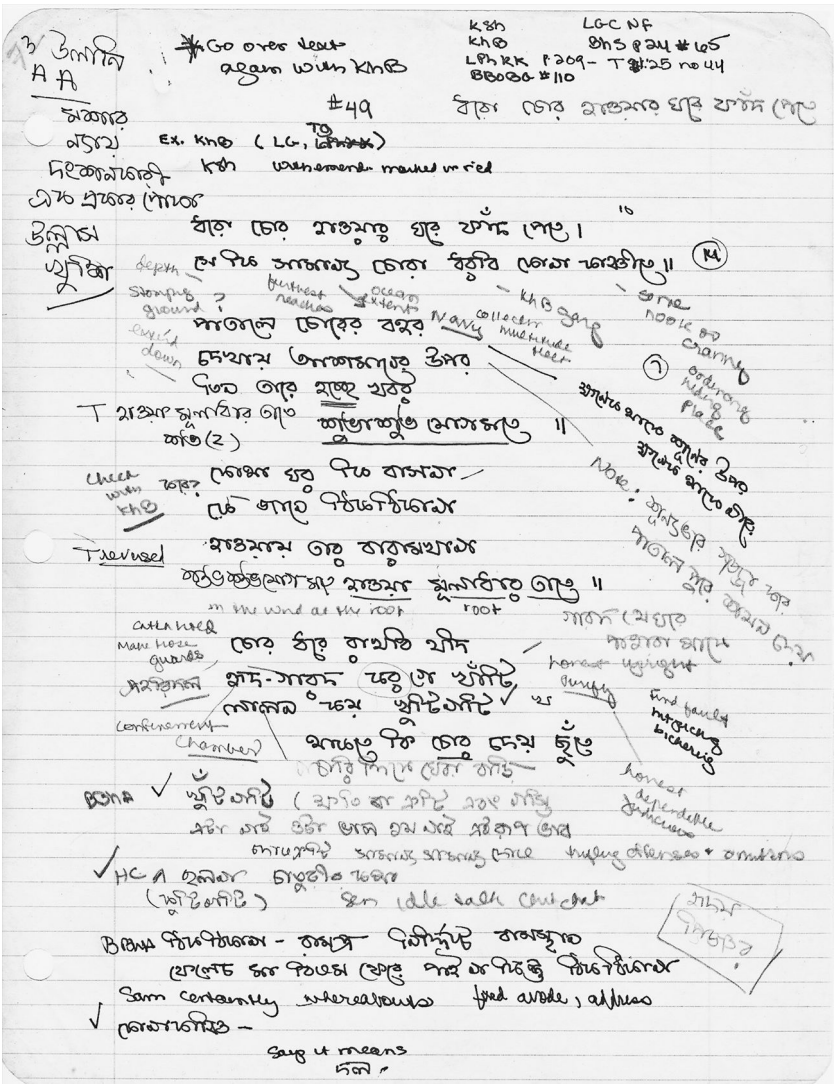
Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phā̃d pete

Another song about the *sahaj mānuṣ* as thief. (See LG nos. 20 ["Śahare ṣola jan bombeṭe," **126**] and 35 ["Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," **120**].) The "trap in the house of wind" symbolizes the practice of breath control. "The underworld" is the *mūlādhār*, the lowest of the seven *cakra*s. "The thief's gang," according to Khodā Bakṣ, signifies the six enemies of man. (In LG no. 20 ["Śahare ṣola jan bombeṭe"] the *sahaj mānuṣ* is depicted as the leader of sixteen robbers, including the six enemies.) "The sky" is the *sahasrār*, the highest *cakra*, which is the *sahaj mānuṣ*'s "permanent address." The "three wires" are the three *nāṛī*s (channels) *iṛā, piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā*, and the "court" located "in the wind at the root" refers to the *mūlādhār* (*mūl*, "root") where the *sahaj mānuṣ* performs his *līlā*.

The Bāuls believe that menstrual blood flows through a different *nāṛī* on each of the three days of menstruation. In the early part of the third day (*dvitīyār prathame*), when the blood flows through the *suṣumnā*, the *sahaj mānuṣ* descends in breath from the *sahasrār* to the *mūlādhār* via the *suṣumnā*. This is considered the "right" time for ritual sexual intercourse.

During *sādhanā* the *sādhak* draws a drop of blood into his penis (a practice the Bāuls term *śoṣaṇ bān*, "suction arrow" and yogic texts call *vajrolīmudrā*). By laying "a trap in the house of wind," by practicing breath control, the *sādhak* is not only able to prevent the discharge of semen during *sādhanā* but also to return it to the *sahasrār*. The resulting feeling of bliss that the *sādhak* experiences is what Lālan calls "catching the thief."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 49; KhB; KSh; BhS, 24, no. 65; T^2: 25, no. 44 (LPhKK, 209); BBOBG no. 110.]



Salomon's MS for "Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phāḍ pete."

74

ধো আজাজিল রেখেছে সেজদা বাকি ে নখানে

Dhoṛo ājājil rekheche sejdā bāki konkhāne

ে ে আজাজিল রেখেছে	dhoṛo ājājil rekheche
সেজদা বঁ কি ে নখানে	sejdā bāki konkhāne
কর রে মন কর সেজদা	karo re man karo sejdā
সেই জায়গা চিনে ॥	sei jāygā cine ॥
জগৎ জুড়ে দিল সেজদা	jagaṯ juṛe dilo sejdā
তবু ঘটে দুরব	tabu ghaṭlo dur-abasthā
ইমান না হইল ে ক্তা	imān nā hailo poktā
ে ড়াই জমিনে ॥	thoṛāi jamine ॥
এমনি মাহা সে জায়গায়	æmani māhātmya se jāygāy
সেজদা দিলে মকবুল হয়	sejdā dile makabul hay
আজাজিলের বি স নয়	ājājiler biśvās nay
লানত সেই জ ॥	lānat sei janye ॥
ইবলিছের সেজদার উপর	iblicher sejdār upar
সেজদা দিলে কি ফল হয় তার	sejdā dile ki phal hay tār
লালন বলে সেই বিচার	lālan bale sei bicār
রায় লেও জেনে॥	tvarāy leo jene ॥

Go and search!
Where did 'Azazil
fail to bow down?
Find that place, my mind,
and bow down there.

He bowed down
all over the world,
but still he got in trouble.
His faith wavered
because of a tiny plot of land.

Bow down
in a holy place like that,
and you'll be taken in.
But 'Azazil didn't believe,
and so he was cursed.

What's the use
of bowing down
where Satan did?
Lālan says, Hurry up and learn
to tell the difference.[1]

1. [Emendation:] LG: For the first word of the refrain read *dhoṛo* instead of *dhare*.

Dhoṛo ājājil rekheche sejdā bāki konkhāne

This song refers to the Qur'anic story of the angel 'Azazil who later became Satan. When Allah made Adam, he asked all the angels to bow down to him, because he had breathed his own breath into him. 'Azazil, who up to this point had been an exemplary devotee, refused to comply because he had been created out of fire, while Adam was made of mere earth. As a result, 'Azazil was cursed and banished from heaven. At his request, his punishment was postponed until the Day of Judgement, when he will be thrown into hellfire. In Lālan's view, the story attests to the divinity of man.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's exemplar (J no. 211; KhB; see below); Salomon's manuscript (slightly different version based on LG no. 288); LSOLG vol. 2, no. 14.]

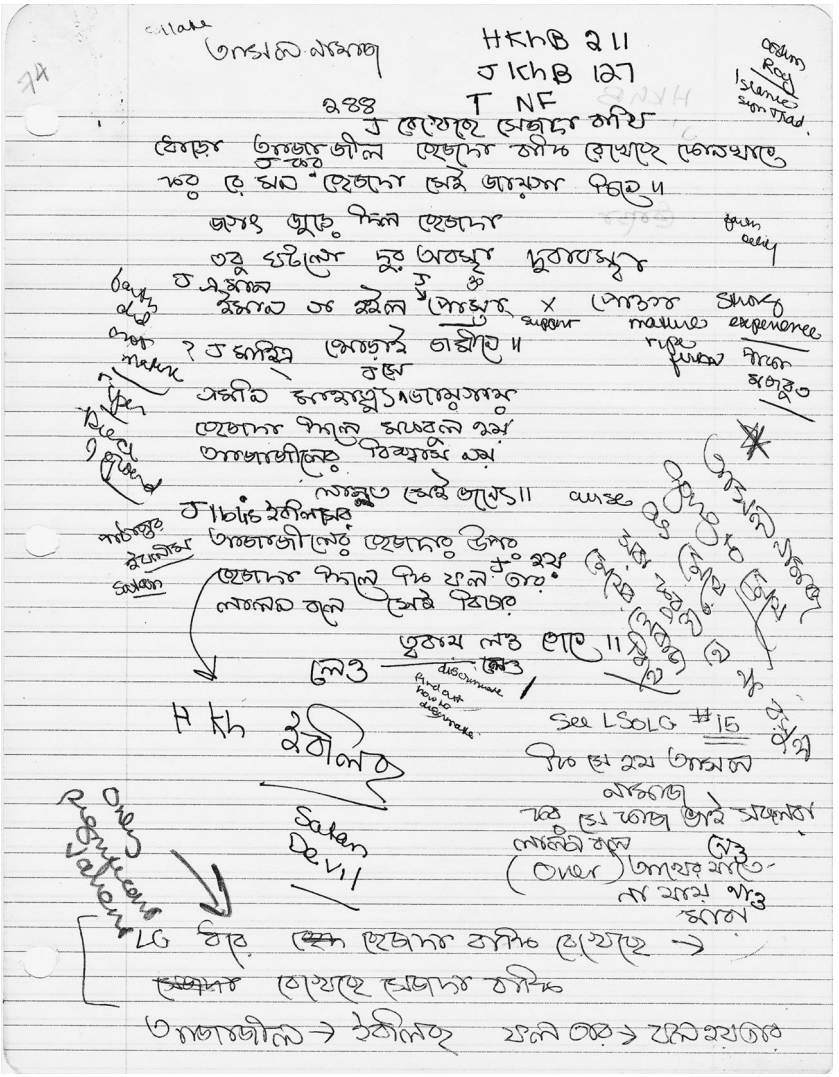
Exemplar: J no. 211; Oral version: KhB

dhoṛo ājājīl rekheche sejdā bāki konkhāne/
karo re man karo sejdā sei jāẏgā cine //

jagat juṛe dilo sejdā, tabu ghaṭlo dur abasthā/
emān nā hailo postā, thoṛāi jamine //

emni māhitya (i.e., māhātmya) se jāẏgāẏ, sejdā dile makbul haẏ/
ājājīler biśvās naẏ, lānat sei janye //

iblicher sejdār upar, sejdā dile ki phal haẏ tar
lālan bale sei bicār, tvarāẏ leo jene //



Salomon's MS for "Dhoṛo ājājil rekheche sejdā bāki konkhāne."

ন

75

নবি না চিনে কি আ পাবে

Nabi nā cine ki āllā pabe

নবি না চিনে কি আ পাবে
নবি দীনের চাঁদ আজ দেখ না রে ভেবে ॥

যার নূরে হয় সয়াল সংসার
সে আজ কলির ভাবে নবি পয়গ র
হাটের ে লমালে তারে চিনলে না ভবে॥

বাতুনের ঘরে নূর নবি
পু ষ কি কৃতি ছবি
পে দেলে রান কর রে বিধান
মনের অ কার যাবে ॥

ে ঝা কঠিন কুদরতি খেয়াল
আমার নবিজি গাছ সঁ ইজি ফল
যে পার ঐ গাছে চড়
লালন কয় কাতর ভাবে ॥

nabi nā cine ki āllā pābe
nabi dīner cā̃d āj dekh nā re bhebe ॥

ẏār nūre hay sayāl saṃsār
se āj kalir bhābe nabi payagambar
hāṭer golamāle tāre cinlām nā bhabe ॥

bātuner ghare nūr nabi
puruṣ ki prakṛti chabi
paṛo del-korān karo re bidhān
maner andhakār ẏābe ॥

bojhā kaṭhin kudarati kheyāl
āmār nabiji gāch sā̃iji phal
ẏe pār ai gāche caṛ
lālan kay kātar bhābe ॥

Will you get Allah
if you don't know the Prophet?
The Prophet is the moon of faith.
Think it over, today.

The one from whose light
the whole world sprang
today is the Prophet of the Kali age.
In the tumult of the marketplace, my mind
I didn't recognize him in this world.[1]

In a hidden room
the Prophet's light.
Does it look like a man
or a woman?
Read the book of the heart.
You'll find the way.
The darkness of your mind will fade.

Divine whim is hard to understand.
My Prophet is a tree,
the Lord, its fruit.
Pick that fruit
and climb that tree,
says Lālan wistfully.[2]

1. Alt. trans. (omitting *bhabe*, "in the world"): "I didn't recognize him."

2. [Emendations:] Verse 1: LSOLG has *dīn* for *nabi*. Verse 2: LPhKK misreads *bātuler* for *bātuner*. LSOLG has *korāṇ* for *ketāb*; T has *karo re*, whereas LG and LSOLG have *karbe*. Verse 3: T has *kudarato*, whereas LG and LSOLG have *kudarati*.

Nabi nā cine ki āllā pābe

This is another song that refers to the hidden and manifest forms of the Prophet (see the annotations to "Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy" [LG no. 206; **76**]), namely, the Prophet's light (Nur Muhammad or Nur Nabi), from whom the "whole world sprang," and who is the divine in the human body (see also the annotations to "Ākār ki nirākār sãi rabbānā" [LG no. 280; **5**]), and the historical Muhammad, whom Lālan describes as the "Prophet of the Kali age," the last and worst of the four ages. As I point out elsewhere ("Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy"), the historical Muhammad is identified with the murshid, so that the "Prophet of the Kali age" can also refer to the spiritual guide.

In Karim Shah's opinion, "the hidden room" (*bātuner ghar*) containing "the Prophet's light" refers to the female sexual organ (*meyeder guptasthān*, lit. "the woman's secret place"). However, in most of the Bāul songs I have examined, Nur Muhammad seems to reside in the two-petaled *ājñā-cakra* between the eyebrows. Kalu Shah ([Āsgar 1991] no. 95) says that he is in the kohl-black room (*kājal-koṭhā*), which presumably is the "hidden room" mentioned by Lālan. Duddu Shah ([Jāhāṅgīr] 1964, no. 95) places this room in the two-petaled lotus and locates the hall of mirrors inside it (for a discussion of the hall of mirrors, see the annotations to "Āmi ekdin-o nā dekhilām tāre" [**16**]):

> *In your true form is the seat of [the Lord's] form.*
> *You can find it on the two-petaled lotus.*
> *Its rays are brighter than ten million moons.*
> *The hall of mirrors is in the kohl-black room.*

In the one exception I encountered, Pāñja Śāh locates the Prophet's light in the *lā mokām*, which is equivalent to the highest *cakra*, the *sahasrār*, rather than the two-petaled lotus ("Ei mānuṣe nabir nūre jhalak dey," in BBOBG, 303). The plexus between the eyebrows is also the site of Nur Muhammad in the Sufi yogic text *Yogakalandar* (ca. seventeenth century) [attributed to] the Bengali poet Sayyid Martuzā (Roy 1983, 176). It describes him as residing in the *jabrut mokām*, equivalent to the two-petaled *ājñā-cakra* between the eyebrows, in a white lotus inside a pearl. According to Enamul Haq's translation of the text (1975, 378–396) based on a composite manuscript he prepared from seven Bengali manuscripts, he is in a cold chamber in the *lāhut mokām* equivalent to the twelve-petaled *anāhata*

cakra in the heart, inside the pearl of an oyster. But the text published by Ahmad Śarīph (1969, 98–99) supports Roy's interpretation. [See the annotations to "Jān gā nūrer khabar" **(61)** for more on the *Yogakalandar* text.]

Once again (see "Apārer kāṇḍār nabiji āmār" [LG no. 269; **4**), Lālan asks the question whether Muhammad took "the form of a man or of a woman." Whereas at the time of the creation (see the annotations to "Āhāde āhāmad ese" [LG no. 282; **22**]) and the *mi'raj*, the Prophet's ascent to heaven (see "Niguṛ prem kathāṭi tāi āj āmi śudhāi kār kāche" [LG no. 244]), he is equated with the Śakti, in the body "the Prophet's light" is identified with the *adhar* or *sahaj mānuṣ*, who is both male and female (see Salomon 1991, 291–292). As Duddu Shah explicitly says in his song "Ār se bāri bār elāhi" (private collection): "The Prophet's light is the divine young couple," that is, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in one (*nūr nabi hale ẏugal kisor*). Saiyyid Martuzā agrees with the Bāuls on this point too. According to his *Yogakalandar*, Nur Muhammad is the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* combined in a single form.[3]

The tree to which Lālan often compares the Prophet represents the manifest state of the God, whereas the fruit or the seed (see "Apārer kāṇḍār . . .") signifies his unmanifest state.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 2, no. 3; LPhKK, 231; LG no. 272; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 292.]

3. [The *Yogakalandar* is attributed to Saiyyid Martuzā, but its authorship remains uncertain.]

76

নবি না চিনলে কিসে ে দার ভেদ পায়

Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy

নবি না চিনলে কিসে ে দার ভেদ পায়
চিনিতে বলেছে ে দে সেই দয়াময় ॥

যে নবি পারের কা র
জে চার যুগের উপর
হায়াতুল মুরসালীন নাম তার
সেই জ কয় ॥

ে ন নবি হইল ওফাত
ে ন নবি বা র হায়াত
নেহাজ করে জেনলে নেহাত
যাবে সংশয় ॥

যে নবি আজ স ে র
চিনে মন তার দাওন ধর
লালন বলে পারের কাে
  সাধ যদি হয় ॥

nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy
cinite baleche khode sei dayāmay ॥

ẏe nabi pārer kaṇḍār
jendā cār ẏuger upar
hāyātul murasālīn nām tār
sei janya kay ॥

kon nabi hailo ophāt
kon nabi bāndār hāyāt
nehāj kare jenle nehāt
ẏābe saṃśay ॥

ẏe nabi āj saṅge tor
cine man tār dāon dhar
lālan bale pārer kāro
  sādh ẏadi hay ॥

How can you find out
the mystery of Khodā
without knowing the Prophet?
The Merciful One himself said
you should know him.

The Prophet who's the pilot
to the other shore
lives throughout the ages.
That's why he's called
the "life of the prophets."

Which prophet died?
Which prophet is the life of man?
Pay attention, and learn this inside out.
You'll put an end to all your doubts.

My mind, the prophet who's with you today—
get to know him.
Grab hold of his hem, Lālan says,
if you've any desire
to reach the other shore.[1]

1. [Emendations:] J[1] omits *nabi* from the first line of the last verse. No other significant variants are found in the versions cited. The song is given in LG (no. 206), but it is corrupt; the Arabic and Persian words are garbled.

Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy

As in "Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy" [LG no. 261; **121**], here too Lālan says that it is through the Prophet that the unknowable divine essence manifests itself and can be known. The answer to the questions that Lālan poses in this song turns on an understanding of the fact that there are basically two forms of the Prophet, the first *bāṭin* [Bng. *bātun*], "hidden," and the second *ẓāhir* [Bng. *jāher*], "manifest":

1. The light of Muhammad (Ar. *nūr muḥammadī*) or the Reality of Muhammad (Ar. *ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya*), the preexistent Muhammad who was God's first creation and is the first of the prophets, is the *bāṭin* form of the Prophet. As a *ḥadīth* says (quoted in Schimmel 1975, 215): "I was a prophet when Adam was still between clay and water." Schimmel explains (1985, 132) that *ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya* is considered to be the fountainhead of all prophetic activity. For this *ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya*—a term often translated as "archetypal Muhammad"—manifests itself first in Adam, then in all the other prophets until it finds its full expression once more in the historical Muhammad, who thus becomes, as it were, the alpha and omega of creation. It is this form of Muhammad that Lālan describes as "the pilot to the other shore" who "lives throughout the ages" and as "the life of the prophets" (*hayātul murasālīn*, Ar. *ḥayāt al-mursalīn*). It is also this preexistent form who is "the life of man" (*bāndār hāyāt*, lit. "the life of the servant") for *nūr muḥammadī* is the light in the soul (*ruhu* or *ātmā*; see, for example, Lālan's song "Æman din ki habe re ār" [LG no. 252]), which is identified with sperm. (On the identification of light and semen, see the annotations to "Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy" [LG no. 239; **106**].) "This hidden form of the Prophet," Karim Shah explained in a performance held in the village of Gopīnāthpur, Magura District, in 1986, "wasn't born from any womb and is a substance sent by God (*āllār prerita bastu*). It is found in the heart, and moves in breath. . . . When that prophet goes out of the body, the person is dead."
2. The historical Muhammad, the last and greatest of the prophets, is the *ẓāhir* form. Schimmel (1985, 132) comments: "Muhammad the Prophet is the all-comprehensive and perfect manifestation of the primordial light, and with him the cycle of manifestations is completed, for he is the Seal of the Prophets." It is this manifest form of Muhammad who "died." In the last verse of the song Lālan refers to another manifest

form of the Prophet "who's with you today." By this he means the murshid or *pir*. (On the identification of the Prophet and the murshid see the annotations to "Rasulke cinile pare khodā cena ẏāy" [**121**].) Karim Shah remarked in the Gopīnāthpur performance that "each person meditates on the image of his *pir* who is for him the manifest form of the Prophet" (*ẏār ẏār pir tār tār dhyāner chabi, tār tār jāhirā rāsul*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 5, no. 9; LPhKK, 233; J^1 no. 249; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 37; LS no. 13.]

77

নবির অ জগৎ পয়দা হয়

Nabir aṅge jagaṯ paydā hay

নবির অ জগৎ পয়দা হয়
সেই যে আকার কি হে তার
কে করে নি য় ॥

আ র ঘরে বে
সেই নবির জ হে
মূল দেহ তার ে থায় রে
শুধাবো ে থায় ॥

কি পে নবির জান সে
যু হয় বাপের বিছে
আবহায়াত যার নাম লিখেছে
হাওয়া নাই সেথায় ॥

এক জানে দুই কায় ধরে
কেউ পু কেউ পাপ করে
কি হবে তার ে জ হাশরে
হিসাবের সময় ॥

নবির ভেদ পায় একা
ঘুচে যায় তার সব স
দৃ হয় তার আলেক ফ
লালন ফকির কয় ॥

nabir aṅge jagaṯ paydā hay
sei ẏe ākār ki halo tār
ke kare nirṇay ॥

ābdullār ghare balo
sei nabir janma halo
mūl deha tār kothāy ralo
śudhābo kothāy ॥

kirūpe nabir jāno se
ẏukta hay bāper biche
āb-hāyāt ẏār nām likheche
hāoyā nāi sethāy ॥

ek jāne dui kāy dhare
keu puṇyi keu pāp kare
ki habe tār roj hāśare
hisāber samay ॥

nabir bhed pāy ekānti
ghuce ẏāy tār sab sandhi
dr̥ṣṭi hay tār ālek phandi
lālan phakir kay ॥

The world came
from the Prophet's body.
What shape did he have?
Who can figure it out?

You say the Prophet was born
in 'Abdullah's house.
But his original body—
where did it stay?
Where can I ask?

How did the Prophet's soul
and his father's seed unite?
No wind enters the place
books call the waters of life.

A man[1] *takes two bodies:*
One does good,
and the other sins.
On judgement day,
at the time of reckoning,
what will happen to him?

If you know the mystery
of the Prophet,
all your doubts disappear.[2]
You see the unseen scheme,
so says Lālan Fakir.[3]

1. *jān:* lit. "soul."

2. *sandhi* < *sandeha* ["doubt"].

3. [Emendations:] The readings of the two notebooks are virtually identical. In verse 2 for LG *rāger bīje* read *bāper biche*. In verse 3 for LG *bojho man re* read *roj hāśare*. In verse 4 for LG *anek* read *ālek*. LSOLG has *pānthi* for *phandī* [or *phandi*]. The two oral versions of the song I collected, one from Khodā Bakṣ and the other from Laili Begum, are almost identical but contain several readings that differ from those of the notebooks. In most cases the variants do not affect the meaning of the song. In verse 1 for *śudhābo kothāy* Khodā Bakṣ and Laili have *e kaṭhā kāre bāśudhāi*. Laili reverses the order of verses 2 and 3. In verse 2 for *nabir jān se* they have *se nabir jān*, and for *ẏukta hay bāper biche* Khodā Bakṣ has *bāper biche ẏukto hon*. Laili gives *hay* for *hon*. For *āb-hāyāt yār nām likheche* both singers give *āb-hāyāter nāmṭi likhā*. In verse 3 they have the synonymous *nikāśer belāy* for *hisāber samay*. The most significant variants are in the last verse: For *sab sandhī* the oral versions have *maner bhrānti*, and for *phandī* they have *panthi* (Laili also gives its variant *pānthi* the first time she sings the word).

Nabir aṅge jagaṯ paydā hay

Nur Muhammad is thought by Bengali Muslims to have anthropomorphic shape. The world was created from drops of light that oozed from his body (see Lālan's song "O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe" [LG no. 240; **36**]). For the answer to the question of where the Prophet left his "original body" when he "was born in 'Abdullah's house" see the annotations to "Āhāde āhāmad ese nabi nām se jānāle" [LG no. 282; **22**].

According to a story in verse recited by Karim Shah, the Prophet's soul was contained in a flower that floated down from the sky and landed on a dead tree in Arabia. Several women tried to pick it, but none of them succeeded. They appealed to 'Abdullah for help. By Allah's order, the flower dropped into his hand and his "brain became heavy" (*magaj halo bhāri*). Since semen is believed to be contained in the head, this may indicate that the Prophet's soul entered 'Abdullah's seed. But the story does not end here. 'Abdullah gave the flower to his wife Amina, and when she smelled it, the Prophet entered her womb. Another reference to this flower is found in a song attributed to Lālan (*Haramaṇi* vol. 5 [Mansuruddin 1984], no. 2 ["Behester pāśe nūrer gāche"]):

> The flower was blooming on the tree of light in heaven. The tree shed its light, and the flower came down to earth into 'Abdullah's hands, who took it and placed it on his head. The Prophet entered Amina's womb and was born ten months and ten days later.

Although I was not able to trace this story to earlier Muslim sources, some of the motifs are present in Arabic and Persian legends about Muhammad. The flower in the Bāul tradition is usually identified with menstrual blood rather than semen. But a legend mentioned by the Persian poets Rumi and Attar (Schimmel 1985: 35) identifies the rose with the sweat of Muhammad, which, according to some Islamic traditions, is the spermatic substance from which the world was created (see the annotations to LG no. 239 ["Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy," **106**]). During the Prophet's heavenly ascent drops of sweat fell on the ground, and from them was created the first rose. (It is interesting to note that in the Taoist yogic text *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, the golden flower signifies crystalized light, which is equated with semen.) In the Bāul legend, the Prophet's substance is absorbed into 'Abdullah's head. Similarly, in Muslim sources composed in Arabic (Rubin 1975, 84–86), as long as

'Abdullah contains the divine prophetic sperm within him, a light shines on his forehead. And in an Islamic legend related by Rubin (1975, 111), Muhammad's substance is contained not in a flower, but in a fruit: "When Allah wanted to make Muhammad manifest in the world, He drew out a drop (*qaṭra*) from beneath His throne, and threw it into one of the earthly fruits. 'Abdullah, the prophet's father, ate it and transferred it into the womb of his wife when copulating with her. Consequently she conceived Muhammad."

The "place books call the waters of life" (*āb-hāyāt*: Pers. *āb* "water" and Ar. *ḥayāt* "life") is the female sexual organ. Since it is an enclosed space, "wind" cannot enter (cf. the similar phrase "without wind waves surge" in Lālan's song). However, it is not clear to me what connection the absence of wind has with how the Prophet's soul combined with 'Abdullah's seed.

The "two bodies" are the *nafs* "soul" and the *rūḥ* "spirit," roughly equivalent to the Hindu terms *jīvātmā* "individual soul" and *paramātmā* "supreme soul." The *nafs* performs all the bad actions, and the *rūḥ* all the good actions. This is in contrast to the *paramātmā,* who does not act. Depending on the person's deeds, the *nafs* will go either to *'Illin*, "heaven," or *Sijjīn*, "hell," until the Day of Resurrection. [See song **40** for the non-literal way in which these terms, usually referring to the register where deeds are kept, are used.]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript: T[1]: 5, no. 8; LG no. 271; LPhKK, 233; J[1]; LG no. 271; LSOLG vol. 1 no. 38; Jhā, 274.]

78

নবির আইন কা ে ঝা সা নাই

Nabir āin kāro bojhā sādhya nāi

নবির আইন কা ে ঝা সা নাই
যার যেটা বু তে আসে
সে বলে তাই ॥

nabir āin kāro bojhā sādhya nāi
ẏār ẏeṭā buddhite āse
se bale tāi ॥

বেহে র লায়েক আহ ক সরে
নতে পাই হাদিস কিতাবে
আমি এ মত কথা হিসাবে
বেহে র ে রব কিসে জানতে পাই ॥

behester lāyek āhammak sare
śunte pāi hādis kitābe
āmi e mata kathā hisābe
behester gaurab kise jānte pāi ॥

ঠকলে বলে আহ ক ে কা
সেই আহ ক চায় বেহে র জায়গা
এ ে বড় পূ ধোঁকা
কে ে চাবে ে থায় যাই ॥

ṭhakle bale āhammak bokā
sei āhammak cāy behester jāygā
e to baṛa pūrṇa dhōkā
ke ghocābe kothāy ẏāi ॥

ে জা নামাজ বেহে র ভজন
তায় করে আহ ক সে জন
বিনয় করে বলছে লালন
থাকতে পারে ভেদ মু দের ঠঁই ॥

rojā nāmāj behester bhajan
tāy kare āhammak se jan
binay kare balche lālan
thākte pāre bhed murśider ṭhāi ॥

The Prophet's law
is impossible to comprehend.
So each man tells it
as he understands it.

I've heard
the ḥādith says[1]
fools are worthy of heaven.[2]
When I think over words like these,[3]
I don't know why
heaven has such prestige.[4]

When a man is duped,
he's called "fool" or "simpleton."
Does that fool get a place in heaven?
I'm in total confusion.[5]
Who will set me straight?
Where can I go?

Fasting and prayer[6]
are rituals that get you to heaven.[7]
Does it make you a fool
if you do them?[8]
Lālan says with all due respect,
A murshid might know the secret.[9]

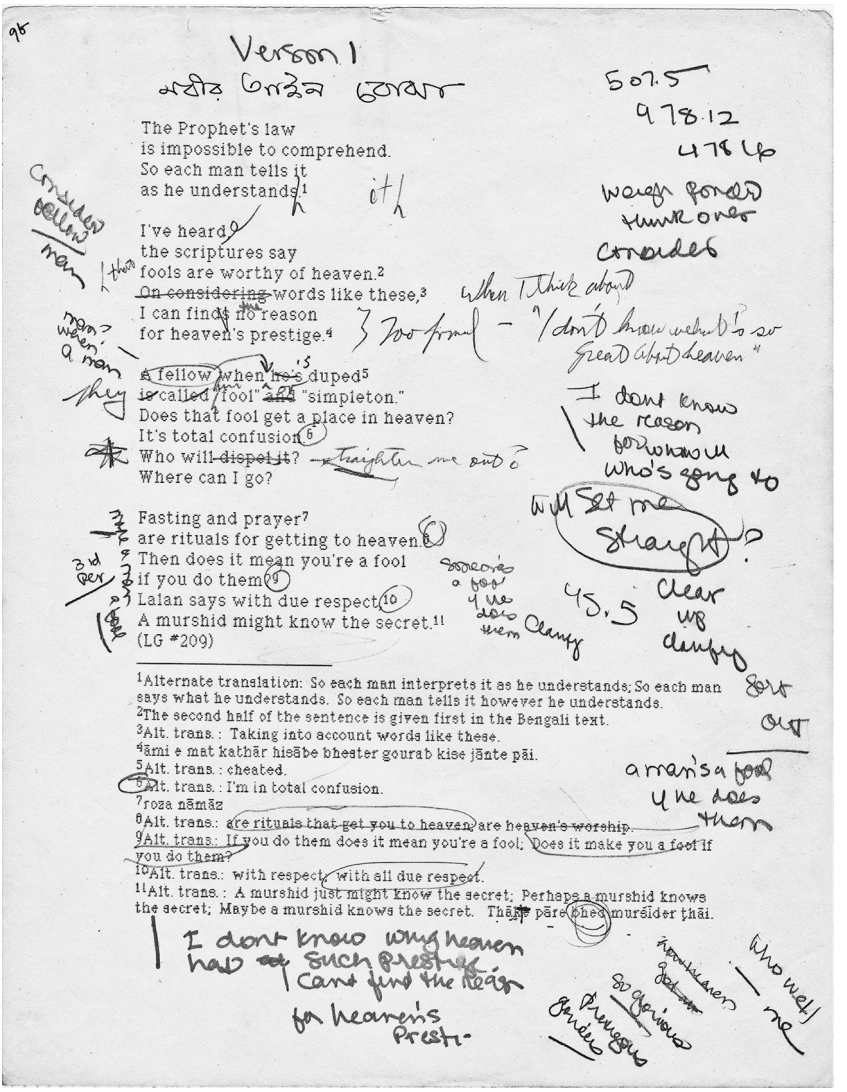
1. Traditional sayings of Muhammad. Alt. trans.: "The scriptures say."
2. The second half of the sentence is given first in the Bengali text.
3. *āmi e mata kathā(r) hisābe.*
4. *behester gaurab kise jānte pāi.*
5. *e to baṛa pūrṇa dhōkā.*
6. *rojā nāmāj.*
7. Alt. trans.: "are rituals for getting to heaven."
8. Alt. trans. (more literal): "Does it make a man a fool if he does them?"
9. *thākte pāre bhed murśider ṭhāi.*

Nabir āin kāro bojhā sādhya nāi

Lālan pokes fun at sophistry, external rituals, and the notion of heaven. The gist of his argument is as follows: According to the scriptures, even fools can go to heaven. So if all you need to be is a fool to get to heaven, then what's its attraction? If a man is a fool, does he automatically go to heaven? And if a man worships with the purpose of getting to heaven, does that make him a fool, since it's been established that fools go to heaven?

It is unusual for Lālan to express doubt in the murshid as he does in the last line of this song. More commonly, his attitude is one of veneration. In many songs he identifies the murshid with the Prophet and Khodā (e.g., LG no. 256 ["Murśider mahaṯ guṇ ne nā bujhe"] and LG no. 213 ["Ẏadi śarāy kārẏasiddhi hay"]). According to Khodā Bakṣ, Lālan here recognizes the reality of the situation—that there are many kinds of murshids. Not every murshid is equally qualified to instruct the adept in *sādhanā*. (On the Bāul attitude to the guru or murshid, see Capwell 1986, 80–81.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KSh; LG no. 209; LS no. 319.]



Salomon's MS for "Nabir āin kāro bojhā sādhya nāi."

79

না জানি কেমন প সে

Nā jāni kæman rūp se

না জানি কেমন প সে
নামের ে রভে যার ভুবন
ে হিত করেছে ॥

দেখতে মন হয় বাসনা
পায় নে তার উপাসনা
ে থায় বাড়ি ে থায় ঠিকানা
খুজিয়ে পা ে ন দেশে ॥

আকার কি সাকার ভাবিব
নিরাকার কি জে তি প
এ কথা কারে ধাব
সৃ করলেন ে থায় বসে ॥

উপদেশে ে ল যদি রয়
কি ভাবিয়ে কি করা যায়
ে লে হরি বললে কি হয়
লালন ভেবে পায় না দিশে ॥

nā jāni kæman rūp se
nāmer saurabhe ẏār tribhuban
mohita kareche ॥

dekhte man hay bāsanā
pāy ne tār upāsanā
kothāy bāṛi kothāy ṭhikānā
khūjiye pābo kon deśe ॥

ākār ki sākār bhābibo
nirākār ki jyotirūpa
e kathā kāre śudhābo
sr̥ṣṭi karlen kothāy base ॥

upadeśe gol ẏadi ray
ki bhābiye ki karā ẏāy
gole hari balle ki hay
lālan bhebe pāy nā diśe ॥

I don't know how he looks—
the one who captivates the three worlds
with the beauty of his name.

I want to see him,
but didn't learn
how to worship him.
Where's his house?
What's his address?
What country should I search?

Should I imagine him
with a gross or subtle form?
Is he formless or is his form light?
And who can I ask this question:
When he created the world
where did he sit?

If the teaching you get
leaves you confused,
what to think?[1]
What to do?
If you follow the crowd[2]
and shout "Hari,"
what will you gain?
Lālan hasn't a clue
though he racks his brain.[3]

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1; M^1; J^1 LPhKK, 171; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 2; BhS, 20; LG no. 135; LS no. 182.]

1. Alt. trans.: "What are you to think? What are you to do?"

2. Alt. trans.: "jump on the bandwagon."

3. [Emendations:] There is only one minor variant among the three manuscripts: In verse 3, T^1 and M^1 have *kare*, whereas J1 has *karā*, which makes better sense. LG has the same readings as T^1 and M^1. The LSOLG version is corrupt. In the refrain LSOLG has *rūper* for *nāmer*. In verse 1, it has *rūp* for *mane, kise hay* for *pāi ne* [or *pāy ne*], and *āmi khūje pāi ne kon(o) deśe* for *khūjiye pābo kon deśe*. In verse 2 the edition has an additional word, *duniyā*, preceding *sṛṣṭi*. In verse 3 instead of *upadeśe* it gives *rūper deśe*, and instead of *ki bhābiye ki karā ẏāy, ki balite ki balā ẏāy; pāy nā* occurs as *nā pāy*.

৪০

না জেনে করণ কারণ কথায় কি হবে

Nā jene karaṇ kāraṇ kathāy ki habe

না জেনে করণ কারণ কথায় কি হবে ।
কথায় যদি ফলে কৃষি তবে
বীজ কেনে ে পে ॥

ড় বললে কি মুখ মিঠা হয়
দীপ না জ্বাললে আঁধার কি যায়
তেমনি জেনে হরি বলায়
হরি কি পাবে ॥

রাজার ে ষ করে
জমির কর বঁ চে না রে
সঁ ই কি ে র একরারি কাজ রে
ে ষে ছাড়বে ॥

ধর ে দকে চে
সঁ ইর আইন আমলে আে
লালন বলে তবে মন
সঁ ই ে রে নিবে ॥

nā jene karaṇ kāraṇ kathāy ki habe ।
kathāy ẏadi phale kṛṣi tabe
bīj kene rope ॥

guṛ balle ki mukh miṭhā hay
dīp nā jvālle ãdhār ki ẏāy
tæmani jene hari balāy
hari ki pābe ॥

rājār pauruṣ kare
jamir karo bãce nā re
sãi ki tor ekarāri kāj re
pauruṣe chāṛbe ॥

guru dharo khodke ceno
sãir āin āmle āno
lālan bale tabe man
sãi tore nibe ॥

What good is talk
when you don't know what to do?
If words could make crops grow,
why plant seeds?

Does saying "sugar"[1]
make your mouth taste sweet?
Does darkness fade
if no lamp is lit?
Do you think shouting "Hari"
makes him appear?

You can sing the king's praises,
but it won't exempt you
from paying taxes.
Just because you glorify the Lord,
will he excuse you from doing
what you promised?

Follow a guru.
Know yourself.
Put the laws of the Lord into practice.
Lālan says, Only then, my mind,
will he take you in.[2]

1. [Lit. *guṛ* "jaggery" or "cane sugar".]

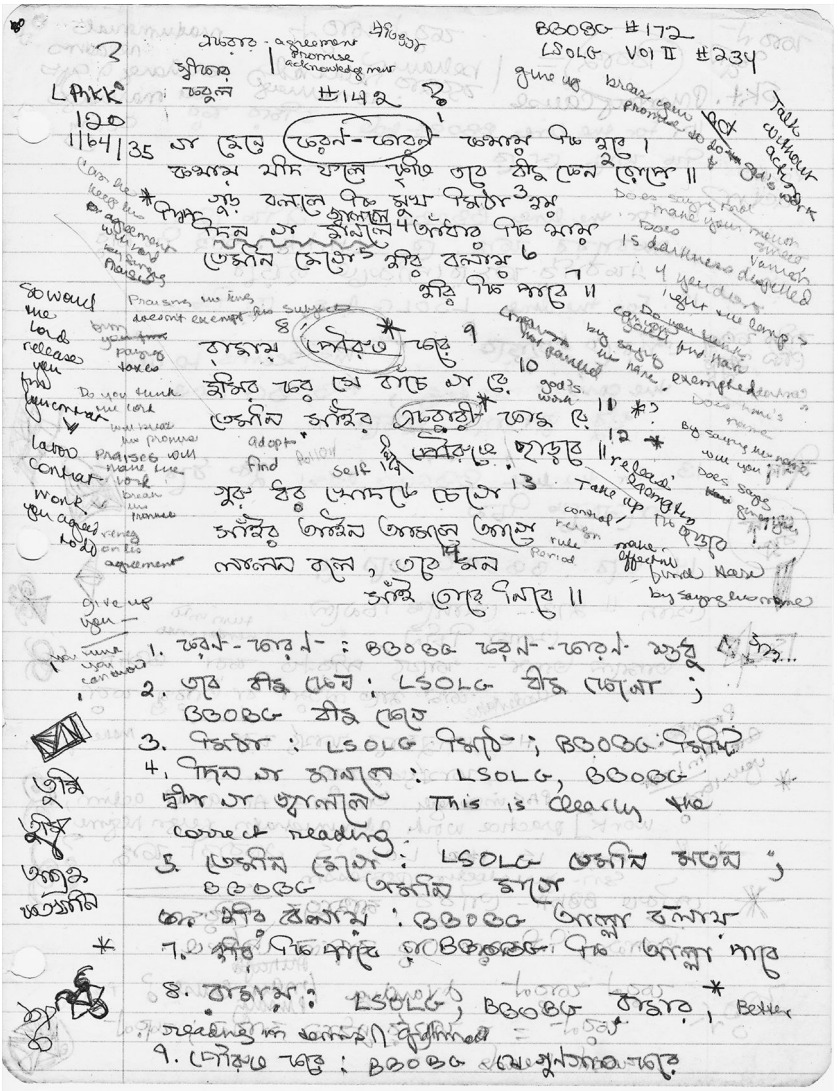
2. [Emendations:] In verse 2 Mitra misreads *ẏe re* for *se re* [or *nā re*]. LG: In verse 1 read *dīp nā jālle* for *din nā jānle*. In verse 2 read *rājār* for *rājāy* and *sā̃i ki tor ekarāri kāj re* for *temni sā̃ir ekarāri kāj re*.

Nā jene karaṇ kāraṇ kathāy ki habe

This song bears a striking resemblance to a poem composed by Kabīr (see Śabda no. 40 [Hess and Singh 1983, 44]). It deals with a theme Lālan has often expressed—that liberation cannot be obtained by reciting prayers or by repeating the names of God. It is what one does rather than says that is efficacious;—actions speak louder than words. As Lālan, quoting a Bengali proverb, remarks elsewhere ("Guṇe paṛe sārli daphā" [**54**]): "Words can't wet rice flakes if you don't add water or milk." Of course, the essential act of Bāul worship and the one being hinted at is ritual sexual intercourse without the discharge of semen.

Lālan's song "Bākir kāgaj gelo hujure" [LG no. 397] provides a clue as to the "promise" that was made to the Lord. Lālan sings: "When you settled on the land, you made a deal to always remember his name. But now you've forgotten him." This "deal" or "contract" (*khoś kābalati*) probably refers to the primordial covenant between man and God mentioned in the Qur'an in Sūra 7:171. In this *sūra* God asks humankind, who has not yet been created, "Am I not your Lord?" (*alastu bi rabbikum*), to which they answer: "Yes, we witness it" (*balā shahidnā*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 35, no. 64; Mitra, 120; LG no. 142; BBOBG no. 172; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 234.]



Salomon's MS for "Nā jene karaṇ kāraṇ kathāy ki habe."

প

৪১

পাখি কখন জানি উড়ে যায়

Pākhi kakhan jāni uṛe ẏāy

পাখি কখন জানি উড়ে যায়
বদ হাওয়া লেগে খঁ চায় ॥

খঁ চার আড়া পে ধসে
পাখি আর দাঁড়াবে কিসে
ঐ ভাবনা ভাবছি বসে
চমক রা বইছে গায় ॥

ভেবে অ নাহি দেখি
কারবা খঁ চা কেবা পাখি
আমার এই আ নায় থাকি
আমারে মজাতে চায় ॥

আগে যদি যে জানা
জ লা কভু ে ষ মানে না
তবে উহার ম করতাম না
লালন ফকির কে কয় ॥

pākhi kakhan jāni uṛe ẏāy
bad hāoyā lege khm̃cāy ॥

khm̃cār āṛā palo dhase
pākhi ār dm̃ṛābe kise
ai bhābnā bhābchi base
camak jvarā baiche gāy ॥

bhebe anta nāhi dekhi
kārbā khm̃cā kebā pākhi
āmār ei āṅgināy thāki
āmāre majāte cāy ॥

āge ẏadi ẏeto jānā
jaṅgalā kabhu poṣ māne nā
tabe uhār prem kartām nā
lālan phakir kende kay ॥

Any day now,
my bird's going to fly away.
An evil wind has struck its cage
and broke its perch.[1]

Now how will my bird use it?
I sit here and worry, a fever of fear
coursing through my body.

I can't fathom who the bird is,
or whom the cage belongs to.
While it lives in my own courtyard,
this bird wants to destroy me.

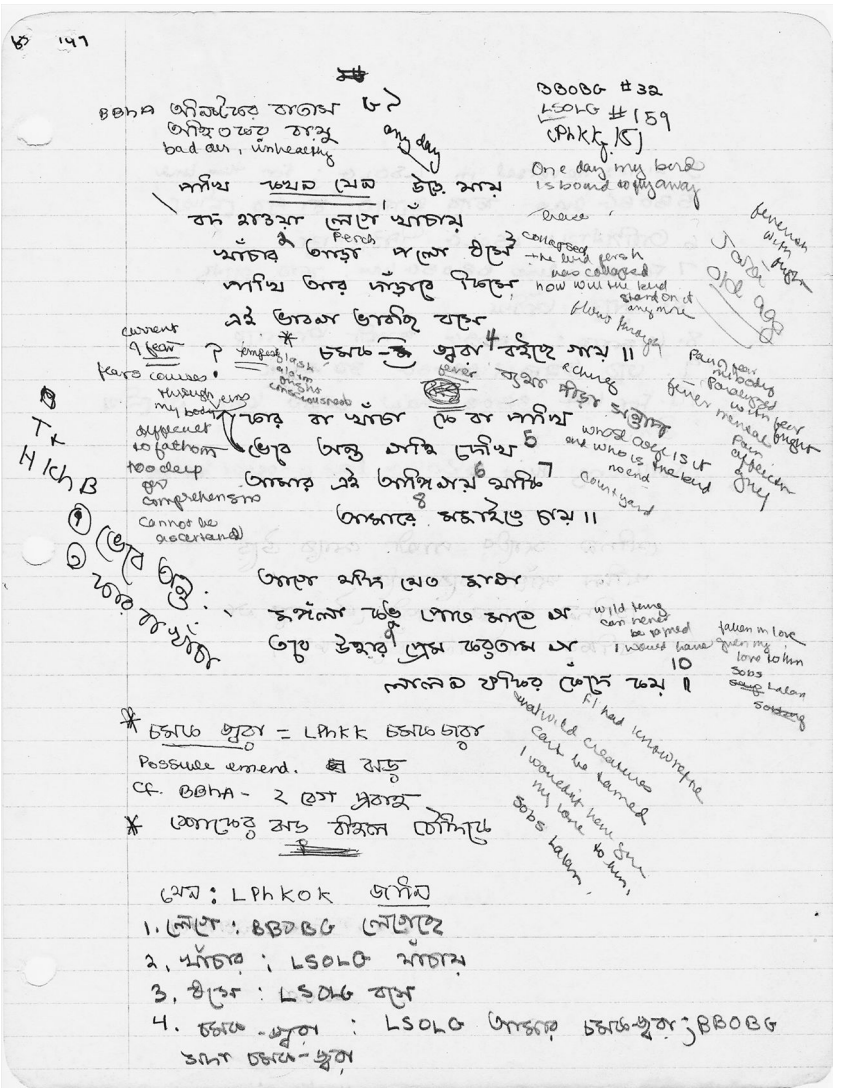
If I had known
that wild things
can never be tamed,
I wouldn't have given him my love,
sobs Lālan.

1. Lit. "The cage's perch collapsed." In the original, this sentence opens the first verse and is not part of the refrain.

Pākhi kakhan jāni uṛe ẏāy

This is one of a series of songs Lālan composed on the theme of the soul-bird who lives in the cage of the human body and who defies all efforts to tame him. (See also "Rāt poyāle pākhiṭe bale de re khāi," LG no. 56 [**124**]; "Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi," LG no. 67 [**137**]; "Ki ek acin pākhi puṣlām khā̃cāy," LG no. 78; "Khāke gaṭhlo piñjire," LG no. 224; and "Khā̃cār bhitar acin pākhi," LG no. 299.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 23, no. 41; LPhKK, 151; LG no. 89; LS no. 426.]



Salomon's MS for "Pākhi kakhan jāni uṛe ẏāy."

82

পাগল দেওয়ানের মন কি ধন দিয়ে পাই

Pāgal deoyāner man ki dhan diye pāi

পাগল দেওয়ানের মন কি ধন দিয়ে পাই
বলি আমার আমার
আছে কি ধন আমার
সদায় মনে মনে ভাবি তাই ॥

pāgal deoyāner man ki dhan diye pāi
bali āmār āmār
āche ki dhan āmār
sadāy mane mane bhābi tāi ॥

দেহ মন ধন দিতে হয়
সেও ধন তারি আমার ে নয়
আমি মুটে ে ট চালাই
আবার ভেবে দেখি
আমি বা কি
ও ে তাও ে আমার হিসাব নাই ॥

deha man dhan dite hay
seo dhan tāri āmār to nay
āmi muṭe moṭ cālāy
ābār bhebe dekhi
āmi bā ki
o go tāo to āmār hisāb nāi ॥

ও সে পাগলা বেটার পাগলা খিজি
নয় সামা ধনে রাজি
ে ন ভাবে ে ন ভাব মিশাই
পাগলার ভাব না জেনে
যদি (কেউ) যায় শ্মশানে
পাগল হয় কি অঙ্গে মাখলে ছাই ॥

o se pāgalā beṭār pāgalā khiji
nay sāmānya dhane rāji
kon bhābe kon bhāb miśāi
pāgalār bhāb nā jene
ẏadi (keu) ẏāy śmaśāne
pāgal hay ki aṅge mākhle chāi ॥

ও সে পাগল ভেবে পাগল হলাম
সেই পাগলে কই রণ হইলাম
আপন পর ে ভুলি নাই
অধীন লালন বলে আপনার আপনি ভুলে
ঘটে ম পাগলের এমনি বাই ॥

o se pāgal bhebe pāgal halām
sei pāgale koi smaraṇ hailām
āpan par to bhuli nāi
adhīn lālan bale āpanār āpani bhule
ghaṭe prem pāgaler æmani bāi ॥

With what treasure
can I win the crazy madman's heart?
I say, "Mine! Mine!"
But what treasure is truly mine?
I can't help wondering.

I must give the treasure
of body and mind.
But even that treasure
belongs to him/her.
not me.[1]
I'm just the coolie
who carries his bags.
Then I think, "What am I?"
Even that I can't figure out.

Oh, that mad fellow
has a mad demand.[2]
He isn't satisfied with ordinary treasures.
How do I join my heart to his?[3]
If you go to the burning ground
without knowing the madman's heart,
do you become mad too,
just by smearing your body with ashes?

Oh, I went mad,
thinking about the madman.
Yet I wasn't in his thoughts.
I didn't forget the difference
between myself and others.
Poor Lālan says, Love comes
when you forget yourself.
Such is the madman's obsession.[4]

1. Alt. trans.: "But even that treasure's his, not mine.

2. *khiji* (Ar. *khajāla*): a Kushtia dialectal word meaning "an impossible demand."

3. "Heart" translates *bhāb*, which literally means "feelings," "emotion," "love."

4. [Emendations:] T and M have identical readings with the exception of the omission of *r* from *āmār* in T, verse 1. LPhKK contains several errors in transcription: In verse 1 *tāiri*

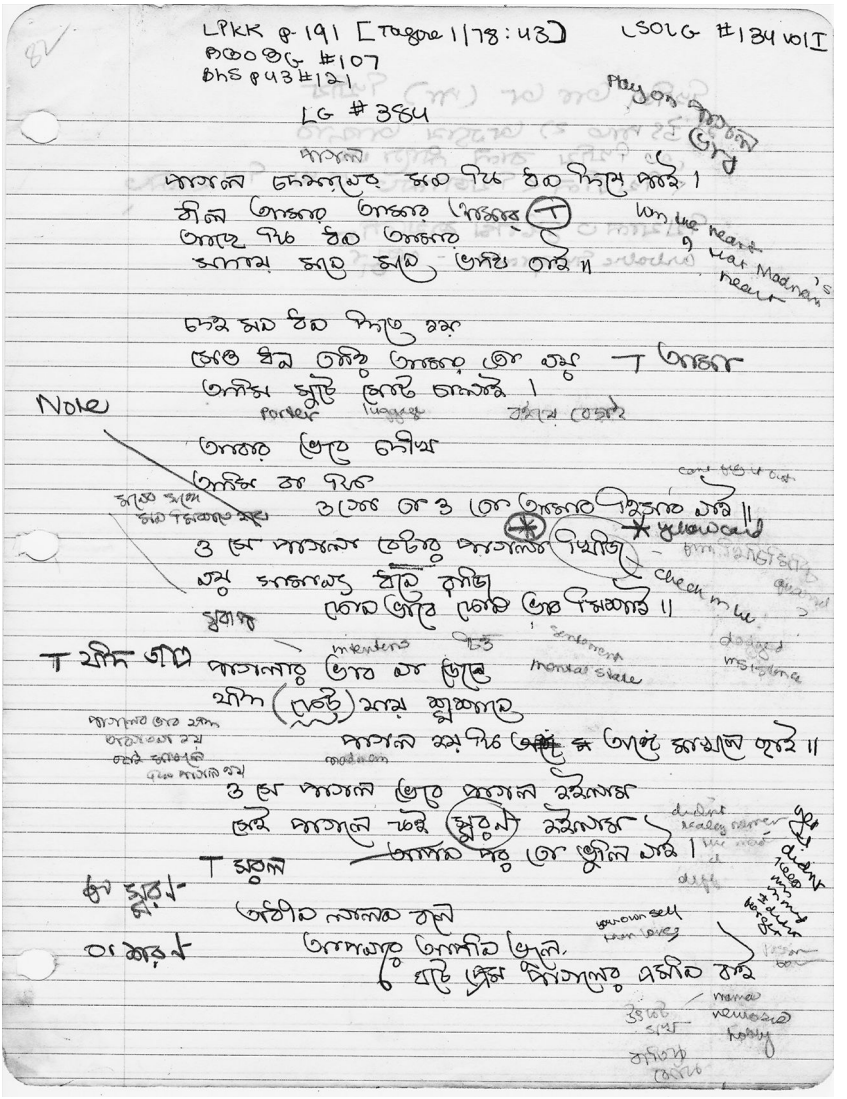
Pāgal deoyāner man ki dhan diye pāi

In order to "win the madman's heart," that is, to attain God or the divine principle, the adept must get rid of his desire for wealth and sensual pleasure, symbolized by the "bags" he carries around. This goal can be reached not by such external acts such as "smearing the body with ashes" to look like a holy man, but by the performance of Bāul *sādhanā* (leading to the extinction of the self or *fanā'* in God). As Lālan says elsewhere ("Ẏadi phānār phikir jānā ẏāy"), punning on the similarity between the words *khod*, "self," and *khodā*, "God": "If you know the rite of extinction, then by extinguishing the self, the self (*khod*) becomes Khodā."[5]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 43, no. 78; M: 26; LG no. 384; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 134; BBOBG no. 107; LS no. 620.]

[or *tāri*] is mis-segmented as *tāi ri*, and *maṭe* is given for *muṭe*. In verse 2 *bhābnā* is given for *bhāb nā*. In verse 3 *saran* is given where the manuscript clearly reads *saral*. Published editions: In verse 2 BBOBG gives *pāglāṭār* for *pāglābeṭār* and *pāglābhāb* for *pāglār bhāb*. LSOLG has *bhābnā* for *bhāb nā*. Both BBOBG and LSOLG add *keu* after *ẏadi*. In verse 3 BBOBG omits the entire second line. LG reads *smaraṇ* and LSOLG *saral*, as do the manuscripts. Since *saral* does not make sense in the context, I have tentatively accepted LG's reading.

5. [A handwritten note on Salomon's annotations suggests she may have intended to revise this commentary to include more recent scholarship in Bāul studies: "Openshaw (2002, 161–162), *advaita*—not saying anything is mine, no *āpan/par* distinction."]



Salomon's MS for "Pāgal deoyāner man ki dhan diye pāi."

83

পাপ-ধ যদি পূ লেখা যায়

Pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy

পাপ-ধ যদি পূ লেখা যায়
করমের লিখিত কাজ করিলে
ে ষ ণ তার কি হয় ॥

নতে পাই সাধু সং র
পূ থাকলে পরে হয় তার
পূ নাই হে না এবার
আর কি তার আশায় ॥

বাদশার আ য় দিলে ফঁ সি
ফঁ সিদার ে হয় না ে ষী
জীবেরে পাপ করিয়ে কি
সঁ ই তার নরক দেয় ॥

ক র ে ষ কি কাজকে ে ষাই
ে ন কথাতে গিরে দিই ভাই
লালন বলে আমার ে ধ নাই
নলে কিবা হয় ॥

pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy
karamer likhita kāj karile
doṣa-guṇ tār ki hay ॥

śunte pāi sādhu saṃskār
pūrbe thākle pare hay tār
pūrbe nāi halo nā ebār
ār ki tār āśāy ॥

bādaśār ājñāy dile phãsi
phãsidār to hay nā doṣī
jībere pāp kariye ki
sãi tār narak dey ॥

karmer doṣ ki kājke doṣāi
kon kathāte gire dii bhāi
lālan bale āmār bodh nāi
śunle kibā hay ॥

If a life of sin
is foreordained,[1]
and you do the things
written in your karma,
do you get praised or blamed?

I've heard that sadhus presume:[2]
What's foreordained
is sure to come true,
and what's not in your fate
can't happen to you.[3]
But then what is left to hope for?

The executioner is not to blame
if he hangs someone
by the order of the king.
Does the Lord make a man sin
and then condemn him to hell?

Do I blame karma
or blame the deed?
Brother, which of these notions
should I believe?[4]
Lālan says, I'm just a fool.
What's the use of listening?[5]

1. *pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāẏ*: lit. "If a life of sin (*pāp-dharma*) is written beforehand." This is a reference to the belief that a person's fate is written on his forehead soon after he is born.

2. Lālan puns on several meanings of *saṃskār* (tatsama): "impression," "belief," "false belief," "superstition," and impression on the mind left from a former birth.

3. "What's foreordained . . . won't happen to you" is a free rendering of *pūrbe thākle pare haẏ tār, pūrbe nāi halo nā ebār*, lit. "If it existed before, it happens later. If it didn't happen before, it doesn't happen this time." *Pūrbe thākle* seems to refer to actions in a previous birth, and *pare haẏ tār* to their effects in the subsequent birth. Cf. verse 2 in the song "Asār bhebe sār din gelo āmār" [LG no. 395]: "The great ones say: If you did good deeds before (i.e., in a previous birth), then as a matter of course you become devoted to the guru's feet. If I had gained that merit, would I have been such a sinner?"

4. *kon kathāte gire dii bhāi*: lit. "Which statement do I tie a knot around?" (See also "Ki sādhane pāi go tāre" [LG no. 126].) According to Khodā Bakṣ, this is a reference to the custom of tying a string around one's finger as a reminder.

5. Emendations to T: In verse 1 *someṣ kār*, dialectal pronunciation of *saṃskār*, should be written as one word. The readings of T and J differ considerably. Khodā Bakṣ's version of the

Pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy

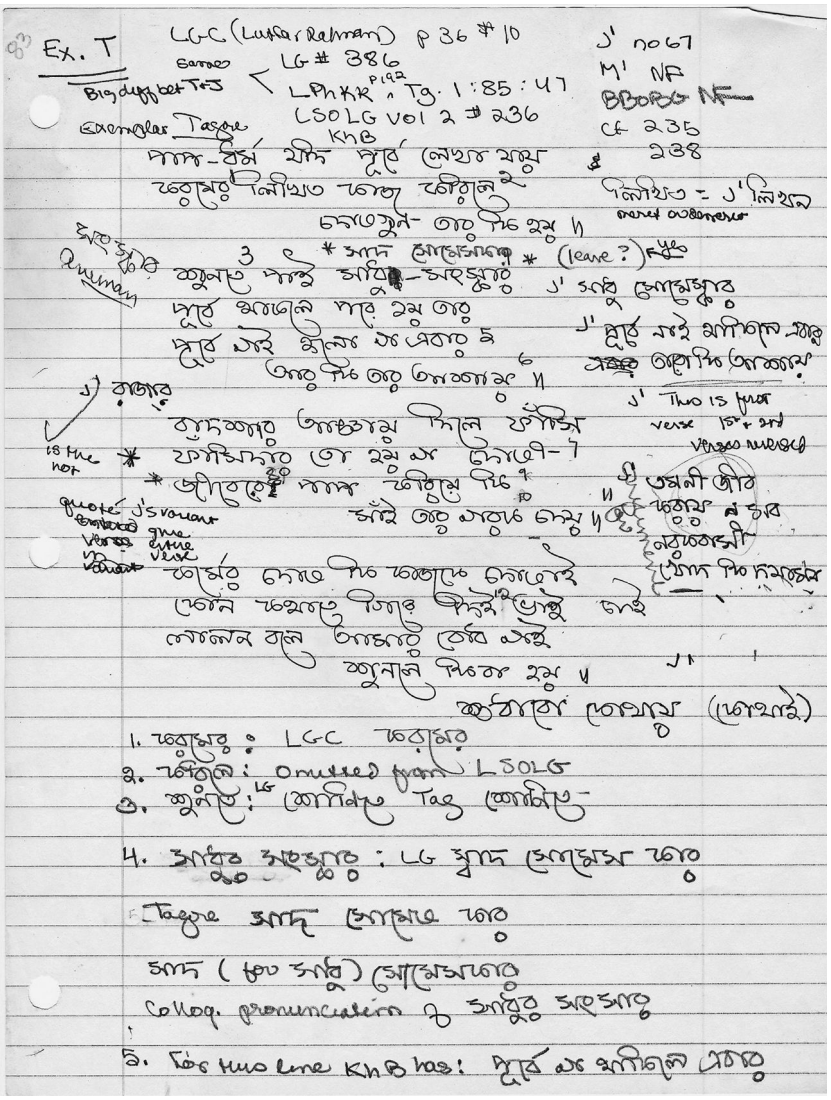
Lālan points out central paradoxes in the law of karma. (By karma Lālan means the effects of actions of a previous birth on one's subsequent birth, as well as the fate written on one's forehead after birth.) He asks how a person can be held responsible for his actions, since they are predetermined. After all, he reasons, an executioner who is following the orders of the king doesn't get blamed for murder. Moreover, if someone is fated to have a bad life because he failed to earn merit in his previous birth, where is there room for hope? But Lālan does not attempt to resolve these paradoxes. For him karma is an irrational system from which man must escape. (And for him the means to escape is to reverse the biological process by performing the sex act without seminal emission.)[6] For other songs on karma see "Kāre āj śudhāi se kathā" [LG no. 238; **40**] and "Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī" [LG no. 11; **119**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 47, no. 85; LPhKK, 192; J[1] no. 67; LG no. 386 (based on T), LSOLG vol. 2, no. 236.]

song for the most part agrees with J. The significant variants are as follows: Verses 1 and 2 are interchanged. (Variants are cited according to the verse order of T.) Verse 1: For the second half of the verse T has *pūrbe nāi halo nā ebār, ār ki tār āśāy,* whereas J has *pūrbe nāī thākile ebār, tāro ki āśāy*. Verse 2: T has *phā̃sidār to hay nā dośī,* "the executioner is not to blame," whereas J has *phā̃sidār ki hay nā dośī,* "isn't the executioner to blame?" In this case the two variants have opposite meanings. For this line Khodā Bakṣ gives: *phā̃sidār ki hay se doṣī*, "is the executioner to blame." For the second half of the verse T has *jībere pāp karie* [or *kariye*] *ki, sā̃i ki tār narak dey,* whereas J has *tamnī jīb karāy sab narakbāsī, khod ki dayāmay.* J's reading is hypermetric and doesn't make good sense. Verse 3: For the last line T has *śunle kibā hay* and J has *śudhābo kothāi*.

The published editions cited all give T's version with only minor variants. In verse 1 the LG version, which is based on T, hypercorrects *sād* (dialectal variant of *sādhu*) to *svād*, "taste." LSOLG omits *karile* from the refrain and in verse 2 has *phāṭak* for *narak*.

6. [See, however, Salomon's annotations to Song no. **103** for her analysis of sexual rituals that do appear to include seminal emission.]



Salomon's MS for "Pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy."

84

পারে কে যাবি নবির ে কাতে আয়

Pāre ke ẏābi nabir naukāte āy

পারে কে যাবি নবির ে কাতে আয়
পকা র ে কাখানি
সে ে কা নাই ে বার ভয় ॥

বেশরা নায়ক যারা
তুফানে যাবে মরা
একই ধা য়
কি করবে তার বদর গাজী
থাকবে ে থায় ॥

নবি না চেনে যারা
মহাহেদ কাফের তারা
এই দুনিয়ায়
ভজনে তার নাই মজুরি
সাফ লেখা যায় ॥

যে মু দ সেই ে রসুল
তাহাতে নাই ে ন ভুল
ে দাও সে হয়
লালন কয় না এমন কথা
দলিলে কয় ॥

pāre ke ẏābi nabir naukāte āy
rūpa-kāṣṭer naukākhāni
se naukā nāi ḍobār bhay ॥

beśarā nāyak ẏārā
tuphāne ẏābe marā
ek-i dhākkāy
ki karbe tār badar gājī
thākbe kothāy ॥

nabi nā cene ẏārā
mahāhed kāpher tārā
ei duniyāy
bhajane tār nāi majuri
sāph lekhā ẏāy ॥

ẏe murśid sei to rasul
tāhāte nāi kon bhul
khodā-o se hay
lālan kay nā æman kathā
dalile kay ॥

Who wants to go to the other shore?
Come aboard the Prophet's boat.
The boat is made from human wood.
There's no chance of its sinking.

Sailors who don't follow Sharī'a
will die in a storm
when the first wave hits.
What can their Badar and Gazi do?[1]
Where will they be then?

Those who don't know the Prophet
are infidels in this world.[2]
Their worship is rejected.
It says so in black and white.[3]

The murshid himself is the Prophet.
There's no mistake about it.
He is Khodā too.
Lālan didn't make this up.[4]
It's stated in the Book.[5]

1. *ki karbe tār badar gājī*: Badar is the name of the patron saint of fishermen and sailors. *Gājī*, "warrior saint," can refer to warrior saints in general or to the popular saint known as Gazi-saheb or simply Gazi who had power over crocodiles and tigers. Note the solecism in the Bengali text: Sailors (*beśarā nāyak ẏārā*) is plural, but the pronoun that refers to them in the next line (*tār*) is singular.

2. *mahāhed kāphir* [or *kāpher*]. The meaning of *mahāhed* is obscure.

3. Lit. "Thus it is plainly written."

4. Lit. "Lālan doesn't say it."

5. *dalile kay*.

Pāre ke ẏābi nabir naukāte āy

At first glance this song seems to espouse Sharī'a. Lālan says that sailors who are *beśarā*, "without Islamic law," will perish in a storm and that "those who don't know the Prophet" are *kāfir*s, "infidels." On closer reading, however, it becomes clear that he reinterprets the term Sharī'a in accordance with his own beliefs and that the song is radically *anti*-Sharī'a. In another song (LG no. 212 ["Āge śarīyat jāno buddhi śānta kare"]) Lālan explicitly states that ritual practices like saying the "profession of faith" (*kalimā*) and doing *namāz* and *rozā* are not what is meant by Sharī'a. A true understanding of Sharī'a can be gained only through love:

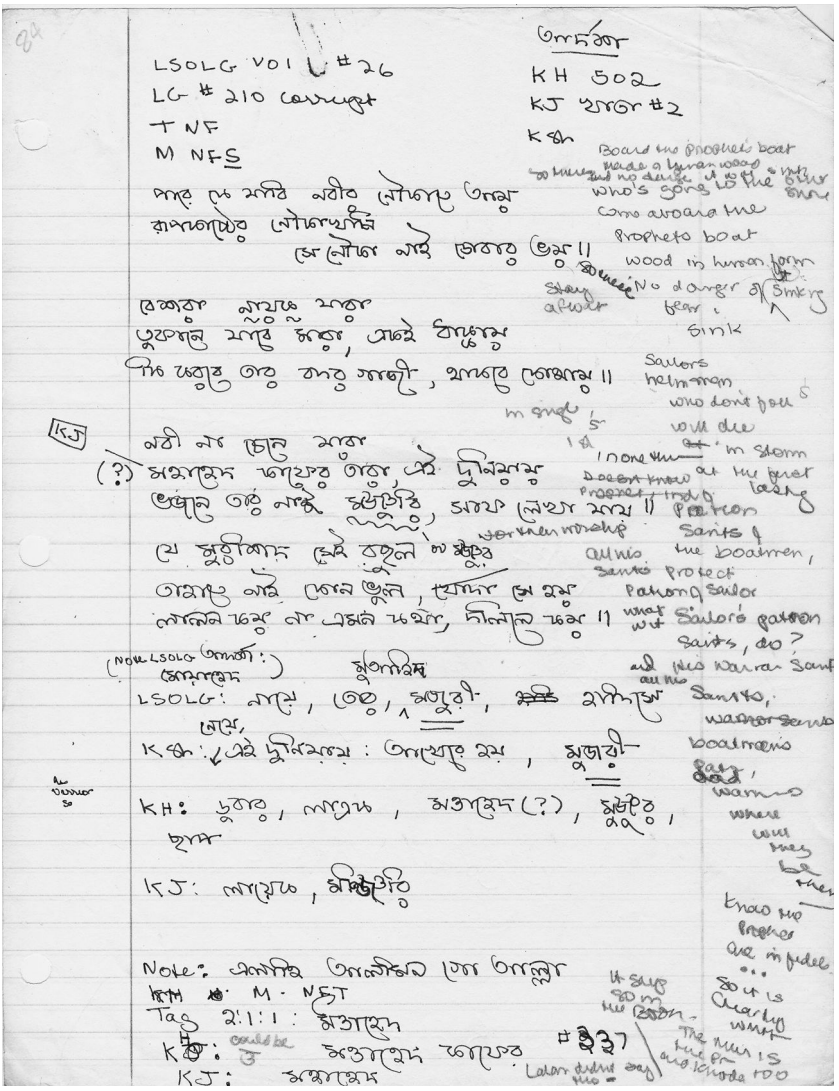
First learn Sharī'a
and satisfy your mind.
Rozā and nāmāz are Sharī'a practices.
But what are you calling the true Sharī'a?
. . .
You can find out through love
that the kalimā is not Sharī'a.
There may be a far greater truth
to Sharī'a than that.

In fact, I have often heard fakirs explain the meaning of *śarā* "Islamic law" by a folk etymology, saying that the term is derived from *surāhā*, "the good path," meaning the way of the Bāuls.

Except for the few terms mentioned above that outwardly appear to indicate support for Sharī'a, the images in the song are all familiar Bāul metaphors referring to their sexual *sādhanā*. Thus the "Prophet's boat" is the human body, the "storm" is a woman's menstrual period, and "dying in the storm" refers to the ejaculation of semen. The identity of God, the Prophet, and man is also antithetical to orthodox Islam.

Dalil, "document," translated as the "Book" refers to the Qur'an interpreted according to Bāul belief.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 26; LG no. 210 (corrupt); KH no. 502; KJ notebook, no. 2; KSh.]



Salomon's MS for "Pāre ke ẏābi nabir naukāte āy."

85

ম কি সামা তে রাখা যায়

Prem ki sāmānyete rākhā ẏāy

ম কি সামা তে রাখা যায়।
প্রেমে মজলে ধ ধ ছাড়তে হয় ॥

দেখ রে সেই মের লেগে
হরি দিল দাসখত লিখে
ষড়ৈ তে করে
কা ল হয়ে ফেরে নদীয়ায় ॥

জে ছিল জলদ কা
ম সেধে ে রা হ
সে ম কি সামা ব
যে মে রসিক দয়াময় ॥

ম পিরিতের এমনি ধারা
এক মরণে দুইজন মরা
ধ ধ চায় না তারা
লালন বলে মের রীতি তাই ॥

prem ki sāmānyete rākhā ẏāy।
preme majle dharmādharma chāṛte hay॥

dekh re sei premer lege
hari dilo dās-khat likhe
ṣaṛaiśvarẏa tejya kare
kāṅgāl haye phere nadīyāy ॥

braje chilo jalad kālo
prem sedhe gaurāṅga halo
se prem ki sāmānya balo
ẏe premero rasik dayāmay ॥

prem piriter æmani dhārā
ek maraṇe duijan marā
dharmādharma cāy nā tārā
lālan bale premer rīti tāi ॥

Is it easy
to hold on to[1] *love?*
When you fall madly in love[2]
you have to throw out[3] *piety and sin.*

Look,
for that love
Hari signed away his freedom.[4]
He renounced the six divine powers
to wander Nadīyā as a beggar.

In Braj
he was black as a raincloud.
He attained that love
and turned into fair Gaur.
Now tell me,
is it just ordinary love
that the Merciful One adores?[5]

True love is such
that two die one death.
They don't care about[6] *piety and sin.*
Lālan says, This is the nature of love.

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 170; LS no. 785.]

1. Alt. trans.: "keep."

2. *preme majle.*

3. Alt. trans.: "dispense with."

4. *hari dilo dās-khat likhe.* Alt. trans.: "Hari agreed in writing to be a slave." *Dās-khat* literally means a letter of indenture.

5. *ẏe premero rasik dayāmay.*

6. Alt. trans.: "bother about."

ফ

86

ফের পল ে র ফকিরিতে

Phero palo tor phakirite

ফের পল ে র ফকিরিতে
যে ঘাট মারা ফিকির ফাকার
ডুবে মলি সেই ঘাটেতে ॥

ফকিরি যে জন এক নাচাড়ি
অধর ধরে দিলো পাড়ি
প নি ে লা ে য়ারি
তাই দেখে রেখেছি পেতে ॥

না জেনে ফকিরি আঁটা
শিরেতে পাড়ালাম জটা
সার হলো ভা -ধুতরা ঘোঁটা
ভজন সাধন সব চুলাতে ॥

ফিকিরি ফকিরি করা
হতে হবে মরা
লালন ফকির লে এড়া
আঁট বসে না ে ন মতে ॥

phero palo tor phakirite
ẏe ghāṭ mārā phikir phākār
ḍube mali sei ghāṭete ॥

phakiri ẏe jan ek nācāṛi
adhar dhare dilo pāṛi
pastāni kholā doyāri
tāi dekhe rekhechi pete ॥

nā jene phakiri ãṭā
śirete pāṛālām jaṭā
sār halo bhāṃ-dhutarā ghōṭā
bhajan sādhan sab culāte ॥

phikiri phakiri karā
hate habe jyānte marā
lālan phakir leṃṭī eṛā
ãṭ base nā kon mate ॥

Mind,[1] *something got in the way*
of your fakir worship—
you drowned at the same quay
where you displayed your clever tricks.[2]

Once there was a fakir, a true showman.[3]
Had I caught that uncatchable fellow
I would have made it across.
But I'm sorry to say[4] *the trap was open,*
and I set it that way on purpose.[5]

Not knowing
what it takes to be a fakir,[6]
I grew a head of matted hair.
Crushing bhang and jimson weed
became the focus of my life.
My prayer and worship went up in smoke.[7]

To turn clever tricks into fakir worship,[8]
you have to be dead while alive.
Lālan Fakir's lost his loincloth.
No way will the knot stay tied.

1. "Mind" does not occur in the original Bengali text, but has been added to the English translation in order to bridge the sudden transition from second to first person. That Lālan is addressing his mind here is clear from the pattern he follows in many of his songs (see, for example, LG no. 199 ["Man tore āj dharte pārtām hāte," **97**]).

2. *ẏe ghāṭ mārā phikir phākār.* On the meaning of *phikir* here, see glossary of obscure terms. [This glossary has not been found among Salomon's manuscripts.] The meaning of *phākār* is unclear. It may just be an echo word of the type commonly used in Bengali to express "and the like."

3. *nācāṛi*: An obscure term that occurs only twice in Lālan's songs (also LG no. 423 ["Kon sukhe sā̃i karen khelā ei bhabe," **51**]). See discussion in glossary of obscure terms. [See text note 2.]

4. "I'm sorry to say" is a free translation of *pastāni*, "regret." On this word too see glossary of obscure terms. [See text note 2.]

5. *tāi dekhe rekhechi pete:* lit. "and noticing that, I set it." Cf. *dekhe śune* "knowingly," "on purpose."

6. *nā jene phakir[i] ā̃ṭā.*

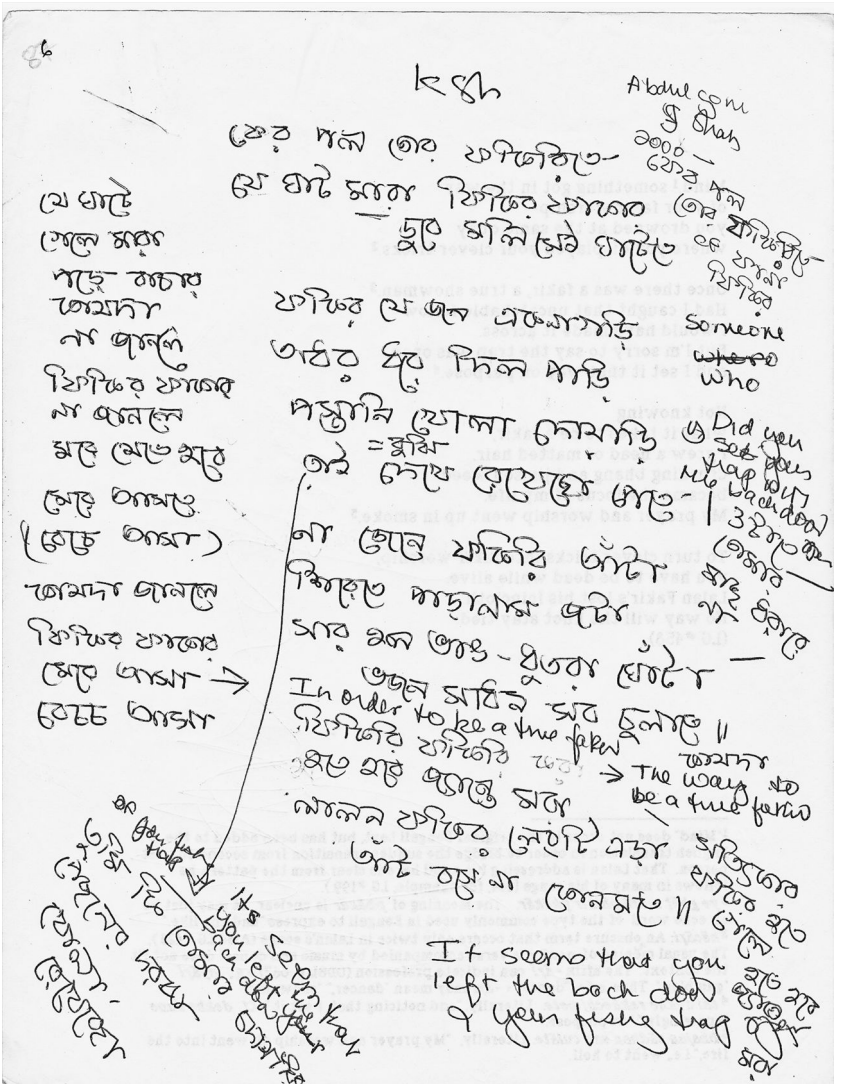
7. *bhajan sādhan sab culāte:* lit. "My prayer and worship all went into the fire," i.e., went to hell. Alt. trans.: "went to hell." (If bhang and jimson weed are not smoked, then there is no pun intended by the Bengali word *culā* and alt. trans. would probably be better.)

8. Translated according to suggested emendation: *phikiri phakiri karā.*

Phero palo tor phakirite

Another song that warns against engaging in Bāul sexual rituals without proper knowledge and caring only for the external trappings of a Bāul fakir (see also LG no. 444 ["Phereb cheṛe karo phakiri," 87]). Lālan says that a *sādhak* who engages in such behavior only ends up "drowning at the quay," "laying the trap" improperly, or "losing his loincloth," all metaphors for seminal emission. *Doẏāri* (or *polui*, as in Padmalocan's song "Man phakirār manero kathā," "The secret thoughts of the fakir of the mind," author's collection), a bamboo fish trap, is used as a phallic symbol in Bāul songs. Note too that the "uncatchable" lord takes the form of a fish, so that a *doẏāṛi* is an appropriate device for "catching" him. The expression "dead while alive" (*jẏānte marā*) refers to the state in which the *sādhak* or *sādhikā* is "dead" to phenomenal existence and no longer has feelings of lust.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KSh; LG no. 458.]



Salomon's MS for "Phero palo tor phakirite."

87

ফেরেব ছেড়ে কে ফকিরি

Phereb cheṛe karo phakiri

ফেরেব ছেড়ে কে ফকিরি
দিন ে র হেলায় হেলায়
হলো আখেরি ॥

ফেরেবি ফকিরি দাড়া
দরগা নিশান ঝা গাড়া
গলে বেধে হড়ামড়া
সি খাওয়ার ফিকিরি ॥

আসল ফকিরি মতে
বা আলাপ নাই ে তাতে
চলে সহজ পথে
অে ধ ে বধের চটক ভারী ॥

নাম ে য়ালা কাজি ভ ণ
ে মার দেখি তমনি ল ণ
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় অে ধ লালন
সাধুর কাছে জুয়াচুরি ॥

phereb cheṛe karo phakiri
din tor helāy helāy
halo ākheri ॥

pherebi phakiri dāṛā
daragā niśān jhāṇḍāgāṛā
gale bẽdhe haṛāmaṛā
sinni khāoyār phikiri ॥

āsal phakiri mate
bāhya ālāp nāi go tāte
cale śuddha sahaj pathe
arodh gobadher caṭak bhārī ॥

nām goyālā kāji bhakṣaṇ
tomār dekhi tamani lakṣaṇ
sirāj sāi kay abodh lālan
sādhur kāche juyācuri ॥

Stop faking
and follow the fakir way.
Through carelessness
you've reached the end
of your days.

These are the ways
of the fake fakir:
He plants his flag and staff
at the shrine of a pir
and ties prayer beads[1]
around his neck—
it's just a pretext to eat[2]
the offerings of sweets.

These are the ways
of the true fakir:
He won't talk of mundane affairs.[3]
He travels the pure natural path,
while fools with the brains of cows
put on fancy airs.[4]

He's a milkman in name only
who drinks rice water.[5]
I see the same traits in you.
Sirāj Sãi says, Foolish Lālan
even tries to swindle sadhus.

[There are no annotations to this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 444; LPhKK, 141 (T^2: 103, no. 54); LSOLG vol. 2, no. 35; BhS, 90, no. 250; KhB.]

1. *haṛāmuṛā* [or *haṛāmaṛā*]: the term is obscure. KhB explains it as a *pātharer mālā*, "necklace of stone beads."

2. *phikiri*: "ruse," "false pretense."

3. Alt. trans.: "He never has superficial conversations."

4. Alt. trans.: "are fond of ostentation."

5. *nām(e) goẏālā kāji bhakṣaṇ*: a proverb. The milkman has nothing better to drink than rice water, because he fails to do his job. Alt. trans.: "He who drinks rice water is a milkman in name only."

ব

88

বনে এসে হারালাম কানাই

Bane ese hārālām kānāi

বনে এসে হারালাম কানাই
যেয়ে কি বলবো মা যে দারে
ভেবে দিশে নাই ॥

bane ese hārālām kānāi
ẏeye ki balbo mā ẏaśodāre
bhebe diśe nāi ॥

খেললাম সবে লুকালুকি
আবার হলো দেখাদেখি
ে দের কানাই গেলো ে ন মু কি
খুজে নাহি পাই ॥

khellām sabe lukāluki
ābār halo dekhādekhi
moder kānāi gelo kon mulluki
khũje nāhi pāi ॥

ছিদাম বলে নিব খুজে
পালাবে ে থা বনমাঝে
দাদা বলাই বলে আর বুঝি
সে দেখা দেয় না ভাই ॥

chidām bale nibo khũje
pālābe kothā banamājhe
dādā balāi bale ār bujhi
se dekhā dey nā bhāi ॥

সুবল বলে পে মনে
বলেছিল একদিনে
কানাই যাবে বৃ বনে
গেলেন বুঝি তাই ॥

subal bale palo mane
balechilo ekadine
kānāi ẏābe gupta bṛndābane
gelen bujhi tāi ॥

We lost Kānāi in the forest.
What should I tell Mother Yaśodā?
I'm at my wits end.

We all played hide and seek
and found each other again.[1]
But where in the world[2]
did our Kānāi go?
I just can't find him.

Then Śrīdām said, "I'll track him down.
Where could he run off to in this forest?"
His older brother Balāi answered,
"I have a feeling[3] *he won't show up again, brother."*

Subal said, "I remember,
Kānāi told me one day he would go
to Hidden Bṛndāban.[4]
I have a hunch[5] *that's where he's gone."*

1. *ābār halo dekhādekhi*: lit. "We saw each other again."

2. *kon mulluke*: lit. "To what kingdom . . . ?"

3. *bujhi*.

4. Alt. trans.: "to a hidden Bṛndāban."

5. *bujhi*.

Bane ese hārālām kānāi

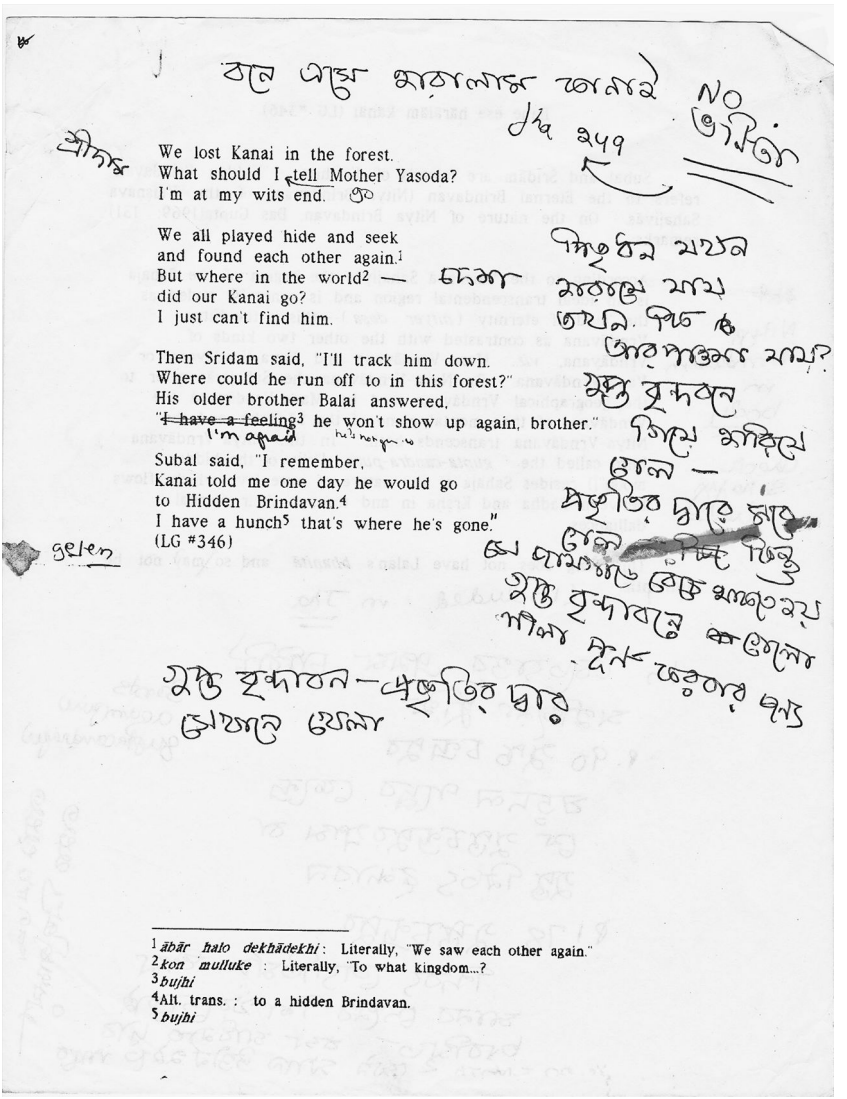
Subal and Śrīdām are friends of Kṛṣṇa. "Hidden Bṛndāban" refers to the Eternal Bṛndāban (Nitya Bṛndāban [< Skt. Vṛndāvana]) of the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās. On the nature of Nitya Bṛndāban, Das Gupta (1969, 131) remarks:

> According to the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās the region of the Sahaja is an ideal transcendental region and is generally styled as the "land of eternity" (*nityer deśa*)—this is the Nitya-Vṛndāvana as contrasted with the other two kinds of Vṛndāvana, *viz*., Mana-Vṛndāvana and Nava-Vṛndāvana or Vana-Vṛndāvana. By Nava-Vṛndāvana the Sahajiyās refer to the geographical Vṛndāvana, and by Mana-Vṛndāvana the Vṛndāvana of the mental plane of the Sādhaka, and the Nitya-Vṛndāvana transcends both. In this Nitya-Vṛndāvana (also called the *gupta-candra-pura*)[6] resides Sahaja of the nature of pure love which flows between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in and through their eternal dalliances.

This song does not have Lālan's *bhaṇitā* and so may not be authentic.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 346; Jhā no. 249.]

6. Lit. "city of the hidden moon."



We lost Kanai in the forest.
What should I tell Mother Yasoda?
I'm at my wits end.

We all played hide and seek
and found each other again.[1]
But where in the world[2] —
did our Kanai go?
I just can't find him.

Then Sridam said, "I'll track him down.
Where could he run off to in this forest?"
His older brother Balai answered,
"~~I have a feeling~~[3] I'm afraid he won't show up again, brother."

Subal said, "I remember,
Kanai told me one day he would go
to Hidden Brindavan.[4]
I have a hunch[5] that's where he's gone."
(LG #346)

[1] *ābār halo dekhādekhi* : Literally, "We saw each other again."
[2] *kon mulluke* : Literally, "To what kingdom...?
[3] *bujhi*
[4] Alt. trans. : to a hidden Brindavan.
[5] *bujhi*

Salomon's MS for "Bane ese hārālām kānāi."

89

বসত বাড়ির ঝগড়া কেজে মিটল না

Basat bāṛīr jhagaṛā keje miṭal nā

বসত বাড়ির ঝগড়া কেজে মিটল না
কার ে য়ালি কে দেয় ধূমা
সব দেখি তা না না ॥

ঘরের ে রে ঘর মারে যার
বসতের সুখ কিসে তার
ভূতের কী যেমন কার
তেমনি তার বসতখানা ॥

দেখে নে আ কে
বাড়ির ক হত হে
সা তে ধন ে রে গেলো
এ ল ে যাবে না ॥

সকলের বড় হাকিমের রে
আরজি দিলাম বারে বারে
লালন বলে সেও ে ফিরে
একবার আমায় দেখে না॥

basat bāṛīr jhagaṛā keje miṭal nā
kār goyālī ke dey dhūmā
sab dekhi tā nā nā ॥

gharer core ghar māre ẏār
basater sukh kise tār
bhūter kīrti ẏæman prakār
tæmani tār basat-khānā ॥

dekhe śune āpta kalo
bāṛir kartā byakti hato halo
sākṣāte dhan core gelo
e lajjā to ẏābe nā ॥

sakaler baṛa hākimer dvāre
āraji dilām bāre bāre
lālan bale seo phire
ek-bār āmāy dekhlo nā ॥

The squabbling in my house never stops.
Who put smoke to whose cowshed?
All I see is trouble.

When a member of your own family
is robbing your house,
how can you be happy living there?
Goblins act that way.
That's the sort of place they live in.

While mediating a domestic spat,
the master of the house was slain.
A thief snatched my money
from under my nose.
I'll never live down the shame.

I appealed again and again
to the highest judge of all.
Lālan says: Not once did he do me a favor.

[There are neither footnotes nor annotations for this song. Sources for the Bangla original include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1], no. 503; BBOBG no. 210.]

ভ

90

ভজ রে জেনে নে

Bhajo re jene śune

ভজ রে জেনে নে	bhajo re jene śune
নবি কলিমা কলে আলি হালদাতা	nabi kalimā kalendā āli hāl-dātā
ফাতিমা দাতা কি ধনদানে ।	phātimā dātā ki dhanadāne ।
নিলে ফাতিমার শরণ	nile phātimār śaraṇ
ফতে হয় করণ	phate hay karaṇ
(এই কথা) আছে ফরমান সঁ ইর জবানে ॥	(ei kathā) āche pharamān sā̃ir jabāne ॥
নেছি মা আমার তুমি অবি ধারী	śunechi mā āmār tumi abimbadhārī
যুগে যুগে মাতা হন ে গে রী	ẏuge ẏuge mātā han ẏogeśvarī
চেনা হলো ভার ও রে মন আমার	cenā halo bhār o re man āmār
ভুলে রইলি এই ভবের ভাবভূষণে ॥	bhule raili ei bhaber bhāb-bhūṣaṇe ॥
সৃ ক সৃ করলেন সবারি	sr̥ṣṭikartā sr̥ṣṭi karlen sabāri
বেদা উপর গম্ভু তাহারি	bedānta upar gambhu tāhāri
তার সু ে গ না বুঝে কু ে গে মজে	tār su ẏog nā bujhe ku ẏoge maje
মারা গেলো এই জীব ে রতুফানে ॥	mārā gelo ei jīb ghor-tuphāne ॥
সাড়ে সাত পা পথেরই দাঁড়া	sāṛe sāt pānti pather-i dā̃ṛā
আধ পা তার আদি মূল ে ড়া	ādh pānti tār ādi mūl goṛā
সিরাজ সঁ ইর চরণ মি না লালন	sirāj sā̃ir caraṇ mithyā nā lālan
অঘাটাতে মারা যা কেনে ॥	aghāṭāte mārā ẏācche kene ॥

Know what you're doing
before you worship!
The Prophet revealed[1] *the kalimā*[2]
Ali gave the cloak.[3]
What was Fatima's gift?

Take refuge in Fatima[4]
and you will succeed.
These are the very words
of the Lord's decree.[5]

I heard my mother never conceived.[6]
In age after age she's the goddess of yogīs.
But she's hard, my mind, for you to recognize.
You're so beguiled by the trinkets
of worldly love.[7]

The creator—
she created everyone.[8]
Her secret's[9] *beyond*[10] *the Vedas.*[11]
This poor soul[12] *didn't learn*
the right time for her.

1. "Revealed" for *kalendā* is highly tentative. See glossary of obscure terms. [This glossary is absent from Salomon's manuscripts.]

2. *kalimā* [< Ar. kalima, lit. "word"]: This here refers to the Muslim profession of faith: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his apostle."

3. "Cloak": *hāl*. See glossary of obscure terms. [See text note 1.]

4. "Take refuge in" may also be translated as "remember." *Śaraṇa*, "refuge," and *smaraṇa*, "remembrance," are homonyms in Bengali.

5. *āche pharamān sãir jabāne*.

6. "Never conceived": *abimbadhārī*. See glossary of obscure terms. [See text note 1.]

7. "Trinkets of worldly love": *bhaber bhāb-bhuṣaṇe*; lit. "the world's ornaments of emotion."

8. The gender of the Creator is not indicated in the Bengali text. The following line, however, clearly refers to the Goddess. According to the LG version, which arranges the lines of the song in a different order (see text notes), the gender of the Creator is ambiguous.

9. "secret" for *gambha* [or *gambhu*] is tentative. See glossary of obscure terms. [See text note 1.] Alt. trans.: "true meaning."

10. Alt. trans.: "surpasses," "transcends," "is above," "goes beyond," "well beyond," "way beyond," "too deep for."

11. *Vedānta*.

12. "Poor soul" (*jīb* [< Skt. *jīva*]). Alt. trans.: "fellow," "man."

He got involved at the wrong time,
and perished in a raging storm.

A road has seven and a half lanes.
In the half lane is the root of all.[13]
Sirāj Sãi tells no lies, Lālan.[14]
Why do you die[15]
where there is no quay?

13. *ādi mūl goṛā*, lit. "the original root."

14. Alt. trans.: "Lālan, Sirāj Sãi speaks truthfully"; "Sirāj Sãi speaks the truth, Lālan."

15. Alt. trans.: "Why die?" "Why are you dying?"

Bhajo re jene śune

The "cloak" refers to the "cloak of spiritual succession" (*'irqah-i-'ikāfat*) that a saint gives to his successor. Ali received a cloak from Muhammad when Muhammad designated him his successor to esoteric knowledge. According to tradition, Ali in turn initiated seventy people into his mystic creed (Haq 1975, 38). Lālan considers Ali the transmitter of gnosis as symbolized by the cloak.

In Khodā Bakṣ's opinion the answer to the question "What was Fatima's gift?" is blood. Another possible answer to the riddle is creation itself. See also LG no. 86 ["Anādir ādi śrīkṛṣṇa-nidhi"]: "From the Śakti comes creation"; and LG no. 115 ["Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā," **104**]: "A woman! A woman created the world and everyone in it."

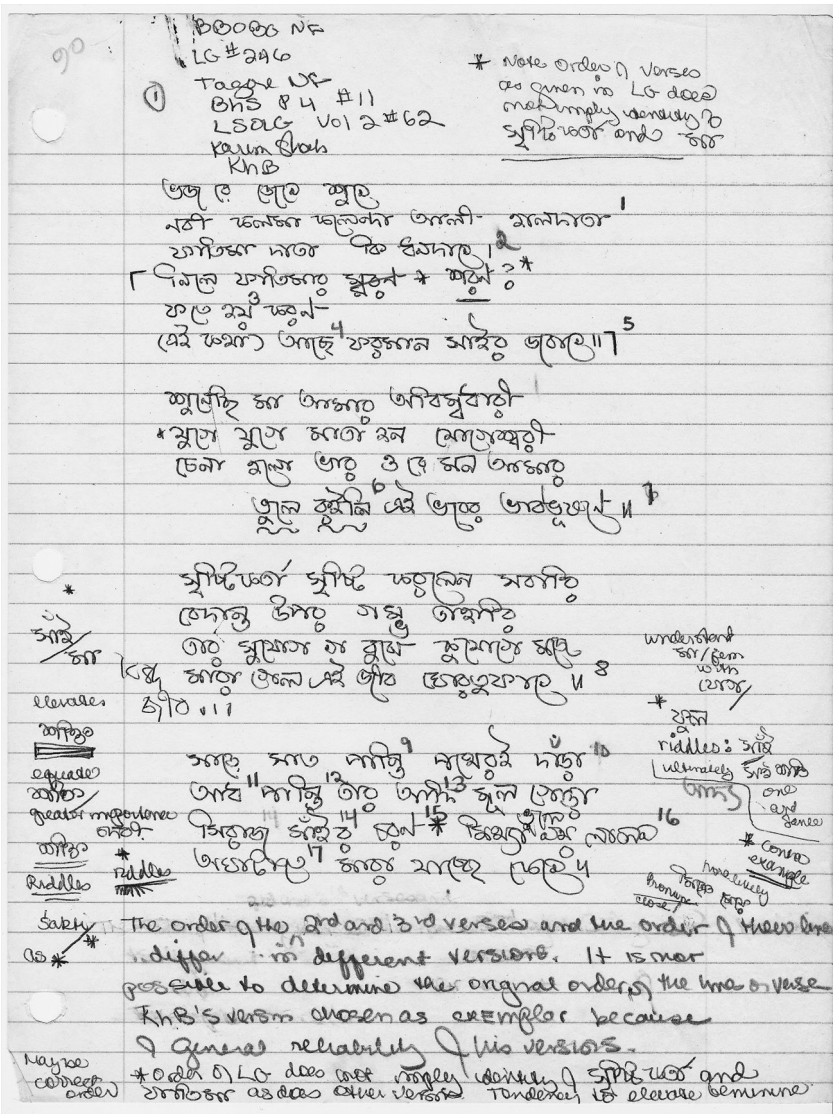
The line "My mother never conceived" is typical of the paradoxical sexual imagery used to describe the Śakti so as to contrast divine creation with human procreation. See my discussion of similar imagery in a Bāul song by Rādhāśyām Dās in "A Contemporary Sahajiyā Interpretation . . ." [Salomon 1979]. Compare Kabīr Śabda no. 44: "She doesn't choose a husband, doesn't get married, but has sons. Not a single black-haired fellow escapes her, but she's a permanent virgin" (Hess's translation [Hess and Singh 1983: 56–57]).

The word *suẏog,* translated "right time," and *kuẏog,* "wrong time," are double entendres. These terms can also signify "good union" and "bad union." Compare LG no. 49 ["Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phā̃d pete," **73**]: *śubhāśubha ẏog-mate,* "Whether the time is right or wrong." In another song (LG no. 26 ["Sabāi ki tār marma jānte pāy"]) Lālan is more explicit as to what he means by "right time" ("good union"): "He who unites (*ẏog kare*) with the Goddess of *ẏogīs* can know the great union, *mahāmayī* (Tagore manuscript *mahāmai*) *ẏog.*" (This is also a pun, since Mahāmāyī (or Mahāmāī) is a name of the goddess Durgā). He knows the meaning of the three days and worships on just one." Elsewhere, he further explains (LG no. 73 ["Tin diner tin marma jene"]): "The new moon day (*amābasyā* [< Skt. *amāvasyā*]), the first (*pratipad*), the start of the second (*dvitīyār prathame*)—that's the time. Darvesh Lālan asks, Who comes at that juncture?" The right time for ritual sexual intercourse, then, is the early part of the third day of a woman's menstrual period when the *sahaj mānuṣ* is believed to become manifest in the woman's *mūlādhār.* By "He got involved at the wrong time and perished in a raging storm" Lālan means that the *sādhak* (in this case Lālan refers to himself) had intercourse on first two days of

his partner's menstrual period, when the flow is the heaviest and the danger of lust extremely great, and he was unable to retain his semen.

The "seven and a half lanes" probably signify the *cakra*s, although the usual number of *cakra*s in Tantrism is seven. In another song (LG no. 299,"Khācār bhitar acin pākhi") the number eight may also be a reference to the *cakra*s, but it is somewhat more likely that it refers to the eight *candra*s (moons) of the body, namely, the hands, face, breasts, chest, navel, and genitals (BBOBG, 375). Half numbers occur frequently in Bāul songs, such as three and a half (*sāṛe tin hāt* "three and a half cubits," the height of a person; *sāṛe tin rati* "three and a half *rati*s," possibly a reference to the amount of semen in the body); and twenty-four and a half (*sāṛe cabbiś candra*, "twenty-four moons"; the nails of the hands and feet and the cheeks, mouth, tongue, and forehead, which constitutes the half-moon). The "half lane" containing the "root of all" may be the *mūlādhār-cakra* or the *ẏoni*. "Dying where there is no quay" possibly alludes once again to ejaculating semen into the *ẏoni* of a woman who is menstruating.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 246; LS no. 52; BhS, 4, no. 11; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 62; KSh; KhB.]



Salomon's MS for "Bhajo re jene śune."

91

ভুলে না ভুলে না বলি

Bhulbo nā bhulbo nā bali

ভুলে না ভুলে না বলি
কাজের বেলা ঠিক থাকে না।
আমি বলি ভুলে না রে
ভাবে ছাড়ে না ে রে
কটা মন পাগল করে
দি ন দিয়ে হানা ॥

স ণে র ধরে
জানিলাম কাজ-অনুসারে
কুস স জুড়ে
সুমতি ে র গেলো ছেড়ে
খাবি খেলাম আপায় পড়ে
এ ল ধুলেও ে যায় না ॥

যে ে রের দায়ে দেশা রী
সে ে র দেখি স ধারী
মদন রাজার ড ভারী
কাম লা দেয় অন্তঃ পুরি
ভুলে যায় ে র মন কা রি
কি করিবে ণারি জনা ॥

র মেতে সঙ সাজিয়ে
বসে আছি মগন হয়ে
সুসখারে স করে
জানতাম যদি সুস রে
লালন বলে তবে কি রে
ছে ড়ে মারে মালখানা ॥

bhulbo nā bhulbo nā bali
kājer belā ṭhik thāke nā।
āmi bali bhulbo nā re
svabhābe chāṛe nā more
kaṭākṣe man pāgal kare
dibya-jñān diye hānā ॥

saṅgaguṇe raṅga dhare
jānilām kāj-anusāre
kusaṅge sambandha juṛe
sumati mor gelo cheṛe
khābi khelām āpāy paṛe
e lajjā dhule-o to ẏāy nā ॥

ẏe corer dāye deśāntarī
se cor dekhi saṅgadhārī
madan rājār ḍaṅkā bhārī
kām jvālā dey antaḥ puri
bhule ẏāy mor man kāṇḍāri
ki karibe guṇāri janā ॥

raṅge mete saṅ sājiye
base āchi magan haye
susakhāre saṅga kare
jāntām ẏadi susaṅgere
lālan bale tobe ki re
chẽcoṛe māre māl-khānā ॥

I won't forget.
I won't forget, I say.
But when it's time for action,
my resolve wavers.

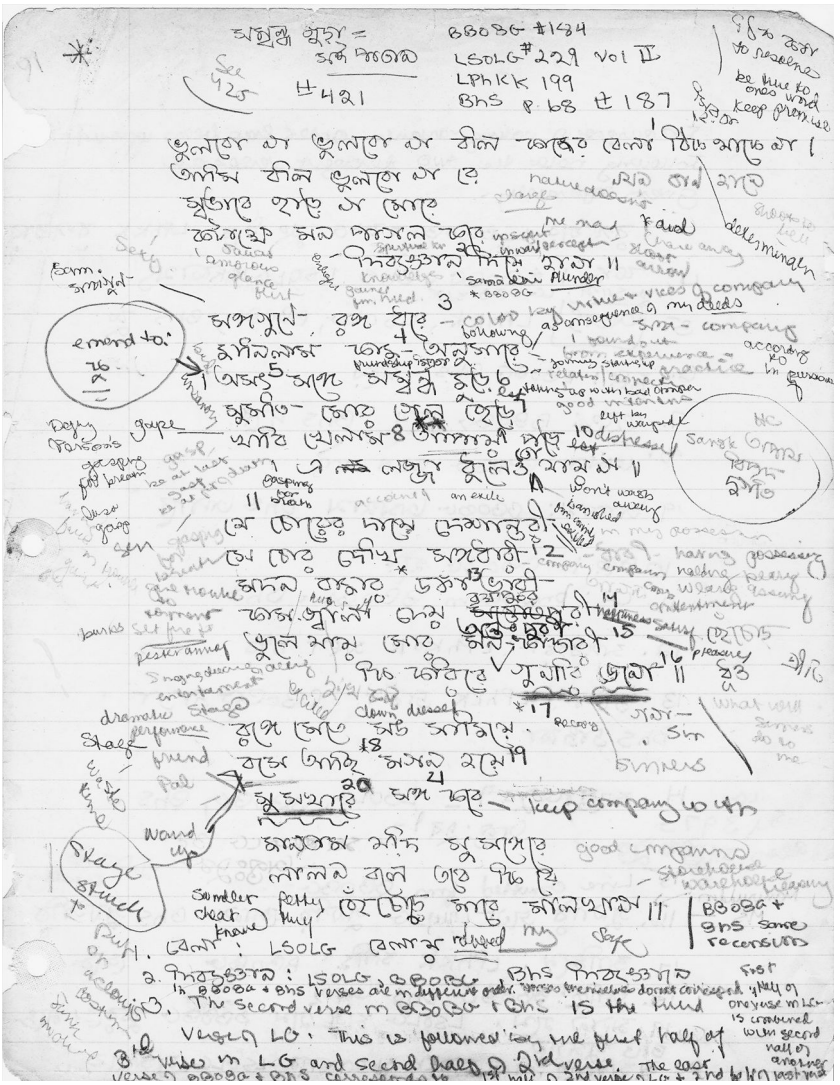
I won't forget, I say.
But my nature doesn't change.
Seductive glances
from the corners of her eyes
drive me crazy and wipe out
divine wisdom.

A man's character is colored
by the qualities of his friends;
so I learned from experience.
When I took up with bad companions,
my good intentions vanished.
I landed in trouble. Now I'm at my last gasp.
My shame can't be washed away.

The thief who drove me into exile—
I see he's come along.
Madan's drum is irresistible.
Flames of lust burn
the inner rooms of my house.
I've forgotten the pilot of my mind.
What more will the sinners do?

Stagestruck,
I put on a clown's costume
and got lost in my act.
If I had kept company with good men,
if I had known good companions, says Lālan,
would that robber have looted my storeroom?

[There are neither footnotes nor annotations to this song. As with many of Salomon's translations, however, her handwritten manuscript for this song contains a significant number of footnotes not included here. It seems likely she had intended to draft a set of annotations and footnotes for each song in this collection. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 421; BBOBG no. 184; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 229; LPhKK no. 199; BhS, 68, no. 187; LS no. 392.]



Salomon's MS for "Bhulbo nā bhulbo nā bali."

ম

92

মদিনায় রসুল নামে কে এল ভাই

Madīnāy rasul nāme ke elo bhāi

মদিনায় রসুল নামে কে এল ভাই
কায়াধারী হয়ে কেনে তার ছায়া নাই ॥

কি দিব তুলনা তারে
খুজে পাই নে এ সংসারে
মেঘে যা‌ে ছায়া ধরে
ধূপের সময়ে ॥

ছায়াহীন যাহা‌ে কায়া
ভুবনে তা‌ে ছায়া
এই কথার ম নেওয়া
অব চাই ॥

কায়ার শরীর ছায়া দেখি
যার নাই সে লা-শরিকী
লালন বলে তার হকীকী
বলতে ডরাই ॥

madīnāy rasul nāme ke elo bhāi
kāyādhārī haye kene tār chāyā nāi ॥

ki dibo tulanā tāre
khūje pāi ne e saṃsāre
meghe ẏāro chāyā dhare
dhūper samaye ॥

chāyāhīn ẏāhāro kāyā
tribhubane tāro chāyā
ei kathār marma neoyā
abaśya cāi ॥

kāyār śarīr chāyā dekhi
ẏār nāi se lā-śarikī
lālan bale tār hakīkī
balte ḍarāi ॥

Brother, who is the man
they call the Messenger[1]
who came to Medina?
He has a body—
so why no shadow?

What can I compare him to?
I can't find anything
in this world that equals him
whom the clouds shade
from the blazing sun.

His body has no shadow,
yet his shadow spreads
over the three worlds.
You've got to understand
what I'm saying.

I see, the body's partner
is its shadow.
So he who casts no shadow[2]
has no partner.
Lālan says, I'm afraid
to tell the truth about him.[3] [4]

1. [The Bengali word for "Messenger" (*rasul*) is also spelled "*rachul*" or "*rāchul*" (the "ch" sound pronounced as a sibilant in some Bengali dialects). Cf. Salomon's transliteration "*rachul*" in the exemplar to this same song on page 9.]

2. The Bengali phrase *ẏār(o) nāi* "who doesn't have" is elliptical. I have tentatively taken it to mean *ẏāro chāyā nāi* "who doesn't have a shadow." In fact, KhB's oral version has *chāyāhīn*, "shadowless."

3. *tār hakīkī* (Ar. *haqīqa*, "true nature"). A more literal translation of the line is: "I'm afraid to tell his true nature."

4. [Emendations:] Verse 1: M has *raito* for *ẏāro* in all the other versions cited. Verse 3: For LSOLG *chāyāhīn* read *ẏār nāi*. The first half of the *bhaṇitā* is corrupt in all manuscripts and printed versions except for LSOLG. T has *tāo ohoki*, M1 has *tāo ohāri*, J1 has *tā ohski*, and LG has *tāo hay ki*. The text should read *tār hakīki* [or *hakīkī*] (Ar. *haqīqa*) "his true nature" as in the two oral versions I collected, one by Khodā Bakṣ and the other by Laili Begum.

Madīnāy rasul nāme ke elo bhāi

This song and no. [**121**], "Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy," are paired question and answer songs. I heard them used in this way in a *pāllā gān* (song competition) performance that I attended in Gopīnāthpur in 1986. However, the song under discussion contains enough of a hint to answer the question why Muhammad casts no shadow, even without reference to its answer song. The clue to Muhammad's true identity is given in the last verse when Lālan says: "So he who casts no shadow has no partner" (*lā-śarikī*; Ar. *lā sharīk*). It is God who is one, without partners. See for example, Qur'an 17:111 (translated by Ali 1983, 726): "Say: 'Praise be to Allah who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion.' " By calling Muhammad *lā-śarikī*, Lālan is hinting at the belief, held by Bāuls and many Sufi groups in Bengal (See Haq 1975, 94), that there is no difference between Muhammad and God. In other songs by Lālan Muhammad is identified not only with God but also with human beings, in particular the murshid. (See the annotations to song no. **40**.)

There is a clever twist to the song in the last verse. Throughout the song, Lālan has been saying that Muhammad has no shadow. He opens the last verse with the statement that the body's partner is its shadow. Then it would logically follow from this that the identity of the one who "has no partner" is Muhammad because he has no shadow. But according to Muslim belief, God is one, without partners. The implication, then, is that Muhammad and God are one and the same.

Bāul fakirs use the word *śarik* in the sense of "offspring," as in this song by Duddu Shah (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, song no. 10, "Śarik karo nā man kari bāraṇ"):

Don't have children (śarik).
I forbid you to do it, my mind.
Kids (śarike) are a great pain.
You'll be born again and again.
If you sire sons and daughters
with your own seed,
you'll wind up crying in the end.

Thus *lā-śarikī* can presumably also refer to a *sādhak* who is successful in Bāul *sādhanā* involving sex without ejaculation and who therefore is able to avoid fathering children. In the performance at Gopīnāthpur,

Khorshed Shah explained that when the Prophet was forty years old, he learned how to avoid ejaculation (*rāsul takhan ājal kare phello*) and thereafter had no more children. It was then that he became *lā-śarikī*.

[The following question is at the end of the typescript, indicating Salomon's further lines of inquiry regarding this song.]

Question: Why does Lālan say he is afraid to tell the truth about him? Elsewhere Lālan says "*akaitab bheder kathā*" and if he tells it "*lāge byāthā*." Why does it pain him to tell it?

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^{1}: 1 no. 2 (LPhKK, 230); M^{1} no. 185; J^{1} no. 252; BhS no. 188 (Jhā, 57); LG no. 204; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 22.]

93

মধুর দিল দরিয়ায় ডুবে যে জন ডুবেছে

Madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche

মধুর দিল দরিয়ায় ডুবে যে জন ডুবেছে	madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche
সে না সব খবরে জবর হয়েছে ॥	se nā sab khabare jabar hayeche ॥
অ যৈছে ভ ঢাকা	agni ẏaiche bhasme ḍhākā
অমৃত গরলে মাখা	amṛta garle mākhā
সে পে আছে রসিক সুজন	serūpe āche rasik sujan
ডুবাইয়ে মন তার অ ষণ পেয়েছে ॥	ḍubāiye man tār anveṣaṇ peyeche ॥
যে নে দুধ শি তে খায়	ẏe stane dudh śiśute khāy
জোঁকে মুখ লাগিলে সেথা র পায়	jōke mukh lāgile sethā rakta pāy
অধমে উ ম উ মে অধম	adhame uttam uttame adham
যে যেমন তাই দেখতেছে ॥	ẏe ẏæman tāi dekhteche ॥
দু জলে মিশলে যেমন	dugdhe jale miśle ẏæman
হংসরাজ করে ভ ণ	haṃsa-rāj kare bhakṣaṇ
সে দু বেছে॥	se dugdha beche
সিরাজ সঁ ই ফকির বলে	sirāj sāi phakir nā bale
লালন ঘুরে বেড়ায়	lālan ghure beṛāy
সব ফিকির না বুঝে ॥	sab phikir nā bujhe ॥

He is the master of all knowledge
who has dived into the sweet lake
of the heart.

My Lord is like fire hidden by ashes,
like nectar mixed with poison.[1]
The true lover dives into his heart[2]
and finds him.

A baby sucks milk from his mother's breast.
But a leech bites it and draws blood.
In the great is the small, in the small, the great.
What you see depends on what you are.

The swan king extracts milk from water.
Sirāj Sẽ̃i says, Lālan, you're walking in circles.
You haven't a clue what it's all about.[3]

1. The sentence had no expressed subject. "Lord" is my interpretation.

2. *rasik sujan ḍubāiye man.*

3. The only significant variation between the two versions is in the *bhaṇitā*, which is slightly corrupt in the LG version. An oral version sung by Makched Ali Shah omits the first verse, probably due to a memory lapse, since there is a long musical interlude after the initial refrain. This is often a stalling technique used by singers when they are trying to remember the words to a song. Moreover, Makched Ali Shah admitted after singing the song that he had made a mistake. In the second verse after *pāy* the oral version has *go se*, which is not in either of the other two versions, but which is necessary for the rhyme and meter. The *bhaṇitā* of this version agrees with that given in LSOLG. (The song is listed in the table of contents of the [K] manuscript, but is no longer extant. I have not found any other manuscripts containing this song.)

Madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche

Insight cannot be gained by reading books but rather, as Lālan says, by diving "into the sweet lake of the heart." Compare the Sufi notion of the "wisdom of the heart" (Schimmel 1975, 4).

The song sets forth a number of opposing substances, fire and ashes, nectar and poison, milk and blood, which are found mixed together. (For other songs on the same theme, see LG nos. 64 ["Gosãir bhāb ẏehi dhārā"], 116 ["Madhur dil dariyāy ḍube ẏe jan ḍubeche," i.e., the song under discussion], 128 ["Halām nā re rasik bheye," **136**], and 457 ["Biṣāmṛta āche re māthā-cokhā"]. Though the items in each pair seem to be opposites, they are actually different aspects of the same essential substances. As Lālan puts it in another song (LG no. 64 "Gōsāir bhāb ẏehi dhārā"), "That current is found in both good and bad substances (*kurase surase mele se dhārā*). Whether one gets the good or bad substance depends on the person; a baby gets milk from a breast while a leech draws blood. It is interesting to note that the inauspiciousness of blood drawn from a breast in lieu of milk is a common theme in Hindu mythology (O'Flaherty [1980], 41).

Underlying the various comparisons are the two main substances of Bāul ritual: semen, which is often equated with milk or cream, and blood, from which both semen and milk are produced. The symbolic significance of the song is that semen and blood are like nectar and poison, fire (here a male symbol) and ashes. They are also often compared to love (*prem*) and lust (*kām*). Just as a breast has both blood and milk, so a woman's body contains seed and blood mixed together. During a woman's menstrual period the *adhar mānuṣ* identified with seed descends and unites with the Śakti in menstrual blood. Just as the mythological "swan king" separates out milk from water, so the adept must separate the seed from the blood, the *nīr* "water" from the *kṣīr* "cream" (code words for semen and blood). In the words of Madan Shah (BBOBG no. 518): "Water and cream are in the same place. A swan who is a true lover discards the water and drinks the cream." Although Lālan does not tell how to effect the separation in this song, other songs mention the act of churning, an obvious symbol for sexual intercourse. For example, "Milk and cream are always mixed together. Separate them with a churning stick. . . . Just as fire is in ashes, so nectar is fused with poison. Some are so greedy for the nectar that they drink poison instead and die. They don't know how to churn" (LG no. 64). The adept who can retain his semen during coitus gets the nectar. He succeeds

in separating *nīr* from *kṣīr* and catching the *sahaj mānuṣ*. In contrast, the adept who is consumed by the poison of lust ends up "dying," that is, he spills his semen and fails to achieve his goal.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 31; LG no. 116; LS no. 476.]

94

মন আমার আজ পড়লি ফেরে

Man āmār āj paṛli phere

মন আমার আজ পড়লি ফেরে
দিন দিন পৈতৃক ধন গেলো ে রে ॥

মায়া-মদ খেয়ে মনা
দিবানিশি ঝোঁক ে টে না
পাছ বাড়ির উল হলো না
কে কি করে ॥

ঘরের ে রে ঘর মারে মন
যায় না ঘুম জানবি কখন
একবার দিলে না নয়ন
আপন ঘরে ॥

বেপার করতে এসেছিলি
আসলে বিনাশ হলি
লালন তুই জুরে গেলে
বলবি কিরে ॥

man āmār āj paṛli phere
din din paitṛk dhan gelo core ॥

māyā-mad kheye manā
dibāniśi jhõk choṭe nā
pāch bāṛir ul halo nā
ke ki kare ॥

gharer core ghar māre man
ẏāy nā ghum jānbi kakhan
ek-bār dile nā nayan
āpan ghare ॥

bepār karte esechili
āsle bināś hali
lālan tui hujure gele
balbi kire ॥

My mind, today you're in trouble.
A thief has been stealing your patrimony,
little by little.

You guzzle the wine of delusion, O mind.
You're drunk day and night.
You never search
the back of your house
to see what's going on.[1]

Someone in your family is robbing your house, mind.
You're always out cold,[2]
so when will you figure it out?
You never look in[3] *your own house.*

You came to trade,
but lost your capital.
What are you going to say, Lālan,
when you stand before the Lord?[4] [5]

1. Alt. trans. (lit.): "to see who is doing what."

2. Alt. trans. (lit.): "asleep."

3. Alt. trans.: "Not once did you look in."

4. *hujur*. Alt. trans. (more literal): "His Honor"; "His Majesty"; "His Excellency"; "His Highness"; "His Lordship." Alt. trans. of *bhaṇitā*: "When you stand before the Lord, / Lālan, what are you going to say?"

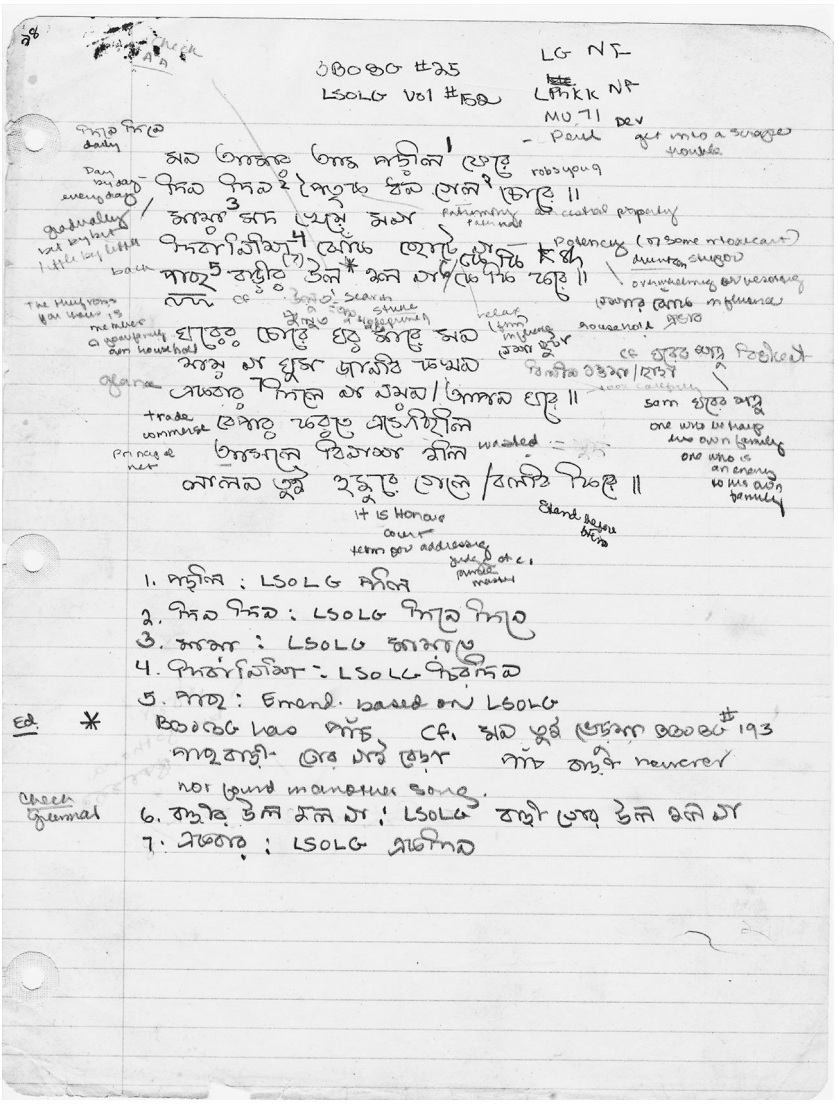
5. [Emendations:] I do not have a manuscript or oral source for this song, but the versions given in BBOBG and LSOLG do not contain any significant variants or obvious textual problems, nor is there any doubt as to the song's authenticity; it is one of the twenty songs by Lālan that Tagore published in *Prabāsī* (*āśvin*, 1322 BS). Tagore's version is identical to that given in BBOBG, which is the exemplar for the translation. It, however, contains one minor error: In verse 1 *pāc* should be emended to read *pāch* as in LSOLG. (The variant readings in the LSOLG version are as follows: In the refrain LSOLG has *dine dine* whereas BBOBG has *din din*. It also gives *khelo* for BBOBG *gelo*. In verse 1 LSOLG has *māyāte mad* for BBOBG *māyā mad, cirodin* for BBOBG *dibāniśi*, and the extra word *tor* preceding *ul*. In verse 2 LSOLG has *ek-din*, whereas BBOBG has *ek-bār*.)

Man āmār āj paṛli phere

This is yet another song about the *sahaj mānuṣ* as the "thief" of semen signified by the stock metaphors "patrimony" and "capital." (See the annotations to "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors" ["Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," **120**].) "Being (lit. 'falling') in trouble" connotes the ejaculation of semen into the vagina. The "back of the house," a metaphor Lālan also uses in "My mind, how spineless you are!" ["Man re ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā," **98**], is the private part of a house and hence symbolizes the genitals, specifically the penis.

Lālan will be accountable to the Lord for "losing his capital" because the Bāuls consider semen to be the divine element in man, the "trust" (*āmānat*, Ar. *amāna*) mentioned in the Qur'an (33:72–73), that man agreed to carry. As Kalu Shah (Āsgar 1991, no. 20), referring to semen by the code word *nūr*, sings: "There is light in man's body. The trust is in him" (*ādamer kālebe āche nūr, āmānat āche tār bhitar*). It is therefore man's duty not to squander this trust. See also Lālan's song "Madman, you brought the merchant's treasure here and squandered it" ["Ene mahājaner dhan bināś karli kṣyāpā," **32**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; BBOBG no. 25; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 152; LS no. 465.]



Salomon's MS for "Man āmār āj paṛli phere."

95

মন আমার কেউ না জেনে মে না পিরিতে

Man āmār keu nā jene majo nā pirite

মন আমার কেউ না জেনে
মে না পিরিতে
জেনে নে কর গে পিরিত
শেষ ভাল যাতে ॥

ভবের পিরিত ভূতের কী ন
ণেক বি দ ণেক মিলন
সব শেষে বিপাকে মরণ
তেমাথা পথে ॥

পিরিতের হয় বাসনা
সাধুর কাছে জেন গে বেনা
ে হা যমন পরশে ে না
হবা সে মতে ॥

এক পিরিতের বিভাগ চলন
কেউ কেউ নরকে গমন
জেনে নে বলছে লালন
এহি জগতে ॥

man āmār keu nā jene
majo nā pirite
jene śune karo ge pirita
śeṣ bhālo ẏāte ॥

bhaber pirita bhūter kīrtan
kṣaṇek bicched kṣaṇek milan
sab śeṣe bipāke maraṇ
temāthā pathe ॥

piriter hay bāsanā
sādhur kāche jeno ge benā
lohā ẏaman paraśe sonā
habā se mate ॥

ek piriter bibhāg calan
keu svarge keu narake gaman
jene śune balche lālan
ehi jagate ॥

O my mind,
don't lose yourself in love
without knowing what you are doing.
Learn about love first,
so it turns out well in the end.

Earthly love is like ghosts singing kirtan;[1]
One moment, separated, the next united—
in the end you get in trouble,
and die at the fork of the three roads.

If you desire love,
go to a sadhu
and learn its true meaning.[2]
You'll be turned to gold,
as iron by a touchstone.

One love can go two ways:
it can lead to heaven or to hell.
Lālan speaks from experience:
This is the way of the world.[3]

1. "Ghosts singing kirtan" translates *bhūter kīrtan*. Like the similar expression *bhūter bāper śrāddha*, "funeral for a ghost's father," it connotes something farcical. Kirtan are Vaiṣṇava devotional songs, while ghosts (*bhūt*) are considered vile, unintelligent creatures who roam around at night stark naked, prefer dirty places, possess humans (particularly women), and, because of the peculiar shape of their mouths, speak through their noses (Day 1878, 80–81). The idiom *bhūter kīrtan* traces back to the sixteenth-century work *Caitanya Bhāgabat* by Bṛndāban Dās (Madhyakhaṇḍa, chapter 23). When Caitanya and his followers pass by the house of the local Muslim ruler, playing musical instruments, singing, and dancing, "the Qazi says, 'Do you know, brother, what music this is? It's either someone's wedding or else it's *bhūter kīrtan*.'"

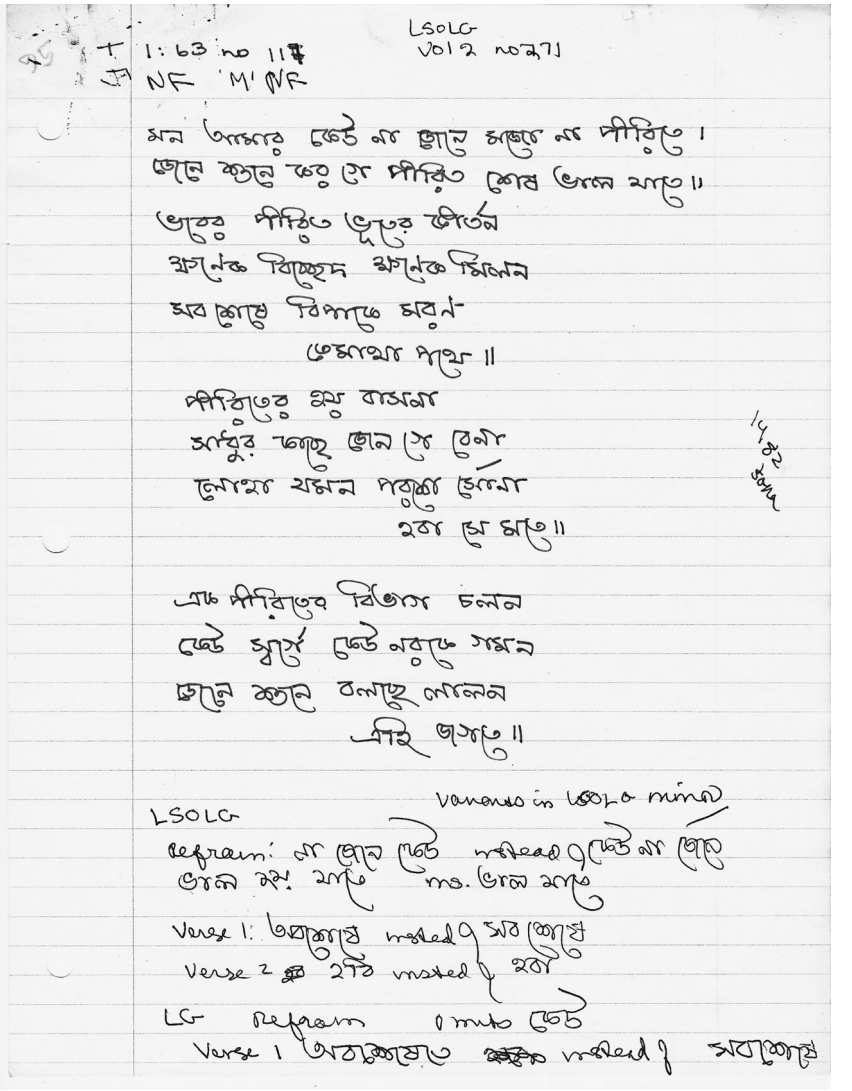
2. *benā*. See "Who could have built a hall of colors like this?" [**48**], text note 2.

3. [Emendations:] LPhKK misreads T *benā* in verse 2 as *cenā*. Published editions: In the refrain LG omits *keu*. LSOLG gives *bhālo hay ẏāte* for *bhālo ẏāte*. In verse 1 LG has *abaśeṣete* and LSOLG has *abaśeṣe*, whereas T has *sabaśeṣe*. LG gives *habe maraṇ* for *bipāke maraṇ*. In verse 2 LG has *cenā* for *benā*. Both LG and LSOLG have *habi*, whereas T has *habā*. Either may be correct, as the song, not untypically, switches back and forth between *tumi* and *tui* forms of the second person.

Man āmār keu nā jene majo nā pirite

Lālan says that only if one learns from a guru or murshid how to perform *sādhanā* can love "turn out well in the end." He remarks that "earthly love" is like "ghosts singing kirtan" (see text note 1 for a discussion of this idiom) because, just as ghosts cannot grasp the meaning of kirtan and only make a cacophonous mockery of it, so the ordinary man is unable to understand what true love (*prem*) involves and instead resorts to its inverse, earthly love or lust (*kām*). Whereas true love involves seminal retention, earthly love ends in ejaculation; "death at the fork of the three roads" signifies the discharge of semen into the woman's *triveṇī*, which is the juncture of the three *nāṛī*s, *iṛā, piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*. When Lālan says "one love can go two ways," he is referring to *prem* and *kām*; true love is the means to escape karma and leads to eternal bliss, while lust dooms one to suffer death and rebirth.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 63, no. 117 (LPhKK, 177–178); LSOLG vol. 2, no. 271; LS no. 465.]



Salomon's MS for "Man āmār keu nā jene majo nā pirite."

96

মন কি ইহাই ভাব আ পাব নবি না চিনে

Man ki ihāi bhābo āllā pābo nabi nā cine

মন কি ইহাই ভাব আ পাব
  নবি না চিনে
কারে বলিস নবি ও তার দিশে পালি নে ॥

যে নূরে হয় আদম পয়দা
সেই নবির তরিক জুদা
নূরের পেয়ালা ে দা
দিলেন তারে ে দ অ জেনে ॥

বীজ মালেক সঁ ই বৃ নবি
দেল ধুড়িলে জানতে পাবি
(আমি) বলে কি সে বৃ র খুবি
তার এক ডালে দীন আর এক ডালে দনে ॥

চার কারের উপরে দেে
রাগ পা সে ছিল কে ে
পূ পরের তার খবর রাে
তবে জানবি লালন নবির ভেদ মনে ॥

man ki ihāi bhābo āllā pābo
  nabi nā cine
kāre balis nabi o tār diśe pāli ne ॥

ẏe nūre hay ādam paydā
sei nabir tarik judā
nūrer peyālā khodā
dilen tāre khod aṅga jene ॥

bīj mālek sãi bṛkṣa nabi
del dhuṛile jānte pābi
(āmi) balbo ki se bṛkṣer khubi
tār ek ḍāle dīn ār ek ḍāle dane ॥

cār kārer upare dekho
rāg pātre se chilo ke go
pūrbāparer tār khabar rākho
tabe jānbi lālan nabir bhed mane ॥

Mind, is this what you think:
You'll get Allah
without knowing the Prophet?
You haven't a clue[1]
who it is you call the Prophet!

That Prophet
from whose light man was born—
his ways are different.
Khodā gave him the cups of light.
because he regarded him
as his own self.[2]

My Lord and Master is a seed,
the Prophet, a tree.
Search your heart
and you'll understand.
What can I say
about the splendor[3] *of the tree?*
On one branch religion
and on the other the world.

1. Alt. trans.: "You haven't even figured out."

2. It is also possible, though less likely, that the phrase *khod añga* [or *aṅga*] *jene* "regarding as His own body" refers to the four cups rather than the Prophet, since they represent the four elements, which also ultimately come from God. (See the annotations for a discussion of the "four cups.") Alt. trans.: "because he considered him part of himself"; "since he regarded him as his own self"; "knowing him to be his own self"; "regarding him as his own self"; "since he knew the Prophet was his own self."

3. Alt. trans.: "beauty."

Before the four states
who appeared in the vessel of love?[4]
Look and see!
Find out what happens in eternity.
Lālan, then you will know
the Prophet's mystery.[5] [6] [7]

4. *rāg pātre*. Alt. trans.: "four stages." Alt. trans. for the line (lit.): "Before the four states who was in the vessel of love?"

5. *pūrvāparer khabar rākhbo*: the word *pūrvāpar* [also transliterated *pūrbāpar*] is problematic. It literally means "before and after." In Pāñja Śāh's song "Gururūpe nayan de re man" (Mind, fix your eyes on the guru's form) [Haque 1990, 416, no. 67], in a verse describing conception, the word precedes *nirantare* "continuously," "always": "What form did you have in your father's body? What form did you take in your mother's womb? Before and after, constantly, Nirañjan has the form of the guru." The same phrase also occurs in Phulbās's "Dīner sardār nabiji āmār" in a verse about creation: "Before and after, constantly, a winter wind was blowing." *Pūrvāpar* seems to be a synonym of *nirantar* and to signify eternal time before creation and also after it during a woman's menstrual period when it is possible to reverse the procreation process and return to the beginning of time. It is a sacred time, which Eliade notes (*The Sacred and the Profane*, 1959, 69) "is indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable. From one point of view it could be said that it does not 'pass,' that it does not constitute an irreversible duration . . . ; it always remains equal to itself, it neither changes nor is exhausted."

6. *tabe jānbi lālan nabir bhed mane*. Alt trans.: "the mystery of the Prophet. *Bhed* means difference as well as "mystery," "secret." Thus the line could also be translated "Lālan, then you will know the distinction between (the forms of) the Prophet."

7. [Emendations:] Manuscripts: T omits *ḍāle* from verse 2 clearly due to scribal error. The word would have begun a new page. C^3 reverses verses one and two. Published editions: LG variants will not be noted, as it is too corrupt; parts of "Dhanya āśakī janā e dīn duniyāy" [LG no. 267] are mixed in with the text of this song. LSOLG follows the same verse order as C^3. In verse 2 LPhKK misreads *thubi* for *khubi, dil* for *din* (i.e., *dīn*), and *dale* for *dane* < *duniyā*. Oral versions: Both Khodā Bakṣ and Karim Shah give *bhār* for *tāre* in verse 1 and *māne* for *mane* in verse 3.

Man ki ihāi bhābo āllā pābo nabi nā cine

This is still another song which expresses the identity of God and the Prophet using the recurrent metaphor of the seed and the tree (see for example the annotations to "Nabi nā cine ki āllā pābe" [LG no. 272, 75]) and distinguishes between the historical Muhammad and Nur Muhammad, "from whose light man was born." Lālan says that Nur Muhammad's ways are different, since he lives eternally, whereas the historical Muhammad experienced birth and death. The "cups of light" that God put in Nur Muhammad to use in creating the world are four in number; they are named *jahari, jabbari, nuri,* and *chattari*; and they represent the four elements. In the body they are identified with the four excretions—urine, semen, feces, and menstrual blood.

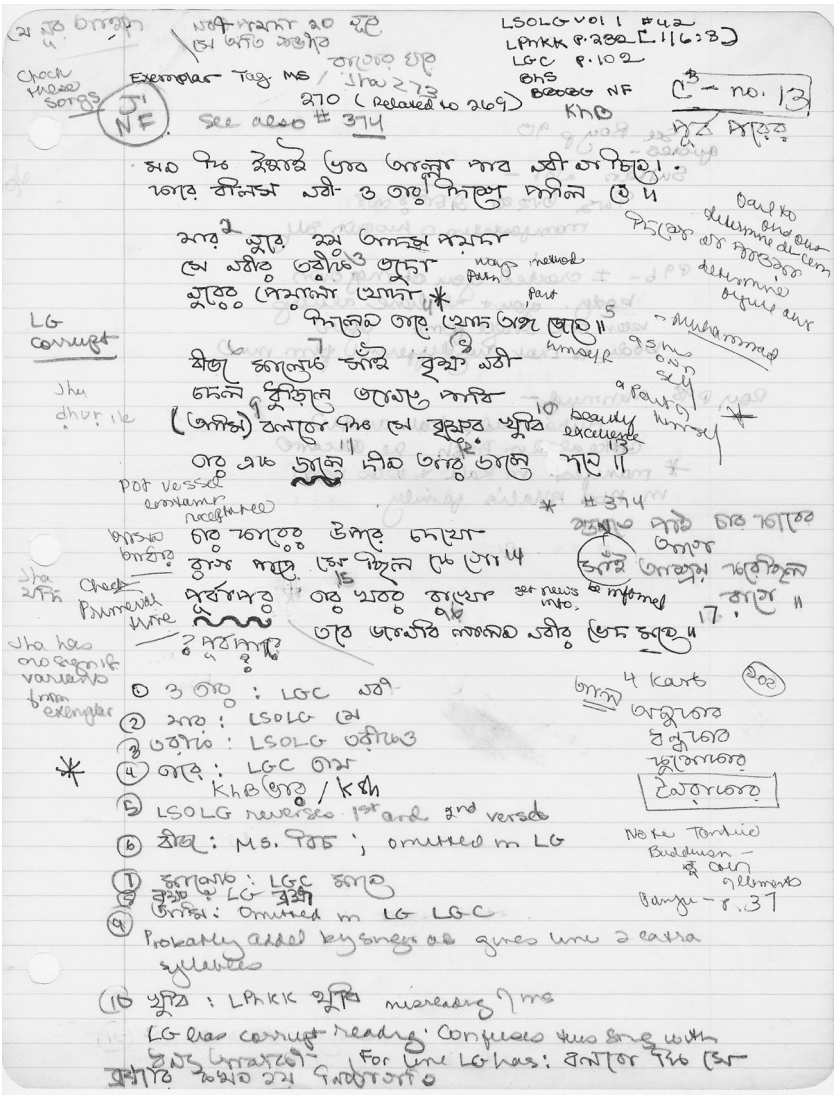
According to one cosmogonic theory mentioned frequently in Bāul songs influenced by Sufism, creation passed through eleven states, termed *kār* after the last syllable in each state (i.e., *andhakār* "darkness," *dhandhakār* "haze," *kuyokār* "fog," *nairākār*, "formlessness," *ākār* "form," *sākār* "subtle form," *dīptākār* "shining," *hāhākār* "the sound *hā hā*, a cry of distress," *huhukār* "the sound *hu, hu*," *śūnyakār* "emptiness," and *nīrākār* "water"). The "four states" alluded to by Lālan are the first four of the eleven states, which, according to the Bāul poet Bāulcā̃d ("O re kon nūre nūr nabi paydā"), were kept hidden. The answer to the question "Before the four states who appeared in the vessel of love?" is found in Lālan's song "Ḍube dekh dekhi man kirūp līlāmay" [LG no. 374], "Mind, dive in and see how our inscrutable Lord looks": "I heard before the four states the Lord took refuge in love" (*rāg*). The word *rāg* is a symbolic term for menstrual blood, which is equated with the cosmic waters, and *rāg pātra* signifies the womb, identified with the cosmic ocean. Just as before the creation of the world the Lord's seed floated on the cosmic waters, so each month when a woman menstruates, the *sahaj mānuṣ* appears in menstrual blood. This is probably what Lālan means by "what happens in eternity" (*pūrvāpar* "before and after": see text note 5).

In his song "Āge karo rāger anveṣaṇ" (Haque [1990], no. 133) Pāñja Śāh explicitly draws this analogy between the stage preceding the creation of the universe and menstrual blood or *rāg*. The first two verses describe the beginning of creation: When before the state of darkness *rāg* first appeared, the *sahaj mānuṣ* took his seat in it. *Rāg* is above the universe and is called the eternal substance. In the final two verses *rāg* is the menstrual flow: It picks up speed at a certain time and becomes a river of cream (*kṣīr*

nadī, another symbolic term for the menstrual flow or semen) in spate. The *sahaj mānuṣ* comes and holds court in it. You can avoid death just by touching one drop. The time (of its appearance) is called "the new moon day (*amāvasyā*)." Its ritual is performed on the second day after *amāvasyā* [Bng. *amābasyā*] and not on the first.

As previously mentioned, in the body the Prophet's light is identified with the *sahaj mānuṣ* (see the annotations to "Nabi nā cine ki āllā pābe"). Thus in this last verse Lālan is saying that the Lord who appeared in the vessel of love and the Prophet's light are one and the same. It is most likely the identity of the Lord and the Prophet, of Ahad and Ahmad, expressed in song after song that Lālan refers to here as "the Prophet's mystery."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 3, no. 6 (LPhKK, 232); C^3 no. 13; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 42; LG no. 270 (corrupt).]



Salomon's MS for "Man ki ihāi bhābo āllā pābo nabi nā cine."

97

মন ে রে আজ ধরতে পারতাম হাতে

Man tore āj dharte pārtām hāte

মন ে রে আজ ধরতে পারতাম হাতে	man tore āj dharte pārtām hāte
দেখতাম ও রে মন কি মুনাই	dekhtām o re man ki munāi
কেমন করে সদায় আল মাতে ॥	kæman kare sadāy āl ḍyāmāte ॥
সদায় বলো আর ভুলব না	sadāy balo ār bhulbo nā
তিলেক তা ঠিক থাকে না	tilek tā ṭhik thāke nā
দু লালস ে ষে মনা	duṣṭa lālas doṣe manā
মজালি আমারে নানান মতে ॥	majāli āmāre nānān mate ॥
কি কবো সে বেহাত আমার	ki kabo se behāt āmār
নইলে কি মন এ তাল ে মার	naile ki man e tāl tomār
পাই নে ণে তালের মার	pāi ne guṇe tāler śumār
ে ন তালে আমায় নাচাও ে ন পথে ॥	kon tāle āmāy nācā-o kon pathe ॥
মে তনু পে ভা	krame tanu palo bhāṭi
আর কবে মন হবা খঁ	ār kabe man habā khā̃ṭi
লালন বলে নারদ কাঠি	lālan bale nārad kāṭhi
বেজলে অমনি নেচে ওঠ তাতে ॥	bejle amani nece oṭh tāte ॥

Hey mind, or king of my mind,[1]
if I could catch hold of you today,[2]
I'd see how bounds are hurdled.[3]

Mind, you always say, "I won't forget."
You don't keep your word
a split second.
You're so tainted by lust,[4]
you've driven me to wrack and ruin.[5]

What can I say?
It's out of my hands.
Rather, you're the one, mind,[6]
who sets the beat.
I can't figure out the count.
What beat do you make me dance to?
Down what path do you make me dance?

My body's on the decline.
Will I ever be pure of mind?
Lālan says, Nārad taps his stick,[7]
and you up and dance to it.

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 199; M[1]: 47 (not in good condition); J no. 329; LS no. 435.]

1. *o re man ki munāi*: The term *munāi* is obscure. According to KhB it means: *ẏe manke paricālanā kare* ("the one who manages the mind"). In other songs Lālan uses the term *manarāẏ* "king of the mind." It is possible that *munāẏ* is derived from *manarāẏ*. Alt. trans.: (line order of original): "If I could catch hold of you, today, / I'd see, mind, or king of my mind, / how bounds are hurdled."

2. "catch hold": Alt. trans.: "grab hold."

3. Alt. trans.: "I'd see how to hurdle bounds"; "I'd see how you hurdle bounds"; "I'd see how to cross over bounds." Bengali: *kæman kare āl ḍeṅgāte*; variant reading[s]: *kare sadāi ālase māte; ki kare sadāi ālase māte; [kæman kare āl ḍyāmāte].*

4. "tainted": Alt. trans.: "debased," "corrupted."

5. Alt. trans.: "You've driven me to total ruin."

6. *naile ki.*

7. Nārad [< Skt. Nārada]: a legendary sage who is said to be the instigator of quarrels. Cf. proverb: *nārad nārad kheṅrā kāṭhi / lege ẏā nārad jhuṭopāti.*

98

মন রে কি তুই ভেড়ুয়া বা ল ন-ছাড়া

Man re ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā

মন রে কি তুই ভেড়ুয়া বা ল
ন-ছাড়া
সদরের সাজ করে সদায়
পাছ বাড়িতে নাই বেড়া ॥

ে থা ব ে থা রে মন
ে কি পাহারা দাও হামেশ ণ
কাজ দেখি পাগলের সমান
কথায় যমন কাঠফাড়া ॥

ে ন ে নায় কি হ ঘরে
একদিনে ে দেখলি না রে
পৈ ক ধন গে ে রে
হলি রে তুই মন ে ক তাড়া ॥

পাছ বাড়ি আটেলা ক
ঘর ে রারে চিনে ধর
লালন বলে নৈলে তোর
থেকবে না মূল এককড়া ॥

man re ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl
jñān-chāṛā
sadarer sāj karcho sadāy
pāch bāṛite nāi beṛā ॥

kothā bastu kothā re man
cauki pāhārā dāo hāmeśakṣaṇ
kāj dekhi pāgaler samān
kathāy ẏaman kāṭhaphāṛā ॥

kon konāy ki hacche ghare
ek-dine to dekhli nā re
paitrik dhan gelo core
hali re tui man phok tāṛā ॥

pāch bāṛi āṭelā karo
ghar corāre cine dharo
lālan bale naile tor
thekbe nā mūl ekakaṛā ॥

My mind, how spineless you are!
You're a yokel without an ounce of sense.[1]
You keep sprucing up the front of your house,
but in the back you have no fence.

Where's your matter
and where's your mind?
Be on the lookout all the time.
But you just act like a madman,
and your words are sharp as splinters.

What goes on
in the corners of your house—
not once did you catch a glimpse.
Then you were completely stumped[2]
when the thief snatched away
your inheritance.

Secure the back of your house.
Identify the thief and nab him.
Lālan says, Otherwise,
not a cent of your capital
will survive.[3]

1. "Yokel" translates *bāṅgāl,* which literally means "an inhabitant of East Bengal" and has the connotation of a crude, uncultured person from the backwaters.

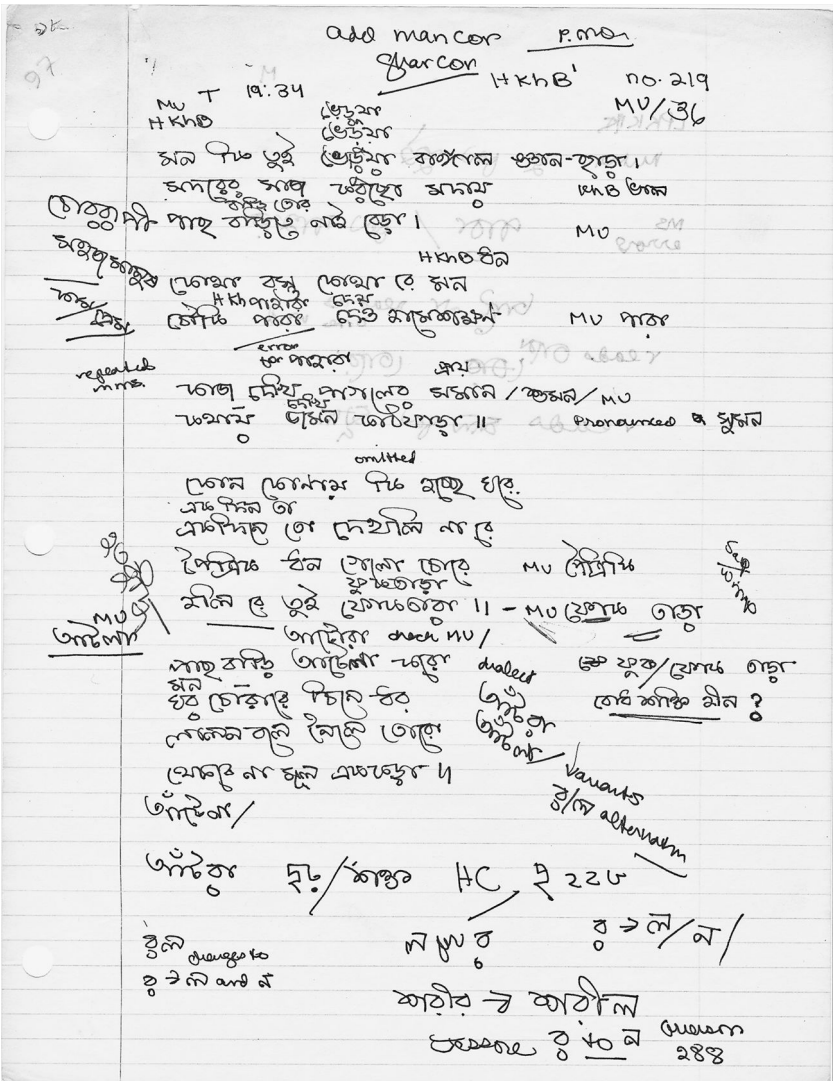
2. "Stumped" translates *phok tāṛā. Phok* [or *phuk*], "the power of understanding," according to Shahidullah (1968, vol. 3), is a word from Pabna dialect, which is basically the same as that of Kushtia. *Tāṛā* "chased away" in this context has the sense of "without." Thus the phrase *phok tāṛā* means "bereft of the power of understanding." (Cf. in "Phero palo tor phakirite" [**86**] Lālan's use of *eṛā,* "undone," in the phrase *leṅṭi eṛā,* "without a loincloth," which I freely translated "lost his loincloth.")

3. [Emendations:] Manuscripts: In the refrain T has *bhoṛuyā,* whereas all other manuscripts and an oral version sung by Khodā Bakṣ have *bheṛuyā,* the standard form of the word. In verse 1 T and M give *pārā,* while J¹ and Khodā Bakṣ's oral version have *pāhārā; pārā* may be a contraction of *pāhārā.* In verse 2 T has *phoktārā,* M has *phok tāṛā,* and J¹ has *phuktāṛā.* On the meaning of *phok tāṛā,* see note 2 above. (LG misreads T *phok tārā* as *koktārā.* Perpetuating the error, Sudhīr Cakrabartī (1992, 63) takes *koktārā* as a word from Kushtia dialect without giving any definition.) In verse 3 T has *āṭenā,* M has *āṭalā,* and J¹ has *āṭoṛā,* all variants of *ā̃ṭaṛā*; [or *āṭelā,* used in the Bengali version above] T and M have *ghar corāre,* whereas J¹ has *man corāre.* LPhKK: In the refrain Mitra misreads *tu* for *tui,* and in verse 3 *āṭe nā* for *āṭenā, tāro* for *toro,* and *mal* for *mūl.* LSOLG: In verse 1 read *pāhārā* for *pāhāṛā* and *pāgaler* for *pāgāṛ.* In verse 3 read *ā̃ṭarā* for *ā̃ṭāno.*

Man re ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā

This is yet another allegory about failure at the practice of seminal retention. When Lālan says "You keep sprucing up the front of your house, but in the back you have no fence," he is poking fun at *sādhak*s who dress up as Bāuls (*sājā bāul*) but cannot prevent ejaculation. "Matter" (*bastu*) signifies semen. As previously mentioned, if the adept cannot control his mind and concentrate on performing *sādhanā*, he will not be able to control his semen. On the *sahaj mānuṣ* as the "thief" of semen, see the annotations to "Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy" [LG no. 35, **120**]. "Inheritance" (*paitrik dhan*) [also transliterated *paitṛk dhan*] is a common code word in Bāul songs for semen, as is "capital" (*mūl*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 19, no. 34; LPhKK, 200; LG no. 424; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 257; M no. 36; J^1 no. 219.]



Salomon's MS for "Man re ki tui bheṛuyā bāṅgāl jñān-chāṛā."

99

মনে ে মার আপন বলতে কে আছে

Mane tomār āpan balte ke āche

মনে ে র আপন বলতে কে আছে
কার কান্দায় কান্দো মিছে ॥

থাক রে ভবের ভাই বেরাদর
ণপাখি সে নয় আপনার
পরের মায়ায় মজিয়ে এবার
ধন হারায় পাছে ॥

সারা নিশি দেখ মনুরায়
নানান প এক বৃ রয়
যাবার বেলায় কে কারে কয়
দেহ ণ তেমনি সে যে ॥

মিছে মায়ায় মদ খেও না
পথ ভুলে যেও না
এবার গেলে আর হবে না
পড়বি কয় যুগের প্যাঁচে ॥

আসতে একা আলি রে মন
যেতে একা যাবি তখন
সিরাজ সঁ ই বলেরে লালন
তুমি কার মায়ায় নাে মিছে ॥

mane tor āpan balte ke āche
kār kāndāy kāndo miche ॥

thāk re bhaber bhāi berādar
prāṇ-pākhī se nay āpnār
parer māyāy majiye ebār
prāpta dhan hārāy pāche ॥

sārā niśi dekho manurāy
nānān pakṣī ek bṛkṣe ray
ẏābār belāy ke kāre kay
deha prāṇ tæmani se ẏe ॥

miche māyāy mad kheo nā
prāpta path bhule ẏeo nā
ebār gele ār habe nā
paṛbi kay ẏuger pyā̃ce ॥

āste ekā āli re man
ẏete ekā ẏābi takhan
sirāj sā̃i balere lālan
tumi kār māyāy nāco miche ॥

O my heart, who is there
to call your own?
On whom do you waste your tears?

Let go of relatives and friends.
The bird of life is not your own.
Make sure you don't get caught
under someone's spell,
or you'll lose
the treasure you hold.

Don't you see, King of my Heart?—
All sorts of birds
spend the night
on the same tree.
When it's time to leave,
who speaks to whom?
That's the fate of body and soul.

Don't waste your life
drinking the wine of infatuation.
Don't stray from the right path.
If you miss this chance,
you won't get another,
for in time's spiral
you'll be trapped.

Alone you came, O my heart,
alone you'll go.
Sirāj Sẽ̃i says, Lālan,
on whom do you waste your dance?

[The handwritten manuscripts and annotations for this song are absent. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Jhā no. 190; LG no. 25.]

100

মনেরি লেঙ এঁটে কর রে ফকিরি

Maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakiri

মনেরি লেঙ এঁটে কর রে ফকিরি	maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakiri
আমানতের ঘরে মনা হয় না যেন চুরি ॥	āmānater ghare manā hay nā ẏæna curi ॥
এ দেশেতে দেখি সদায়	e deśete dekhi sadāy
ডাকিনী বাঘিনীর ভয়	ḍākinī bāghinīr bhay
দিনেতে মানুষ ধরে খায়	dinete mānuṣ dhare khāy
থেক শিয়ারি ॥	theko hũśiyāri ॥
বারে বারে বলি রে মন	bāre bāre bali re man
কর রে আ সাধন	karo re āpta-sādhan
আক ণে দু দমন	ākarṣaṇe duṣṭa daman
মা ধরি ধরি ॥	māro dhari dhari ॥
কাজে দেখি দড়ফড়ে	kāje dekhi daṛaphaṛe
লেঙ ে মার নড়বড়ে	leṅṭi tomār naṛabaṛe
খাটবে না রে লালন ভেড়ে	khāṭbe nā re lālan bheṛe
টাকশালে চাতুরি ॥	ṭākaśāle cāturi ॥

Tie the loincloth
of your mind on tightly
and follow the fakir's path[1]
so no one can rob the treasury.[2]

I see witches and tigresses
constantly terrorizing this land.
They feast on men in broad daylight.
Better be on your guard!

My mind, I told you time after time—
perform the worship of the Self.
Lure your enemy, then crush him.[3]
Seize him and put him to death.[4]

I see you get your job done quickly.[5]
Your loincloth is sagging.
Lālan, you fool, the mint is no place to pull tricks.[6]

1. Alt. trans.: "the fakir's way."

2. Alt. trans.: "so the treasury doesn't get robbed"; "to ensure that the treasury isn't/doesn't get robbed."

3. *ākarṣaṇe duṣṭa daman*: lit. "By attraction, crush the enemies."

4. Alt. trans.: "and take their lives"; "and finish them off."

5. Alt. trans.: "The job, I see you did lickety-split"; "I see you do the job lickety-split"; "I see you get the job done lickety-split"; "I see you work fast"; "I see you get you get your job done in a hurry / in a flash."

6. Emendations to J1: In the refrain *āmanate* is clearly an error for *āmānater*. The word order of the second line of the refrain is somewhat different from that of the other versions. The manuscript reads: *āmānater ghare manā hay nāẏeno curi*, whereas all other versions have *āmānater ghare ẏeno hay nāko / nā re curi*. In verse 2 *duṣṭa man* is an error for *duṣṭa daman* as given in KhB's oral version. In verse 3 *naṛbhore* is given instead of *naṛbare*. *Ṭākaśālāte* makes the line hypermetric. All other versions have *ṭākaśāle*. Published editions: In verse 1 BBOBG and LSOLG have *thākbe* for *theko re*. In verse 2 BBOBG has *karbe kathin* for *karo re*. BBOBG and LSOLG omit *daman* after *duṣṭa*. *Māro dhari dhari* should appear as the fourth line of the verse. In verse 3 BBOBG *baṛo phōṛe*, and LSOLG has *baṛo phoṛe* instead of *dharpharṛe* [or *daṛaphaṛe*]. KhB's oral rendition: verse 1 has *ẏoginīr* for *bāghinīr*. Verse 2 has *karo ebār*, whereas J[1] has *karo re*.

Maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakirī

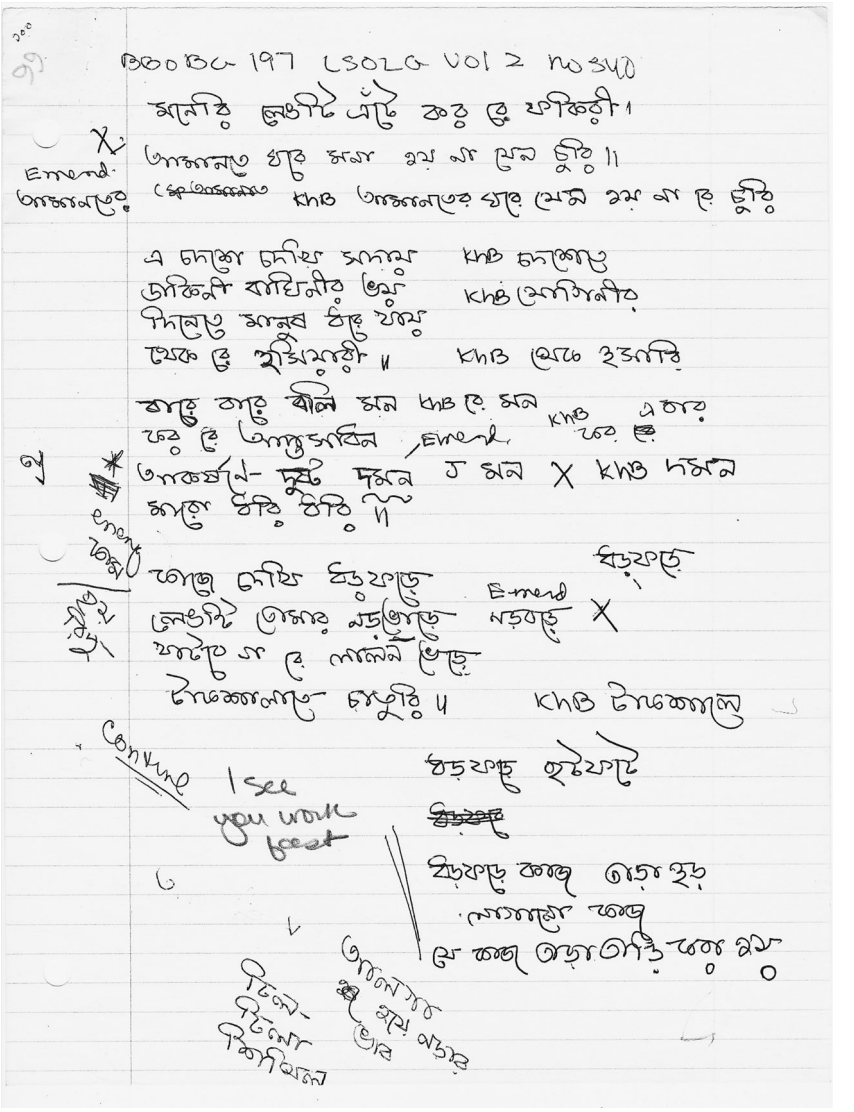
On the symbolism of the loincloth, see the annotations to "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors" ["Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," LG no. 35; **120**]. The "treasury" (*āmānater ghar*) probably refers to the *maṇikothā* ("room of jewels") where semen is stored (see, again, the annotations to the song mentioned above). If the "loincloth of the mind" is on tight, that is, if the mind is controlled, the "treasury" won't be robbed, that is, semen will be preserved in the *maṇikothā*.

Bāul songs express an ambivalent attitude toward women, characteristic of South Asian culture as a whole. On the one hand, they are considered sexually voracious "witches and tigresses" who attack men and rob them of their semen. On the other hand, they are the Śakti on whom the *sādhak* is dependent for success in *sādhanā*.

According to Bāul belief, the Absolute split in half and manifested itself as two polar principles, male and female. When, through sexual intercourse involving seminal retention, these two principles are reunited, the adepts experience the eternally blissful true Self of the Absolute (*ātmasvarūp*). This is what Lālan means by "worship of the Self" (*āpta-sādhan*, a blend of Bengali *āp* and Skt. *ātma*).

The "enemy" is the *chay ripu* "six enemies" in general and *kām* "lust" in particular. The way to "crush" *kām* is not to avoid it but to "seize it," to harness it and transform it into *prem* by preventing ejaculation during sex. In order to accomplish this, the *sādhak* must not be in a hurry but must take his time and proceed slowly and carefully. The "sagging loincloth" in the last verse symbolizes the phallus that has lost its erection. The "mint" (*ṭākaśāl*) is used by Lālan in several of his songs to symbolize the vagina (see the annotations to "Look brother! Being forced to work is like swallowing a husking machine" ["Uparodhe kāj dekho re bhāi ḍhẽki gelār mato," LG no. 447; **23**]).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1] no. 37; BBOBG no. 197; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 340; KhB; LS no. 384.]



Salomon's MS for "Maneri leṅṭi ẽṭe karo re phakiri."

101

মরে ডুবতে পারলে হয়

Mare ḍubte pārle hay

মরে ডুবতে পারলে হয়	mare ḍubte pārle hay
যদি মরা ভেসে উঠে কি সে ফল তায় ॥	ẏadi marā bhese uṭhe ki se phal tāy ॥
মরা ে অনেকে মরে	marā to aneke mare
ে বা কঠিন হয় গভীরে	ḍobā kaṭhin hay gabhīre
মা নাই ম সে বরে	māṭi nāi prem sarobare
ডুবতে হবে প প আ য় ॥	ḍubte habe svarūp rūp āśray ॥
যদি জানায় তারে	guru ẏadi jānāy tāre
তবে মরা জানতে পারে	tabe marā jānte pāre
শমন লা যাবে দূরে	śamana-jvālā ẏābe dūre
মানব জনম সফল নি য় ॥	mānab janam saphal niścay ॥
ে বে না মন উঠে খেদে	ḍobe nā man uṭhe khede
ডুবতে চায় কলসী বেধে	ḍubte cāy kalasī bēdhe
খেদে লালন বলছে কেদে	khede lālan balche kēde
না জানি ে ন ঘাটে লাগায় ॥	nā jāni kon ghāṭe lāgāy ॥

It's all right
if a man can die and then dive.[1]
But if the corpse floats to the surface,
then what's the use?[2]

Death:
many die.
It's diving deep that's hard.
There's no solid ground[3]
in the lake of love.
A man has to dive
to reach his true nature,[4]
the haven of God's form.[5]

Whoever the guru instructs
can know this death.[6]
Yama won't plague him anymore.
His human life will pay off, for sure.

Mind, don't dive
just to jump back up.
You have to dive,
weighed down by a pot.[7]
Lālan says, crying in despair,
I don't know where to dock.[8]

1. Alt. trans.: "if a man can die and dive."

2. Alt. trans.: "then what good is it?" "then what's the purpose?"

3. Alt. trans.: "bottom to the lake of love."

4. *svarūp*: Alt. trans.: "true form"; "subtle form."

5. *rūp āśray*.

6. Lit. "If the guru instructs him, he can . . ."

7. *kalasī*: a water pot made of clay. Alt. (literal) trans.: "with a pot tied on."

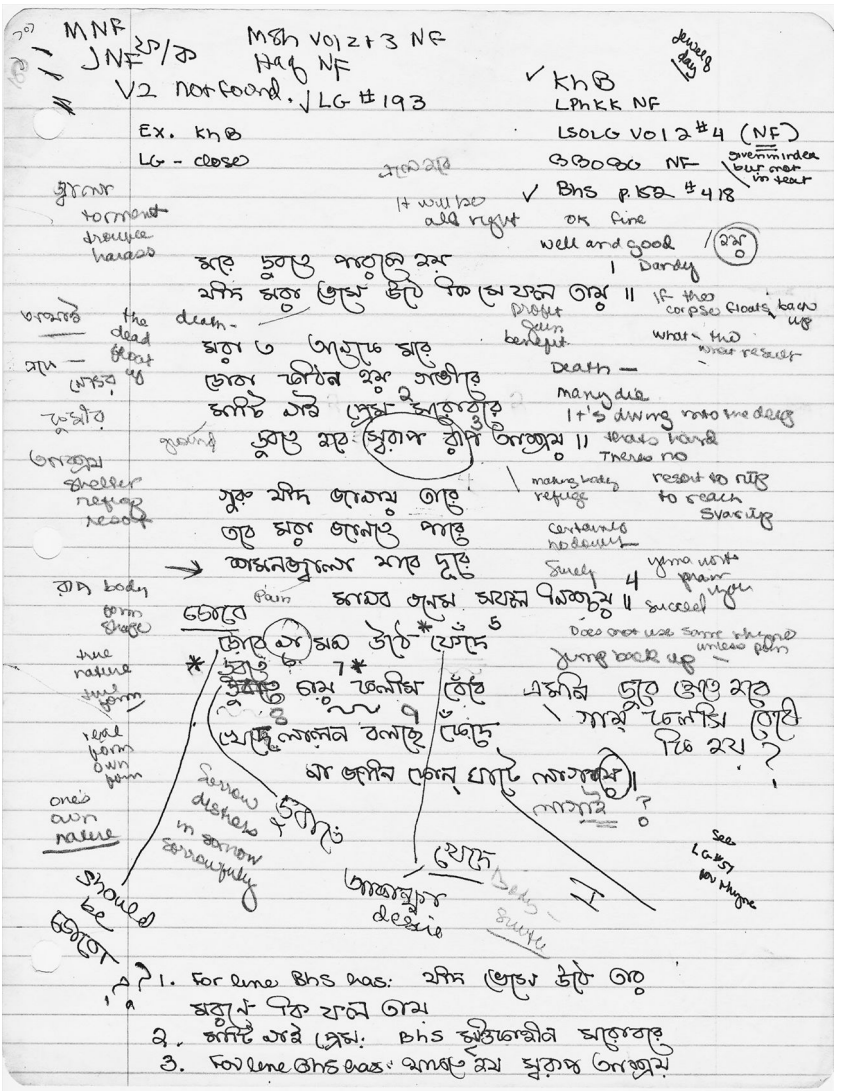
8. Lit. "I don't know which quay it (i.e., my mind) docks at." In the Bengali text of the two versions collected (LG and BhS), *ghāṭe lāgāy*, "he or she docks," is in the third person. One would expect in this context the first person *lāgāi*. The first and third persons of *ā* stem verbs are very close in pronunciation and are acceptable rhymes (see, for example, LG no. 51). Moreover, in nonstandard spelling, final *y* and *i* are often interchangeable. Thus it is possible that there is an error in the text, even though the other rhyming words end in *y*.

Mare ḍubte pārle hay

On the meaning of "dying and then diving" see the notes to "Ke tomāy e beś bhūṣaṇe" (LG no. 221, [**47**]). To float "to the surface" means to come back to worldly life and engage in sex ending in ejaculation. On the "true nature" (*svarūp*) as the means to reach God's form (*rūp*) see notes to LG no. 80 ["Āche māyer ote jagaṯpitā," **10**].

According to Qureshi ([1977], 242), Bengali literary texts mention that women committed suicide by drowning with a pot tied to them, presumably to weigh themselves down. Thus on the exoteric level "to dive weighed down by a pot" (lit. "with a pot tied on") refers to a method of committing suicide. On the esoteric level, however, the "pot" signifies the male sexual organ, and "being weighed down by a pot" or "tying on a pot" refers to gaining control over the ejaculation of semen. (On pot symbolism, see also LG no. 129 ["Rasik nām dhariye manā," **122**].) In Khodā Bakṣ's opinion, by the line "I don't know where to dock," Lālan means that he doesn't know whether he (i.e., his mind) will go to the "dock" of love or the "dock" of lust.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 193; KhB; BhS, 152, no. 418; LS no. 344.]



Salomon's MS for "Mare ḍubte pārle hay."

102

মলে জীব ঈ র হবে কেন বলে

Male jīb īśvar prāpti habe kæna bale

মলে জীব ঈ র হবে কেন বলে।	male jīb īśvar prāpti habe kæna bale ॥
সেই যে কথার পাই নে বিচার	sei ẏe kathār pāi ne bicār
কা কাছে ধালে ॥	kāro kāche śudhāle ॥
মলে হয় ঈ র	male hay īśvar prāpta
সাধু অসাধু সমস্ত	sādhu asādhu samasta
তবে কেনে তপ জপে এত	tabe kene tap jape eta
করে রে জলে লে ॥	kare re jale sthale ॥
যে প প ভূত হয়	ẏe pañce pañcabhūta hay
মলে তা যদি তাতে মিশায়	male tā ẏadi tāte miśāy
ঈ র অংশ ঈ রে যায়	īśvar aṃśa īśvare ẏāy
নরক কার মেলে ॥	svarga narak kār mele ॥
জীবের এই শরীরে	jīber ei śarīre
ঈ র অংশ বলি কারে	īśvar aṃśa bali kāre
লালন বলে চিনলে তারে	lālan bale cinle tāre
মরার ফল তাজায় খেলে ॥	marār phal tājāy khele ॥

Why do they say
you'll reach God when you die?
No matter who I ask,
I never get a cogent answer.[1]

If everyone,
saint and sinner,
reaches God when he dies,
then why all the penance and prayer
on land and on water?

The five things
from which the five elements come—
if you merge with them when you die,
and the divine[2] *in you goes to God,*
then who goes to heaven and hell?

What do they call divine in a creature's body?
Lālan says, Just know this,
and the fruits of death
ripen while you're fresh.

1. *sei ẏe kathār pāi ne bicār*: Alt. trans.: "I never get a straight answer."

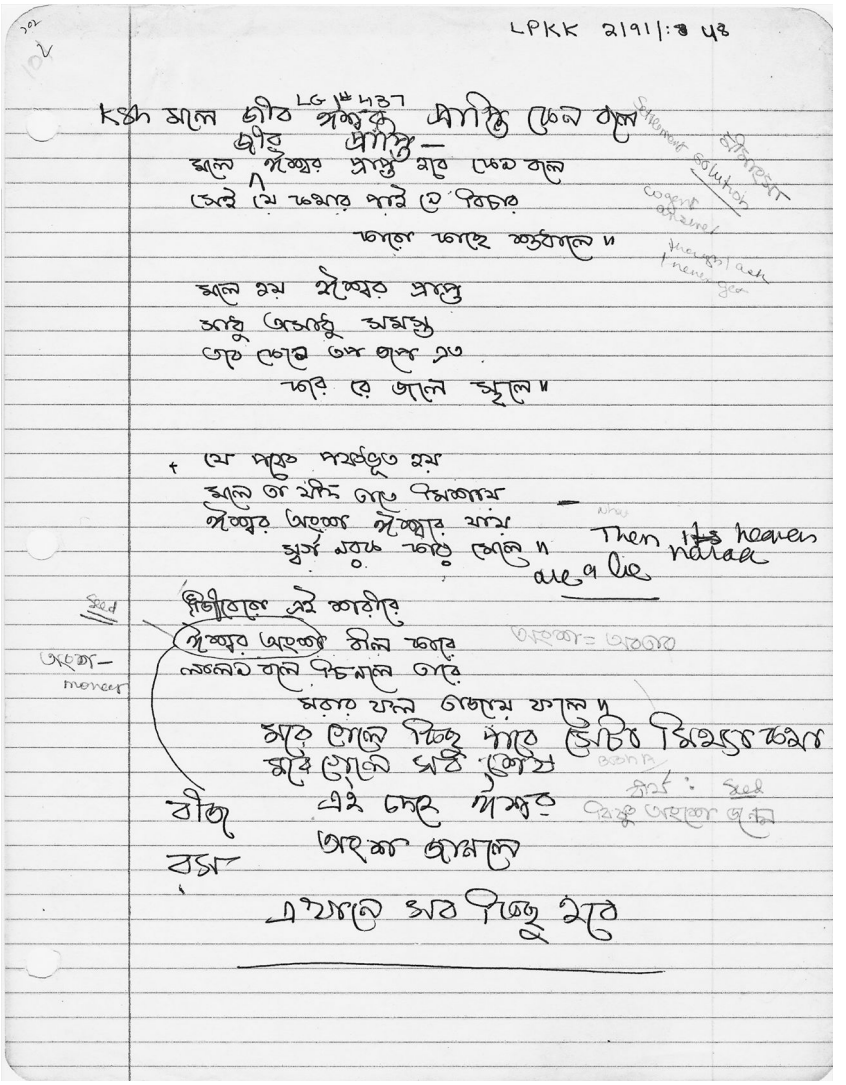
2. *īśvar aṃśa*: See commentary.

Male jīb īśvar prāpti habe kæna bale

Lālan ridicules the popular belief that even sinners can obtain liberation after death (presumably through *bhakti*). "The five things from which the five elements come" are the *tanmātra*s (subtle elements).

The answer to the riddle "What do they call divine" (or more literally, "the divine part," *īśvar aṃśa*) "in a creature's body?" is semen. (The use of *aṃśa,* which usually means "part," "portion," to signify semen is not peculiar to Bāul poetry. BBhA [source unknown, probably Bangla Academy's *Bāṃlā Bhāṣār Abhidhān*] gives "power" as one of the definitions of the word *bīrẏa* "semen" (def. 11) and quotes the phrase *biṣṇu aṃśe janma* "born from Viṣṇu's *aṃśa*.") Lālan's goal is not to merge with God after death but to become liberated in life (through preserving semen and performing *sādhanā*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 437; KSh; LS no. 766.]



Salomon's MS for "Male jīb īśvar prāpti habe kæna bale."

103

মানুষের করণ সে কি সাধারণ

Mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ

মানুষের করণ সে কি সাধারণ
জানে রসিক যারা ।
টলে জীব বিবাগী অটল ঈ র রাগী
সেও রাগ লেখে
বৈদিক রাগেরই ধারা ॥

যদি ফুলের স ঘরে বি পড়ে ঝরে
আর কি রসিক ভেয়ে হাতে পায় তারে
নীরে রে মিশায় সে পড়ে দু শায়
না মিশিলে হীন অ বিফল পারা ॥

হলে বাণে বাণ পনা বিষের উপ না
অে পথে গতি উভয় শেষখানা
প বাণের ছিলে ম অ কা লে
তবে হবে মানুষের করণ সারা ॥

ও সে রসিক শিখরে যে মানুষ বাস করে
হেতুশূ করণ সে মানুষের রে
নিহেতু বি সে মেলে সে মানুষে
অধীন লালন ফকির হেতু কামে
যায় মারা ॥

mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ
jāne rasik ẏārā ।
ṭale jīb bibāgī aṭal īśvar rāgī
seo rāg lekhe
baidik rāger-i dhārā ॥

ẏadi phuler sandhi ghare bindu paṛe jhare
ār ki rasik bheye hāte pāy tāre
nīre kṣīre miśāy se paṛe durdaśāy
nā miśile hīn aṅga biphal pārā ॥

hale bāṇe bān kṣepanā biṣer uparjanā
adhopathe gati ubhay śeṣ-khānā
pañcabāner chile prem astre kāṭile
tabe habe mānuṣer karaṇ sārā ॥

o se rasik śikhre ẏe mānuṣ bās kare
hetu-śūnya karaṇ se mānuṣer dvāre
nihetu biśvāse mele se mānuṣe
adhīn lālan phakir hetu kāme
ẏāy mārā ॥

Is the worship of the Man[1]
just ordinary worship?[2]
Those who are true lovers[3] *know.*
Unsteady: unbridled[4] *mortal.*
Steady: God's devotee.
Both are mere Vedic ways of devotion.
You can find them in black and white.[5]

If a drop spills
at the flower-junction, brother,
can the true lover get it back again?
If he mixes milk and water,
he's in desperate straits.
But if he doesn't, his mortal body[6]
goes to waste.

1. Alt. trans.: "person."

2. Alt. trans.: "just any old worship"; "your run-of-the-mill worship."

3. Alt. trans. of *rasik*: "expert lovers."

4. *Bibāgī* means "detached from the world," "indifferent to worldly life." Lālan, however, seems to use this word in exactly the opposite sense, to describe a person who has not renounced the world. In fact, the version in BBOBG contains the variant *biṣay-bhogī*, "one who enjoys worldly pleasures," which is probably a lectio facilior. The word appears in the opening line of another song by Lālan [LG no. 198] in a similar negative context: *man bibāgī bāg māne nā re / ẏāte apamṛtyu habe tāi sadāy kare*. It is unclear whether Lālan is punning on *bibāgī* and *bāg* "control" or is actually giving a definition of *bibāgī* when he says *bāg māne nā*, "You don't submit to control." It is possible to analyze *bibāgī* as the affix *bi* "without" and *bāg* "control," although this meaning is not attested. The verse quoted above would then translate: "Unbridled mind, you don't submit to control. You always do those things that lead to an early death." It is probably in this latter sense that Lālan uses the word. Another such word that occurs in Lālan's songs is *akaitab* "genuine," redefined by folk etymology to mean "cannot be told." See the notes to "Ẏe rūpe sā̃i āche mānuṣe" [LG no. 222; **116**].

5. The translation is highly tentative. *Rāg* seems to be used here in the sense of path. The last two lines have been reversed in the English translation for the sake of clarity in the English. Jhā explains the line in this way (1995, 327): *"lekhe arthāt ei duṭo panthāi śāstrer likhito nirdeśe pāoyā ẏāẏ."*

6. *hīn aṅga*. The line is somewhat problematic: Is *hīn* an attributive adjective or a predicate adjective? Alt. trans.: "pitiful body," "lowly body," "wretched body." Jhā (327) interprets the line to mean *aṅgādi hīnatā prāpta haẏ*, "the body, etc., attains an inferior state." Alt. trans.: "His body decays and goes to waste"; "His body becomes weak and goes to waste." KSh has *hem* for *hīn*. For the same confusion between *hīn* and *hem* [see] "Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāẏ" [LG no. 48; **112**].

And if he shoots
one arrow after another
all he gains[7] *is poison.*
Should the poison descend,
both he and she are ruined.[8]
But if he cuts the bowstring
of the five arrows[9]
with love's weapon,
then he'll complete the worship
of the Man.

That Man who lives at the top
of the true lover's head—
selfless worship[10]
brings you right to his door.[11]
By unselfish faith you get the Man.
But poor Lālan's dying
because he acts selfishly.

7. *uparjanā* for *upārjan*. The ā is added for the sake of the rhyme.

8. *ubhay śeṣ-khānā*. "He and she" do not appear in the Bengali text, but it is clear from the context that "both" refers to the male and female practitioners. The suffix *-khānā* seems to be pleonastic, added for the sake of the rhyme.

9. Alt. trans.: "to the five arrows."

10. *hetu-śūnya karaṇ*. Alt. trans.: "for no special cause;" "for its own sake;" "without a motive."

11. *se mānuṣer dvāre*. *Dvār* "door" is used in the sense of "way," "means." The phrase could also be rendered "is the way to the man," or "opens the door to him."

Mānuṣer karaṇ se ki sādhāraṇ

Lālan opens this song with a rhetorical question. "The worship of the Man," of course, is not "just ordinary worship" of the type described in scriptures. "Unsteady" (*ṭal*) refers to a man who is unable to prevent ejaculation and who, as a result, sires children. "Steady" (*aṭal*) describes a man who remains celibate and practices *sādhanā* without the aid of a woman.[12] Lālan rejects both these extremes as "Vedic"—that is, sanctioned by the scriptures. They belong to the written tradition and as such are not secret like Bāul doctrines. The aim of Bāul *sādhanā* is for the *sādhak* to become *suṭal*, that is, to engage in sexual intercourse with a woman, thereby making his semen descend, but not allowing it to be ejaculated. (See also "Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ" [LG no. 143; **62**].)[13]

The "drop" refers to semen, and the "flower-junction" to the *triveṇī* [Bng. *tribeṇī*], the juncture of the *nāṛīs iṛā, piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā* in a woman's *mūlādhār-cakra*, where the flower representing the Śakti is said to blossom during her menstrual period. "Milk" is a metaphor for semen, and "water" signifies menstrual blood. Lālan says that on the one hand, the *sādhak* should avoid spilling semen and mixing "milk and water" (i.e., semen and menstrual blood) if he is to succeed in *sādhanā*. Yet, on the other hand, if he fails to mix "milk and water," his "body goes to waste."

Scholars hold different opinions about how semen and blood are to be mixed, when it is to be done, and where. Lutphar Rahmān (1977, 154) finds that it is the practice in some Bāul groups for the *sādhak* to ejaculate into the vagina of a menstruating *sādhikā* on the third day of her menstrual period. Through sexual intercourse, the *sādhak* churns the semen, turning it into nectar. He then separates it out from the blood and takes it into his body again through his penis by means of a yogic technique termed *śoṣaṇ kārẏa,* "the act of suction." According to Rahmān, it is this *sādhanā* that is referred to as *raser bhiẏān* "making sweets" as well as *amṛ̣ta pān* "drinking nectar."[14] He interprets the reference to "another vessel" found in some

12. [Salomon's typescript adds the parenthetical note "(check with fakirs)" here and at other points in the annotations, indicating her intention to confirm some of these assertions through additional correspondence with Bāul practitioners.]

13. Openshaw [2002, 214] gives alternate definitions of *aṭal and suṭal*. She notes that *aṭal* sometimes is used to mean "intercourse without ejaculation of semen." If that is the case, then *suṭal* means occasional limited ejaculation, which, she says, is only to be practiced after the *sādhak* has mastered coitus reservatus.

14. Rahmān ([1977], 154) rejects U. Bhaṭṭācārya's explanation of *raser bhiẏān* (see BBOBG, 398) as sexual intercourse during the three days of the *sādhikā*'s menstrual period.

Bāul songs as well as in Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts to mean the ejaculation of semen into the woman's vagina, which represents the "other vessel." See, for example, Pāñja Śāh's song in BBOBG no. 287 and R. Haq [1990] no. 133, "(Ebār) āge karo rāger anveṣaṇ" ("Now first search for passion") and Bibarta Bilāś (quoted in BBOBG, 399). If the *sādhak* is not able to perform the difficult act of *śoṣaṇ*, then after ejaculating into the *sādhikā*'s vagina, the combined sexual fluids are placed in a vessel and drunk. Some groups mix the fluids with rice powder, honey, molasses (*guṛ*), and sugar to make a concoction termed *prem-bhājā*.[15]

Rahmān further notes (155–156) that *sādhak*s belonging to Pāñja Śāh's *sampradāy* practice strict coitus reservatus. They do not prescribe any seminal emission. It is for this reason, he concludes, that Pāñja does not mention placing semen in "another vessel." Instead of ejaculating, the *sādhak* separates out the two elements that comprise menstrual blood (*rajaḥ*), *ras* (juice) and *rakta* (blood), and then takes the purified *ras* into his body through his penis.[16] Rahmān, however, did not notice that the song by Pāñja mentioned in the previous paragraph does, in fact, refer to "another vessel" in which semen is placed:

It's not a rite for the first day,
but for the second day of the moon.
Whoever puts it (semen) in another vessel
and mixes the water and milk together,
says poor Pāñja in tears,
I worship the feet of that man. (BBOBG no. 287)

In another song, using the code word "light" (*nūr*) for semen instead of "milk," Pāñja Śāh again alludes to the mixture of these substances (quoted

In his song "Śuddha bhakti haite hay śuddha premer upārjan" (Jāhāṅgīr, nos. 28 and 77) Duddu alludes to another interpretation of *amṛta pān*. He says that the nectar is drunk by both the male and female. It is shared mouth to mouth (*adhare adhar dāraṇ*; see the notes to "Put your lips to hers . . ." ["Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye," **72**]) and obtained when the frog (the male) places his arrow (penis; instead of *bān* "arrow," no. 77 has *bāṭe*, which does not seem to make sense in the context) in the snake's (woman's) mouth. This seems to be a reference to the *sādhanā* discussed in the annotations to "Put your lips to hers . . ." in which the woman extracts semen orally and then passes half of it from her mouth to the *sādhak*'s mouth. It is probably this act which Duddu calls *amṛta pān*.

15. [Salomon's typescript adds the parenthetical note "(check)." See note 12.]

16. Salomon's typescript adds the parenthetical note: "(Check whether I have understood the Bengali correctly: *maithun dvārā nārīrajaḥ madhyastha ras o rakta pṛthīkaraṇer par pariśuddha ras mudrābiśeṣer sāhājye sādhak śarīre uttolani mūl lakṣya*.)"

in Rahman 1977, 156): "For the worship, brother, you should put light in a container. You should take water from the root (*mūlādhār*) and mix it in." These lines also indicate that the "mixing" takes place outside of the body for *sādhak*s who have mastered coitus reservatus. Whether fakirs in Pāñja's lineage prescribe ejaculation on the "second day of the moon," that is, the third day of a woman's menstrual period (the first day is *amāvasyā,* "the new moon day"), as this verse seems to indicate, is a matter for further study.

Openshaw also mentions limited ejaculation [2002, 158–159, 214, 174n16], considering it a more advanced stage than complete seminal retention, and remarks that male and female sexual fluids are even mixed together but does not provide any further details. In his account of Bāul *sādhanā*, U. Bhaṭṭācārya notes ([BBOBG] 397–398) that some Bāul couples drink menstrual blood and semen that has been extracted through oral sex (see the annotations to "Dharo re adhar cā̃dere" [LG no. 42; **72**]) and then mixed together outside of the body. For Bāuls who follow this method, the vessel in which the fluids are combined may be what is referred to as "another vessel" in Bāul songs.[17]

According to Śaktināth Jhā, the combining of male and female sexual fluids does not take place in the woman's body, where it could lead to conception, but rather in the man's body. He explains ([1995], 348n118) that through inverted sexual intercourse (*viparīta-rati* [Bng. *biparīt rati*]) with the woman positioned on top, the *sādhak* is able to take menstrual blood and even seed mixed with menstrual blood into his penis using the *śoṣaṇ* technique. In the latter case, it seems that at least a small amount of semen would have to be ejaculated. This would make Rahmān's and Jhā's descriptions of *sādhanā* closer than they appear at first. Alternately, Jhā continues, the *sādhak* may take the blood orally or simply absorb it into his body, presumably because he is on the bottom and the blood is flowing downward onto him. Jhā does not say whether the blood taken orally is mixed with semen afterward and, if so, how it is done. Nor does he explain what is meant in Bāul songs by the term *pātrāntar*. [Here is one possible] solution to the paradox obtained from my own field work:

"Shooting one arrow after another" refers to rapidly thrusting the penis in and out of the vagina, a practice which excites lust and leads

17. Bhaṭṭācārya gives a completely different interpretation of "another vessel." He believes (BBOBG, 398–399) that semen and menstrual blood exist in a woman's body in mixed form and that *pātrāntar* indicates the separating out of the semen from the blood, which is then made to go upward (presumably in the *sādhak*'s body into which it has been drawn). This view is rejected by Rahmān, who holds that the *sādhak*, through sexual intercourse, has to make his semen combine with the woman's menstrual blood.

to ejaculation. According to Lālan's song "Ẏe pathe sãi cale phere" [LG no. 65], "poison" (*biṣ*) comes from the woman's *kuṇḍalinī*.[18] Once the *sādhak* is bitten by it, the poison goes straight up to his *brahmarandhra*, presumably causing his semen to descend and be ejaculated.[19] (Cf. the Nāth term *garal-candra* "poison moon" in Śukur Māhmud's *Gupicandrer sannyās* ([1922], 169) and in Śekh Jāhed's *Ādya paricay* ([1964], 51). In note 57 (Haq 1975) Muhammad Enamul Haq explains that when semen, which is termed *amṛta* (nectar), descends from the *sahasrār-cakra* to the *mūlādhār* and is ejaculated, it turns into poison. "The five arrows" may refer to the five senses (see also "Dharo re adhar cãdere"). "Love's weapon" represents the penis (cf. *rāg astra* in "Āge jāno nā o manurāy" [LG no. 429; 6]). The "man" who lives "at the top of the true lover's head" is the Supreme present in semen, which is believed to be stored in the head.

"Selfless worship" (*hetu-śūnya karaṇ*) and "unselfish faith" (*nirhetu biśvās*) mean pure devotion (*śuddha bhakti*), that is, worship that is done for its own sake without any desire or ulterior motive. As Lālan explains in "Ki sādhane āmi pāi go tāre" (LG no. 125): "Rites (*bidhi*) for the five kinds of liberation and the eighteen kinds of magical powers—these are all called selfish worship (*hetu-bhakti*). My unseen lord isn't won over by them."

"Because he acts selfishly" loosely translates *hetu kāme*. *Kām* can mean "work" (< Skt. *karma*) or "desire," "lust" (< Skt. *kāma*). Karim Shah, in his rendition of the song, replaces *kām* with *kāj* "work" or "act," indicating that it is in the latter sense that the word is understood on the surface level. Translated literally, *hetu kāme* means "due to selfish acts." The phrase, however, also puns on the second sense of *kām*, providing the answer to what Lālan means by selfish acts, namely, sex motivated by *kām* "lust"

18. [Salomon's typescript adds the parenthetical note "(check)." See note 12.]

19.

ẏe pathe sãi cale phere
tār khabar ke kare//
se pathe āche re sadāy
biṣam kāl(a)nāginīr bhay
ẏadi keu āndāje ẏāy
omni uṭhe chō māre/
palak bhare biṣ dheye tār
uṭhe brahma-randhre re// (LSOLG vol. 2, no. 42)

or "desire" rather than by *prem* "love" that is *niṣkām* "without desire" for *ātmasukh* "one's own pleasure." It is for this reason that Lālan dies, that is, discharges semen.

[Manuscript Exemplar (V1 no. 142):]

mānser[20] *karaṇ se ki re*[21] *sādhāraṇ*
jāne rasiko yārā /
ṭale jīb bibāgī, aṭal īśvar rāgī
seo rāg lekhe[22] *baidig*[23] *rāgero dhārā//*

ẏadi[24] *phuler sandi*[25] *ghare, bindu paṛe jhare*[26]
ār ki rasik[27] *bheẏe*[28] *hāte pāẏ tāre*[29]*/*
nīre kṣīre miśāẏ, se[30] *paṛe durdaśāẏ*
nā miśle[31] *hīn*[32]*āṅga biphalo pārā*[33]*//*

hale[34] *bāṇe bāṇ khepanābiṣer*[35] *uparjanā*[36]
adhopate gati ubhaẏ śeṣ-khānā [37]*/*

20. KSh has *mānuṣer*.

21. Omitted in KSh's version.

22. J has *likhche se rāg*.

23. For *baidik*.

24. J has *o śe*; KSh has *ẏe jan*.

25. For *sandhi*.

26. J reverses the order of these two words.

27. V[1] omits the *k*.

28. J has *bhāẏe*; KSh omits the word.

29. KSh begins the line with *ẏe jan*.

30. J and KSh have *seo*.

31. KSh has *miśāile*.

32. KSh has *hem*.

33. The order of verses 1 and 2 are reversed in J. For the sake of listing the variants this reversal will not be taken into consideration.

34. J has *o śe*.

35. KSh has *habe biṣ*.

36. For *upārjan* "gaining," "obtaining."

37. KSh has *śvetkhānā*.

pañcabāṇer[38] *chile,* **prem astre**[39] *kāṭile*
tabe habe mānser[40]*karaṇo sārā*[41]//

o se rasiko śikhare, ẏe[42]*mānuṣ bās kare*
hetusarnna[43] *karaṇ se* **mānser**[44] *dvāre/*
nirhetu[45]*biśvāse*[46]*, mele se* **manuṣe**[47]
adhīn[48] *lālan phakir hetukāme ẏāẏ mārā*[49]//

(Other manuscripts: V[2] no. 29, M 29, and J no. 463. All the manuscripts have more or less the same readings. For the only significant variant, the last word in verse 2, V[1] has the better reading in terms of the rhyme and has been chosen as the exemplar for this reason. Oral version: KSh, which agrees with V[1]'s reading for the last word in verse 2.)[50]

[The following questions show Salomon's intended directions of research into the meaning of this song. They are included for reference.]

1. Who is the *mānuṣ*? Is it male, female or neither? In whose body is it the *sādhak*'s or *sādhikā*'s or both? (See Pāñja Śāh's song: "Mānuṣer karaṇ mānuṣ bhinna nay re man . . . ras ratite khelche mānu.") Does *karaṇ* mean *upāsanā*? *ki kare mānuṣer karaṇ hay*? *ki karte hay*?
2. What does *bibāgī* mean?

38. J has *bāne*.

39. V[1] and M have the same scribal error, *pram atre*, perhaps indicating that one was copied from the other.

40. KSh has *mānuṣer*.

41. M has *kāṛā* (?). The first two letters are darker than the last two and look like they have been gone over; V[2] and J have *karā*.

42. KSh has *se*.

43. V[1] and M have this spelling; V[2] has *sarna*, and J has *sanya* for *śūnya*.

44. V[1] has *māser*; KSh has *mānuṣer*.

45. J has *niḥhetu*; KSh has *nihetu*.

46. V[2] and J have *biśvāśo*.

47. V[1] and M have *mānuṣ*, V[2] has *mānuśo*, and J has *mānuś*.

48. Omitted in J.

49. For the line KSh has: *hetu kāje phakir lālan ẏāẏ mārā*.

50. Note: The final inherent vowel, which is not normally pronounced, may be pronounced for the sake of meter. Thus in this song both *rasik* and *rasiko* occur.

3. *Īśvar rāgī—īśvarer bhakta*? Who is *īśvar rāgī*, one who practices without a woman or a *sādhak* who practices total arrest of semen (see Openshaw [2002, 158–160])?
4. What does *rāg* mean in: *seo rāg lekhe baidik rāgero dhārā*? Is *rāg* here from *anurāg*? What does the whole sentence mean? What does Vedic mean? Can it refer to Qur'an as well as Hindu scriptures?
5. Is *phuler sandhi ghar* equivalent to *meyeder tribeṇī ghāṭ*?
6. In the sentence "*ār ki rasik bheye hāte pāy tāre*" to what does **tāre** refer (*bījke nā mānuṣke*)? Does it mean: "Does the *sādhak* get it (i.e., the semen) back again?"
7. Lālan says "*Nā miśle **hīn aṇga** biphalo pārā.*" What does *hīn* mean here? *Nicu*? Where should they be mixed? Why are semen and blood mixed? Many songs mention *pātrāntar*. Two possible solutions: the *sādhak* mixes them in his own body by taking in some of the woman's blood (but that would not explain *pātrāntar*), or, if he is unable, it is mixed in a bowl and eaten by the couple, or they are mixed in the woman's body.
8. Does *bāṇe bāṇ khepanā* refer to rapid thrusting of the penis in the vagina?
9. What does the **poison** refer to?
10. Is the suffix *-khānā* added to *śeṣ* only for the sake of *mil* [meter]? Does it have any special meaning here?
11. Are the five arrows *pañco indrīyo*? [See Salomon's description of the *pañcabāṇ* "five arrows" in her annotations to no. **72** "Dharo re adhar cā̃dere adhare adhar diye."]
12. ***Prem astra** kāke bale*? What is love's weapon? Is it at the top of the male's head where the *mānuṣ* lives?
13. *Hetu-śūnya karaṇ se mānuṣer dvāre*. What does *dvāre* mean here? Does *mānuṣer dvāre* mean *mānuṣ pāoyār path*? Is *hetu śūnya karaṇ* worship without desires such as offspring?
14. What is *bīṣ* and *amṛ̥ta*?
15. Does the mixing take place inside or outside the body? If it is inside the body, then whose body?

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V^1 no. 142; V^2 no. 29, M 29, and J no. 463; LG no. 456; LS no. 686.]

104

মায়েরে ভজিলে হয় সে বাপের ঠিকানা

Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā

মায়েরে ভজিলে হয় সে বাপের ঠিকানা।	māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā।
নি ম বিচারে স গেলো তাই জানা ॥	nigum bicāre satya gelo tāi jānā ॥
পু ষ পরওয়ার দেগার	puruṣ paraoyār degār
অ ছিল কৃতি তার	aṅge chilo prakṛti tār
কৃতি কৃতি সংসার	prakṛti prakṛti saṃsār
সৃ সব জনা ॥	sṛṣṭi sab janā ॥
নি ম খবর নাহি জেনে	nigum khabar nāhi jene
কেবা সে মায়েরে চেনে	kebā se māyere cene
যাহার ভার দীন দুনিয়ে	ẏāhār bhār dīn duniye
দিলেন র না ॥	dilen rabbānā ॥
ডি ম কে বা ছিল	ḍimbu madhye ke bā chilo
বের হয়ে কারে দেখিল	ber haye kāre dekhilo
লালন কয় তার ভেদ যে পে	lālan kay tār bhed ẏe pelo
ঘুচিল দিনকানা ॥	ghucilo dinakānā ॥

If you worship Mother,
you'll find out Father's address.
Some figured out the secret
and revealed this truth.[1]

There was a woman
in the body of the man, our protector.
A woman! A woman created the world
and everyone in it.

Who can recognize that mother
without knowing the secret—
the mother to whom our Lord entrusted
religion and the world?

Who was in the egg?
When he came out,
whom did he see?
Lālan says, His dayblindness is cured
who knows this mystery.[2]

1. *nigum bicāre satya gelo tāi jānā*: The subject is unexpressed in the Bengali. The line translates literally as follows: "By determining the secret, the truth became known."

2. Mitra misreads *nigum* in the refrain and in verse 2 as *nigur* and *nigun*, respectively.

Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā

The "mother" refers to the female aspect of the Supreme, the Śakti, identified with the primeval waters, light, and menstrual blood, as well as with women in general, who are considered incarnations of the Śakti. The Śakti is conceived of as the creative power of the Supreme and the efficient cause of the universe. The "father" refers to the male aspect of the Supreme, the Puruṣa, identified with light and semen.

According to the Bāuls, ontogeny recapitulates cosmogony—that is to say, human procreation repeats the primeval act of creation. The unqualified formless Supreme, in order to create the universe, took an active form by incarnating in the cosmic egg as the Creator Nirañjan, the father of the world. The cosmic egg from which he was born floated in the womb of the primal Śakti, represented by the cosmic waters.[3] The Bāuls hold that the conditions that were present when the universe was created are re-created every month when a woman menstruates. At the beginning of the third day of menstruation the active form of the Supreme, termed the *sahaj mānuṣ*, becomes manifest in menstrual blood just as Nirañjan became manifest on the cosmic waters. It is at this time that they perform their sexual *sādhanā* to "catch" him.

When Lālan says, "If you worship Mother, you'll find out Father's address," he is referring to the importance of the woman in *sādhanā*. It is only with the help of his female partner that the male practitioner is able to "catch" the Supreme, for it is in her body that the *sahaj mānuṣ* becomes manifest. He is also referring to the notion that *sahaj mānuṣ* unites with the Śakti in menstrual blood and that menstrual blood is the substance containing this form of the Supreme, just as the cosmic waters contained Nirañjan. (Cf. LG no. 80 ["Āche māyer ote jagaṯpitā," **10**]: "The mother screens the father of the world from view," and also LG no. 153 ["Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā," **68**]: "The mother of the world floats in the sea. Lālan says, The father is in her belly.") This belief that ontogeny recapitulates cosmogony and that the Creator appears in menstrual blood and can be caught like a fish by the experienced adept who is able to detect his presence is probably what Lālan means by the "secret."

3. The myth of Nirañjan's birth from the cosmic egg or Hiraṇyagarbha, as it is often called, can be traced back to the Ṛg Veda (10.121), Svetāśvara Upaniṣad (3.4. and 4.12c), Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.19), Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (II.I6, 1–2), Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (1.3), and Manusmṛti (I.7–9), among other Sanskrit texts.

Lālan states that "a woman was in the body of the man, our protector" because the Śakti was born from the Lord's body when he split into male and female in order to create the universe. As Duddu Shah sings (Jāhāṅgīr [1964], no. 63): "When the Lord was in the void, he was alone, the sole being. By the strength of his infinite power, from that power he brought his Śakti forth." As the material cause of the universe "she created the world and everyone in it." In another song (Jāhāṅgīr [1964], no. 91) Duddu Shah says: "A woman is the original creator, the original substance of creation. Father, the supreme male, the Lord—he was born from a woman."

According to Khodā Bakṣ, when Nirañjan who was in the egg came out, he saw the Śakti, called Fatima by Muslim Bāuls. For a discussion of the Śakti as both mother and wife of the Supreme, see annotations to LG no. 223, "Kāre śudhābo re marmakathā" [**41**]. For other egg riddles see LG nos. 102 ["Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sā̃i," **114**] and 223 ["Kāre śudhābo re marmakathā."]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[2]: 38, no. 71; LG no. 215; BhS, 89, no. 245; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 80; LPhKK, 222; LS no. 632.]

105

মিলন হবে কতদিনে

Milan habe katadine

মিলন হবে কতদিনে	milan habe katadine
আমার মনের মানুষের সনে ॥	āmār maner mānuṣer sane ॥
চাতকও য় অহ শি	cātak-o prāy aharniśi
চেয়ে আছি কা শশী	ceye āchi kālo śaśī
হ বলে চরণ দাসী	habo bale caraṇ dāsī
ও তা হয় না কপাল ণে ॥	o tā hay nā kapāl guṇe ॥
মেঘের বি ৎ মেঘে যেমন	megher bidyuṯ meghe ẏæman
লুকালে না পায় অ ষণ	lukāle nā pāy anveṣaṇ
কালারে হারায়ে তেমন	kālāre hārāye tæman
ঐ প হেরিয়ে দ ণে ॥	ai rūp heriye darpaṇe ॥
ঐ প যখন রণ হয়	ai rūp ẏakhan smaraṇ hay
থাকে না ে ক ল র ভয়	thāke nā lok lajjār bhay
লালন ফকির ভেবে বলে সদায়	lālan phakir bhebe bale sadāy
ও ম যে করে সে জানে ॥	o prem ẏe kare se jāne ॥

When will I be united
with the Man of my Heart?

Day and night
like a rainbird[1]
I long for the Black Moon,
hoping to become his servant.
But this is not my fate.

I caught a glimpse
of my Dark Lord a dream,
and then he was gone
like a flash of lightning
vanishing into the cloud it came from,
leaving no trace.[2]

Meditating on his image,
I lose all fear of disgrace.
Poor Lālan says,
He who always loves
knows.

[Salomon's handwritten manuscripts and annotations are missing for this popular song, which Bāul singers often sing collectively at the conclusion of a series of songs. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 362; LS no. 585.]

1. The *cātak* bird, according to legend, drinks no other water but the rain that falls for only a couple of weeks during the year. It is a symbol of devotion to an absent lover.

2. I translated the line freely, as the construction of the Bengali sentence is not parallel. It literally translates as: "Just as a flash of lightning leaves no trace when it vanishes into the cloud it came from, so I lost my Kālā, after glimpsing his image in a dream."

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মু দ জানায় যারে ম সেই জানতে পায়

Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy

মু দ জানায় যারে ম সেই
জানতে পায় ।
জেনে নে রাখে মনে সে কি কারে কয় ॥

নিরাকার রয় অচিন দেশে
আকার ছাড়া চলে না সে
নির সঁই অ যার নাই
যে ভাবে সে তাই হয় ॥

মু কের মু গিরি
কাজ নয় তার ফ গিরি
আকার নাই কে যার ব াখ আকার
বলে স দায় ॥

নূরেতে কুল আলম পয়দা
আবার কয় পানির কথা
নূর কি পানি ব জানি
লালন ভাবে তাই ॥

murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei
jānte pāy ।
jene śune rākhe mane se ki kāre kay ॥

nirākār ray acin deśe
ākār chāṛā cale nā se
niranta sā̃i anta ẏār nāi
ẏe bhābe se tāi hay ॥

munsīloker munsīgiri
kāj nay tār phaṣṭigiri
ākār nāi ko ẏār barjokh ākār
bale sarbadāy ॥

nūrete kul ālam paydā
ābār kay pānir kathā
nūr ki pāni bastu jāni
lālan bhābe tāi ॥

Only he finds out the truth—
the one to whom the murshid reveals it[1]
He learns his lesson well and keeps in mind
what his murshid says, and to whom he says it.[2]

Bodiless,[3] *he lives in an unknown land.*
But he goes nowhere without a body.
The eternal Lord who never dies—[4]
he is just as you think he is.[5]

What do I know
of pedants and their pedantry?[6]
Though he has no body, his middlemen do,[7]
people always say.

1. Alt. trans.: "Only the one to whom the murshid reveals it finds out the truth"; "Only he to whom the murshid reveals the truth finds it out"; "Only he finds out the truth to whom the murshid reveals it"; "The only one who learns the truth is the one to whom the murshid reveals it."

2. The translation is based on the tentatively accepted reading *kāre* and is therefore also tentative. Alt. trans.: "what the murshid says and to whom."

3. Alt. trans.: "unbodied."

4. *niranta sā̃i anta ẏār nāi.*

5. The Bengali sentence *ẏā bhābe tāi hay* [or *ẏe bhābe se tāi hay*] (see also *ẏe ẏā bhābe se hay dāṛāy* in "Til parimāṇ jāygāte ki kudaratimay" [LG no. 134; **64**]) is probably elliptic for what is somewhat more fully expressed in the title line of another song by Lālan: "Ye ẏā bhābe sei rūp se hay" [LG no. 420], "He takes whatever form you picture him as having" (lit. "In whatever way one thinks of him, in that form he appears"). A similar statement occurs in Lālan's "Dhanya bhāb gopī bhāb āhā mari mari" [LG no. 359]: *chilo kṛṣṇer pratijñā æman, ẏe bhābe ẏe kare bhajan tāite hay tāri,* "Such was Kṛṣṇa's promise: in whatever way one worshipped him, in just that way he appeared." This seems to echo Gītā 4.11: *ẏe yathā mām prapadyante tāṃs tathaiva bhajāmy aham,* "In whatsoever way any come to Me, in that same way I grant them favor" (Edgerton's translation [from Sanskrit]). Alt. trans.: "He is whatever you think he is"; "He is whomever you think he is" (IV. 11, in Edgerton 1972, 24).

6. "Pedants" translates *muñsīlok* [also spelled *munsīlok*], who are scribes and teachers of languages, particularly Arabic, Persian, and Urdu.

7. "Middlemen" translates *barzakh* [Bng. *barjokh* or *barjakh*]. On the meaning of this word in Bāul songs, see the annotations to this song. Alt. trans.: "mediators," "intercessors," "go-betweens." Though he has no body, his middlemen have bodies.

From light the whole world was created.
But they also speak of water.
Can light be a liquid substance?[8]
Lālan thinks so.[9] [10]

8. Alt. trans.: "watery substance."

9. The line could also be translated: "Lālan wonders."

10. [Emendations:] The song is not included in any of the manuscripts I have collected. However, I have discussed portions of the text with Khodā Bakṣ and taped an oral rendition of it sung by Mahendranāth Goswāmī. In this case I did not choose any one text as the exemplar, as there are only a few significant variants and no version is free from error. In the refrain LSOLG has *kāro* and MG has its variant form *kāru*. LG has *kāre*, which makes better sense in the context and which I have therefore tentatively accepted as the reading. MG reverses the order of verses 1 and 2. Verse 1: MG gives *kay* instead of *ray*. LG and MG have *niranta sãi, anta ẏār nāi*, which I have accepted as the correct reading. LSOLG has *ananta sãi, anta ẏār nāi*, and KhB has *nirantar sãi, antar ẏār nāi*. *Niranta* is a pseudo-Sanskrit word. Both *nirantar* and *ananta* may be attempts to correct this solecism. MG has *tāre ẏe ẏā bhābe se tāi hay*, and KhB has *ẏe ẏā bhābe tāi hay* for LG and LSOLG *ẏe bhābe tāi hay*, which is metrically correct. Verse 2: LG and LSOLG have *barjakh kār*, which does not make sense. MG has *kise barjakh tār*, and KhB gives *barjakh ākār*, which makes the best sense. Verse 3: LG has *phul* instead of *kul*, the reading of the other versions.

Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy

On the macrocosmic level, the "unknown land" refers to God's abode in heaven. In the context of the Islamic terminology of the song, it signifies in particular the area beyond the Sidrah tree, which marks the border between the seventh heaven and God's domain. On the microcosmic level it stands for the highest *cakra*, the *sahasrār*, where God exists in a state of absolute unity as the *aṭal īśvar* "unwavering God" (see the annotations to "This time search your own house" ["Dekho nā ebār āpnāro ghar ṭhāoriye," LG no. 62; **69**]). As Lālan says elsewhere ("Ke bojhe sā̃ir līlākhelā" [LG no. 16]), "Above the seventh floor (i.e., the *sahasrār*), formless, he stays in an unknown land." In the "unknown land" the Lord is transcendent and without form or qualities. Here he is unknowable.

Lālan says that the Lord "goes nowhere without a body" because, as stated previously ("You should understand what sets those two lights apart" ["O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe," LG no. 240; **36**]), when God desired to be known, he revealed the form manifest in himself and created man in his own image. (See the discussion of the paradox of the form of the formless Lord in the annotations to "It amazes me to see the Lord's play" [LG no. 281; **132**].) The line "He is just as you think he is" expresses the belief that God is one but has many forms and names. As Lālan says in a song referred to previously ("Ẏe ẏā bhābe sei rūp se hay" [LG no. 420]): "He takes whatever form you picture him as having. Rām, Rahim, Karim, Kālā—throughout the world, just one Allah."

The Arabic word *barzakh*, freely translated as "middlemen," is used in the Qur'an to mean "a partition, a bar or barrier; the place or state in which people will be after death and before Judgement" (Ali 1983, 23:100 n2940). It is interpreted by Sufis as referring to the Prophet, who occupies a position intermediate between the divine and the created world (Schimmel 1985, 134). According to the Bāuls, it is the murshid who is the *barzakh*, the intermediary between God and man. In Lālan's opinion, the fact that the *barzakh* has a body belies the assertion of "pedants" who only rely on book knowledge that God has no physical shape.

Lālan is equating light with seed when he agrees that light can be a liquid substance. (On creation from liquid light see "You should understand what sets those two lights apart" ["O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe," **36**]. On the connection of light and seed in Islamic, Tantric, and Buddhist traditions see Salomon 1991, 282.)

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 239; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 60; KhB; MG; LS no. 72.]

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মু দের ঠঁই নে না রে তার ভেদ বুঝে

Murśider thẽi ne nā re tār bhed bujhe

মু দের ঠঁই নে না রে তার ভেদ বুঝে	murśider thẽi ne nā re tār bhed bujhe
এ দুনিয়ায় সিনায় সিনায়	e duniyāy sināy sināy
কি ভেদ নবি বিলিয়েছে ॥	ki bhed nabi biliyeche ॥
সিনার ভেদ সিনায় সিনায়	sinār bhed sināy sināy
সফিনা ভেদ সফিনায়	saphināro bhed saphināy
যার যে দিকে মন গেলো ভাই	ẏār ẏe dike man gelo bhāi
সে সে ভাবে দাঁড়িয়েছে ॥	se se bhābe dā̃ṛiyeche ॥
কুত আর কু ভাবী	kutarkī ār kusvabhābī
তারে ভেদ বলে নাই নবি	tāre bhed bale nāi nabi
ভেদের ঘরে দিয়ে চাবি	bheder ghare diye cābi
শরার মতে বুঝিয়েছে ॥	śarār mate bujhiyeche ॥
নেক-তন বা রা যত	nek-tan bāndāra ẏato
ভেদ পেলে আউলিয়া হে	bhed pele āuliyā hato
নাদানেরা শূল যঁ চিত	nādānerā śūl ẏā̃cita
মনছুর তার সাবুদ আছে ॥	manchur tār sābud āche ॥
তফসীর হোসেনি যার নাম	taphsīr hoseni ẏār nām
তাই ধুড়ে পায় মসনবি কালাম	tāi dhuṛe pāy masanabi kālām
ভেদ ইশারায় লিখা তামাম	bhed iśārāy likhā tāmām
লালন বলে নাই নিজে ॥	lālan bale nāi nije ॥

What message[1]
did the Prophet pass on to this world
from one heart to another?
Find out from a murshid.

The heart's message is in hearts;
the Book's message, in the Book.[2]
Whichever way your mind goes
that's where you end up.[3]

The Prophet didn't tell the message
to sophists and wicked men[4].
He locked the message away[5]
and taught Sharī'a to them.

If they had heard[6] *the message,*
all those pious souls, servants of God,[7]
would have been saints, for sure,
and impaled on the stake by morons,[8]
as happened to Mansur.[9]

Search the commentary called Tafsīr Hosnī.
You'll find the gist[10] *of the Mathnawī.*
The whole message is written there in code.[11]
These words are not Lālan's own.[12]

1. *bhed* is a free translation of "message." The term has the sense of both "secret" or "secret doctrine" and "doctrine" in general (cf. *tattva*).

2. Alt. trans.: "the book's message in books." As Bengali sometimes does not distinguish singular and plural, either translation is possible. I have taken "Book" to mean the Qur'an, but Lālan could also mean religious books in general.

3. Alt. trans. (literal): "That's where you stand."

4. Alt. trans.: "bad-natured men."

5. *bheder ghare diye cābi*: Alt. trans.: lit. "He locked the room to the message."

6. "Received," according to Khodā Bakṣ's version. Alt. trans.: "Had they only heard . . ."

7. *nekatan bāndārā ẏato.*

8. *nādānerā śūl ẏācita:* lit. "Morons would have put them to the stake."

9. *manchur tār sābud āche:* lit. "Mansur is the proof." Alt. trans.: "As in the case of Mansur."

10. *kālām*: lit. "words."

11. *iśārāy*: lit. "in hints."

12. *lālan bale nāi nije*: lit. "Lālan didn't say this on his own." Alt. trans. (free): "This is what Lālan was told."

Murśider thẽi ne nā re tār bhed bujhe

Lālan says that the Prophet imparted two teachings to the world; one is found "in the Book" (*saphināy*), and the other "in the heart" (*sināy*). The former, *sharī'a* [Bng. *śarā* or *śarīyat*] "religious law," is *ẓāhir* [Bng. *jāher*] "external," "exoteric," and "available to all," while the latter, *ma'rifa* [Bng. *māraphat*] "mystic knowledge," is *bāṭin* [Bng. *bātun*] "hidden," "secret," and given only to a few. As Lālan sings in another song (LG no. 263 ["Dibārete theko sab re bāhu sāri"]): "The exoteric (*ẓāhir*) words are all in the Book, but the secret (*gupta*, a synonym of *bātun*) words I (Muhammad) put in the heart."

Mansur is Manṣūr Ḥallāj [Bng. Manchur Hāllāj], the great Persian Sufi saint, famous for his dictum *anā l-ḥaqq* "I am the Truth" (i.e., God). He was executed in 922 CE, probably on the gallows, for his beliefs. Schimmel writes ([1985], 59) that he came to represent "the model for all who are punished because they speak openly about the mysteries of love and unity." In praising Ḥallāj, Lālan follows a long South Asian Muslim poetic tradition. As Schimmel notes ([1982], 158): "There is barely a poet in the popular tradition of Indo-Pakistan and Anatolia who does not sing again and again of this "martyr of love." See also LG no. 255 ["Āmi ki tāi jānle sādhan siddhi hay"]: "There was a fakir Mansur Hāllāj. He said "I am the truth (*āmi satya*)."

Tafsīr, (commentary on the Qur'an), is one of the literary forms Sufi mystics used to express their beliefs. The *Tafsīr Hosnī* may have been a commentary of this type written in "code," that is, in a cryptic style termed *ishārāt* (pl. of *ishāra*; Bengali *iśārā*), in order to veil the truth, which is too dangerous to express openly. Since I have found neither the original text nor a description of it, the exact nature of this *tafsīr* must remain conjectural. The *Mathnawī* is the masterpiece of the great Persian Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi. It was written in the second half of the thirteenth century and consists of approximately twenty-six thousand. Rumi is widely considered to be "the foremost interpreter of the all-embracing Unity of Being" (Schimmel [1982], 83). Maybe it is this message that Lālan says is found both in the *Tafsīr Hosnī* and the *Mathnawī*. When I asked Khodā Bakṣ to explain what Lālan might mean by "the gist of the *Mathnawi*," he quoted the following verse in Hindi: Man is not Khodā, but he is not different from him (*ādam kabhi khodā nahi, magar khodā judā nahi*).

The last verse is unusual for its erudition. Perhaps it is to deny any pretentions to scholarship that Lālan says that he is not expressing original thoughts.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; KhB; LG no. 259; BhS; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 48; LPhKK, 137; LG no. 259; LS no. 69.]

108

মেরে সঁইর আজব লীলাখেলা

Mere sãir ājab līlākhelā

মেরে সঁইর আজব লীলাখেলা
তা কেউ বুঝতে পারে।
কালায় ে নে অ দেখে
এই ভাবনগরে ॥

ড়া সে নেচে বেড়ায়
অ জনায় সব দেখেরে।
মরা করে তাজা আহার
ধরে ধরে ॥

জল নাই দেখি স
ভাসে প সেই পুকুরে।
এ বড় রহ -কথা
বলে কারে ॥

খঁাচায় ে তর নাই তার
উড়ছে পাখি নির রে।
সিরাজ সঁই কয় দেখরে লালন
দেখ নজরে ॥

mere sãir ājab līlākhelā
tā keu bujhte pāre।
kālāy śone andha dekhe
ei bhābnagare ॥

nyāṃṛā se nece beṛāy
andha janāy sab dekhere।
marā kare tājā āhār
dhare dhare ॥

jal nāi dekhi sadya
bhāse padma sei pukure।
e baṛa rahasya-kathā
balbo kāre ॥

khãcāy kautar nāi tār
uṛche pākhi nirantare।
sirāj sãi kay dekh-re lālan
dekh najare ॥

No one can understand
the strange game of my Lord.
The deaf hear, the blind see
in this city of love.

The lame dance while the blind watch.
The dead feast on fresh food.

I just saw a lotus
floating in a dried-up pond.
This is a great secret.
To whom should I tell it?

The cage is empty, but pigeons
keep flying out.
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Look, Lālan!
Look carefully!

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 154; LS no. 148.]

য

109

যদি গৌরচাঁদকে পাই

Ẏadi gaurcãdke pāi

যদি ে রচাঁদকে পাই
গেলো গেলো এ ছার কুল
আর তাতে তি নাই ॥

জ লে মরিতে হবে
কুল কি কা ে স যাবে
মিছে কেবল দুদিন ভবে
কুলের বড়াই ॥

কি ছার কুলের ে রব করি
অকূলের কূল ে র হরি
ভবতর র তরী
ে র ে সঁই ॥

ছিলাম কুলের কুলবালা
নিলাম আঁচলা-ঝোলা
লালন বলে ে র বালা
আর কারে ডরাই ॥

ẏadi gaurcãdke pāi
gelo gelo e chār kul
ār tāte kṣati nāi ॥

janmile marite habe
kul ki kāro saṅge ẏābe
miche kebal dudin bhabe
kuler baṛāi ॥

ki chār kuler gaurab kari
akūler kūl gaur hari
bhabataraṅger tarī
gaur gosãi ॥

chilām kuler kulabālā
skandhe nilām ãcalā-jholā
lālan bale gaur bālā
ār kāre ḍarāi ॥

If only I could get Gaurcãd.
So I lose this worthless family.
What do I care?

You're born, you die.
Does your family go with you?
Yet I waste my few days on earth,
bragging of my pedigree.

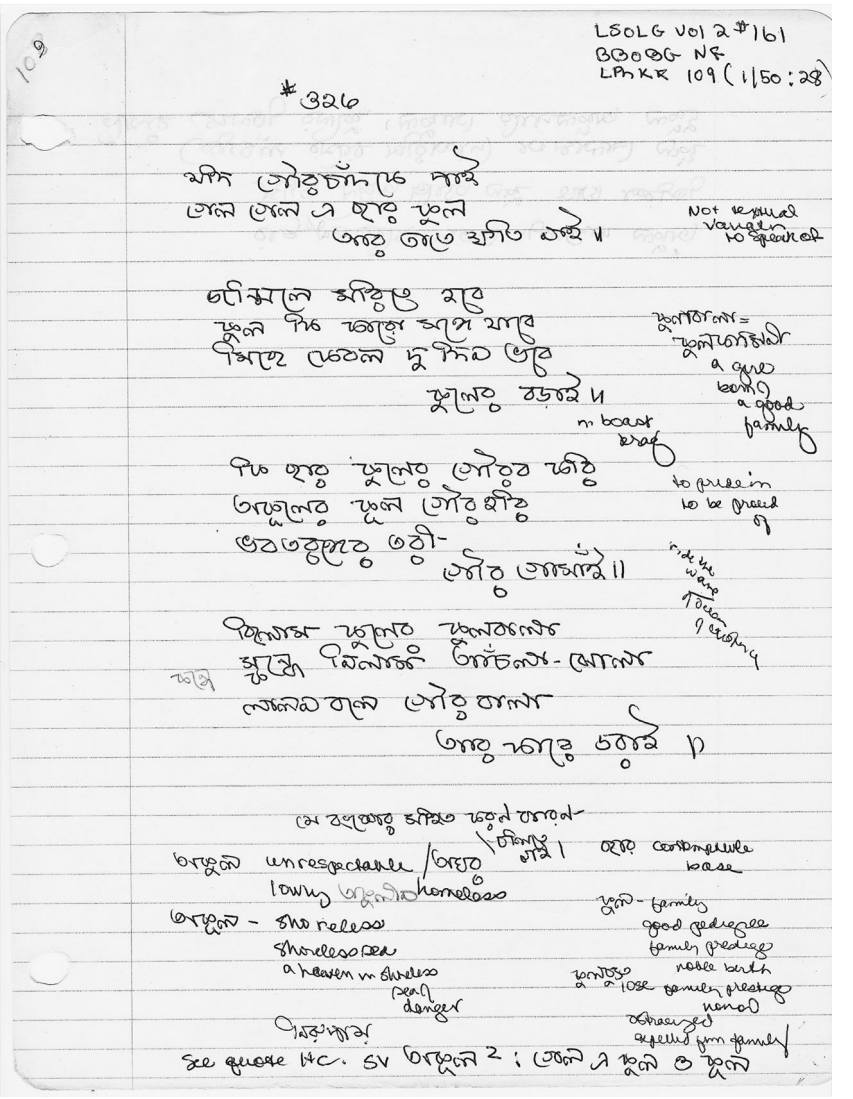
What a worthless family
I take pride in.
My Gaur is Hari,
shore to a shoreless sea,
the boat to ride the waves
in the ocean of existence.

I was a girl from a good family
till I slipped the beggar's bag
on my shoulder.
Lālan says, I'm Gaur's girl now.
Who do I have to fear?

Ẏadi gaurc̃ādke pāi

Gaurc̃ād [also transliterated Gaurcand], "Fair Moon," is an epithet of Caitanya, the sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava reformer, identified here with Hari or Kṛṣṇa. This song expresses *Gaur nāgar bhāva* [Bng. *bhāb*]; Lālan regards Gaur as his *nāgar* (lover), and himself as a woman in love with him (*nāgarī*). See LG no. 443 ["Ājab raṅ phakiri sādā sohāginī sãi," **13**] on the importance of taking the female role.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 326; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 161; LPhKK no. 109 (T^1 50:28); LS no. 247.]



Salomon's MS for "Ẏadi gaurcãdke pāi."

110

যাও হে ম রাই কু আর এে না

Ẏāo he śyām rāi kuñje ār eso nā

যাও হে ম রাই কু আর এে না
এলে ভাল হবে না ॥

ẏāo he śyām rāi kuñje ār eso nā
ele bhālo habe nā ॥

গাছ কেটে জল ঢালছো পাতায়
এ চাতুরী শিখলে ে থায়
উচিত ফল পাইবে হেথায়
তা নইলে টের পাবা না ॥

gāch keṭe jal ḍhālcho pātāy
e cāturī śikhle kothāy
ucit phal pāibe hethāy
tā naile ṭera pābā nā ॥

করতে চাও ম নাগরালি
যাও যথা সেই চ বলি
এ পথে পড়েছে কালি
এ কালি আর যাবে না ॥

karte cāo śyām nāgarāli
ẏāo ẏathā sei candrābali
e pathe paṛeche kāli
e kāli ār ẏābe nā ॥

কেলে বঁধু জানা গেলো
উপর কাল ভিতর কাল
লালন বলে উভয় ভাল
করি উভয় ব না ॥

kele bādhu jānā gelo
upar kāl bhitar kāla
lālan bale ubhay bhālo
kari ubhay bandanā ॥

Go away, Śyām!
Don't come to Rādhā's garden ever again.
It won't do you any good to return.

You cut down a tree,
then water its leaves.
Where'd you learn such a trick?
Here you'll get what you deserve,
or you'll never learn your lesson.

If debauchery is what you want,
go to Candrāvalī.
This road is stained
and the stain will never rub off.

I found out, Kele,[1] my friend,
you're as black inside as out.
Lālan says, You're both good.
I salute you both.[2] [3]

1. Kele (< *kāliyā*), another epithet that means "black," has a pejorative connotation.

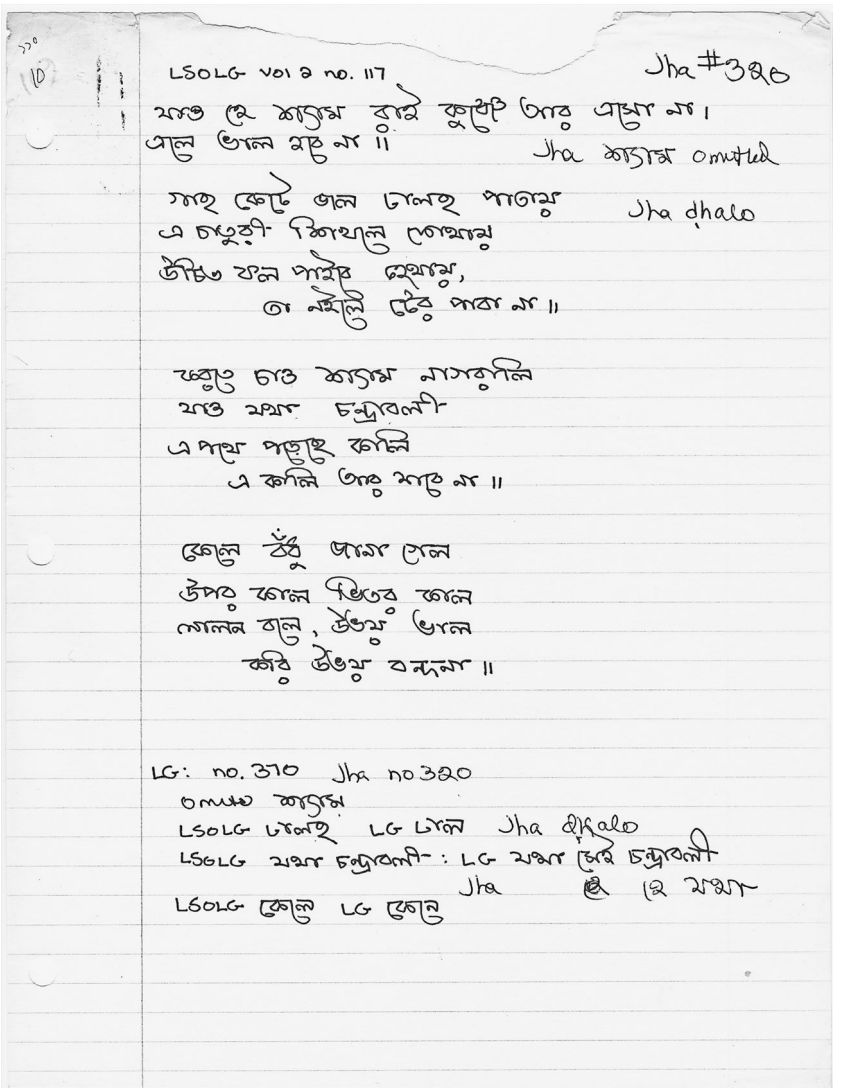
2. "Both" refers to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

3. [Emendations:] I have no manuscript or oral source for this song. There are just two minor variants in the song as given in LSOLG and LG: LSOLG has *ỳāo he śyām* for the opening of the refrain, whereas LG omits *śyām*. The last verse begins with *kele* (see note 2 above) in LSOLG and *kene* in LG. In both cases the variants given in LSOLG make better sense. This version has therefore been chosen as the exemplar.

Ẏāo he śyām rāi kuñje ār eso nā

This is another song (see ["O kālār kathā kæna balo āj āmāy," LG no. 368; **35**]) on the theme of Rādhā's anger (*mān*) at Kṛṣṇa's infidelity, playing on the name Kṛṣṇa, which literally means "black," and on epithets with the same sense (here, Śyām [commonly transliterated Shyam] and Kele). "To cut down a tree and water its leaves," a variant of the proverbial saying "to cut the root of a tree and then water the top" (*gācher goṛā keṭe āgāy jal ḍhālā*," or, more briefly stated, *goṛā keṭe āgāy jal*) has the sense of consoling a person after causing his or her downfall.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 117; LG no. 370; Jhā no. 320; LS no. 376.]



LSOLG vol 2 no. 117 Jha #320

যমত হে শ্যাম রাই কুঞ্জই আর এছা না।
এলে ভাল হই না ॥ Jha শ্যাম omitted

যাহ ক্ষেত্রে ভল চালহু পাতহু Jha dhalo
এ চতুরী কিঁথালে শেখাহু
ভীষ্ঠ ফল পাইব দেখাহু,
তা নহিলে হেঁর পরা না ॥

ক্ষণহু চাত শ্যাম নাসকুলিল
যত যমা চন্দ্রাবলী
এ পাখ পড়ুহু কলি
এ কলি আর মাহু না ॥

কোলে বঁধু জাগা লোল
উপর কোল ভিতর কোল
লালন বলে, ভঁভয় ভোল
কবি ভঁভয় বন্দনা ॥

LG: no. 310 Jha no 320
omitted শ্যাম
LSOLG চালহু LG চাল Jha ধীরালো
LSOLG যমা চন্দ্রাবলী : LG যমা হেরি চন্দ্রাবলী
Jha ছাড় ১২ যমা
LSOLG কোলে LG কোলে

Salomon's MS for "Ẏāo he śyām rāi kuñje ār eso nā."

111

যারে নে পায় না মহামুনি

Ẏāre dhyāne pāy nā mahāmuni

যারে নে পায় না মহামুনি
আছে সেই অচিন মানুষ
মীন প ধরিয়ে পানি ॥

আজব রঙের মীন বটে সে
সাত সমু জুড়ে আছে
সবার হাতের কাছে
চিনতে পারে ে ন ধনি ॥

কর রে সমু নি য়
ে ন ে গে তার ে ন ধারা বয়
ে গ চিনে ডুবলে তাতে
মীনকে ধরা যায় আপনি ॥

ে গ বুঝে মীন পড়ে ধরা
জানতে পায় সে ে গী যারা
সিরাজ সঁ ই বলছে খাড়া
লালন সে ঘাটে খায় চুবানি ॥

ẏāre dhyāne pāy nā mahāmuni
āche sei acin mānuṣ
mīn-rūp dhariye pāni ॥

ājab raṅger mīn baṭe se
sāt samudra juṛe āche
sabār hāter kāche
cinte pāre kon dhani ॥

karo re samudra nirṇay
kon ẏoge tār kon dhārā bay
ẏog cine ḍuble tāte
mīnke dharā ẏāy āpani ॥

ẏog bujhe mīn paṛe dharā
jānte pāy se ẏogī ẏārā
sirāj sāi balche khāṛā
lālan se ghāṭe khāy cubāni ॥

That unknown person
whom the great sages never find
with all their meditation—
he takes to water
in the shape of a fish.

It truly is a strange-colored fish,
spreads over the seven seas.
It's within everyone's grasp,
but who is lucky enough
to spot it?[1]

Find out about the sea—
when each current flows.[2]
Dive in at the right time,[3]
and catch the fish automatically.

The fish is caught
when the time is right.[4]
Those who are yogīs know.[5]
Sirāj Sãi says, standing straight as can be,
Lālan is drowning at the quay.

1. *cinte pāre kon dhani.*

2. *kon ẏoge [tār] kon dhārā bay.*

3. *ẏog cine ḍuble tāte.*

4. *ẏog bujhe mīn paṛe dharā.*

5. LG has an alternate line: *jānte pālle nadīr dhārā*. The line translated in the text (given in the LSOLG version) is contained in LG no. 37 ("Dhyāne ẏāre pāy nā mahāmuni"), a song very close to this one.

Ẏāre dhyāne pāy nā mahāmuni

This song and the next six songs[6] hint at a persona Lālan calls the *acin* or *ajān mānuṣ*, "unknown person," whose identity may differ from song to song. Even a single song may have more than one possible solution to the figure's identity.

In the song under discussion, Lālan reveals who the *acin mānuṣ* is when he says that the figure has the "shape of a fish." As mentioned in the annotations to "The Lord's game is terrifying to watch" ["Līle dekhe lāge bhay," LG no. 184; **125**], the fish symbolizes the active form of the Supreme, who becomes manifest in a woman's body during her menstrual period. (Lālan composed several additional songs that mention the Supreme in the form of a fish. See, for example, "Mīn-rūpe sẽi khele" [LG no. 138], "Samay bujhe badhāl bẽdhle nā" [BBOBG no. 52], "Prem-ḍubāru bine ke jāne" [BBOBG no. 119], and "Samay gele re o man sādhan habe nā" [LG no. 450].) It is interesting to note that Eliade (1969, 308n45) interprets the fish as a symbol of "revelation," as the passage of a doctrine from the state of oblivion or eclipse to the state of "complete manifestation," an interpretation completely consonant with its use in Bāul songs, where it represents the manifest form (*prakāśvarūp*) of the Supreme. This form of the Supreme, known as the *sahaj mānuṣ*, is androgynous and possessed only by the female, yet identified with semen.

Further proof that the *acin mānuṣ* is a form of the Sẽi is provided by another song composed by Lālan: "Dhyāne ẏāre pāy nā mahāmuni" [LG no. 37], a companion piece to the one under discussion with an almost identical refrain. Instead of *acin mānuṣ*, the refrain has *adhar cẽd* "uncatchable moon" (LG reads *acin cẽd* "unknown moon"), which is another name for the Lord: "My uncatchable moon whom the great sages never find with all their meditation travels around, taking to the water in the shape of a fish."

The "currents" refer to the menstrual flow on each of the three or four days a woman is said to menstruate. It is in the blood of the third day that the Lord becomes fully manifest and can be "caught" by the *sādhak* through ritual sex. This is considered the "right time" (*ẏog*) for *sādhanā*.

By referring to his guru Sirāj Sẽi as "standing straight as can be" Lālan is saying that he is able to remain *aṭal* "unwavering," that is, maintain an

6. [This refers to the song's position in a set of seven songs compiled by Salomon that treat upon the subject of the *acin* or *ajān mānuṣ*, "unknown person" (cf. song no. **9**). The other songs as referenced in the annotations are listed alphabetically by their first lines and can also be located using the song list.]

erection and prevent ejaculation. In contrast, Lālan pokes fun at himself, describing himself as "drowning at the quay," which means ejaculating into his partner's vagina. The "quay" is the *ghāṭ* of the *triveṇī* [Bng. *tribeṇī*], the place in the *mūlādhār* where the three channels meet, or simply the *ẏoni*.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 117; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 192; LS no. 471.]

112

যে জন প হেম সে বরে যায়

Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy

যে জন প হেম সে বরে যায়
অটল অমূ নিধি সেই অনায়াসে পায় ॥

অপ প সেই নদীর পানি
জ তাতে মু মণি
বলে কি তার ণ বাখানি
পরশে পরশ হয় ॥

পলকে ভড়ে পড়ে চড়া
পলকে বয় তড়কা ধারা
সেই ঘাট বেধে মৎ ধরা
সামা কাজ নয় ॥

বিনে হাওয়ায় ে জা খেলে
  খ হয় ত্রিপিনালে
তাহে ডুবে র ে লে
রসিক মহাশয় ॥

গুরুজি কা রি যারে
অথায়ে থাই দিতে পারে
লালন বলে সাধন ে রে
  শমন এড়ায় ॥

ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy
aṭal amūlya nidhi sei anāyāse pāy ॥

aparūp sei nadīr pāni
janma tāte muktāmaṇi
balbo ki tār guṇ bākhāni
paraśe paraś hay ॥

palake bhaṛe paṛe caṛā
palake bay taṛakā dhārā
sei ghāṭ bẽdhe maṯsya dharā
sāmānya kāj nay ॥

bine hāoyāy maujā khele
trikhaṇḍa hay tripināle
tāhe ḍube ratna tole
rasik mahāśay ॥

guruji kāṇḍāri ẏāre
athāye thāi dite pāre
lālan bale sādhan jore
  śaman eṛāy ॥

He who goes to the golden lotus-river
easily gets a lasting and priceless treasure.[1]

This river has miraculous water.
It yields all kinds of jewels and pearls.
How can I describe its power?
One touch and you turn to gold.[2]

In the wink of an eye
the river silts up.
In the wink of an eye
it rushes on.[3]
It's no simple task
to catch a fish, standing
where there's no firm ground.[4]

Without wind waves surge.
At the Triveṇī three rivers merge.[5]
True lovers, those great souls,
just dive in and come up with jewels.
Whoever makes his guru
the helmsman of his boat,
reaches the shore of this shoreless river.
Lālan says, By the strength of his worship
he escapes the clutches of death.[6]

1. Lit. "the golden pond of the lotus." I have freely translated *sarobar* as "river" instead of "pond," its literal meaning, so that the refrain is consistent with the rest of the song, which describes a river. [Salomon also translated this line "He who goes to the river that has no lotus blossoms" according to a variant given in the manuscripts. See the emendations in note 6 below.]

2. *paraśe paraś hay. Paraś* "touch," often short for *paraś-pāthar* "touchstone," seems to mean "gold" in this context. See also T²: 63, no. 119: *ẏe paraś parśe paraś se paraś cine le nā.*

3. *taṛakā dhārā.*

4. *sei ghāṭ bēdhe maṯsya dharā sāmānya kāj nay.*

5. Lit. "the Triveṇī has three parts."

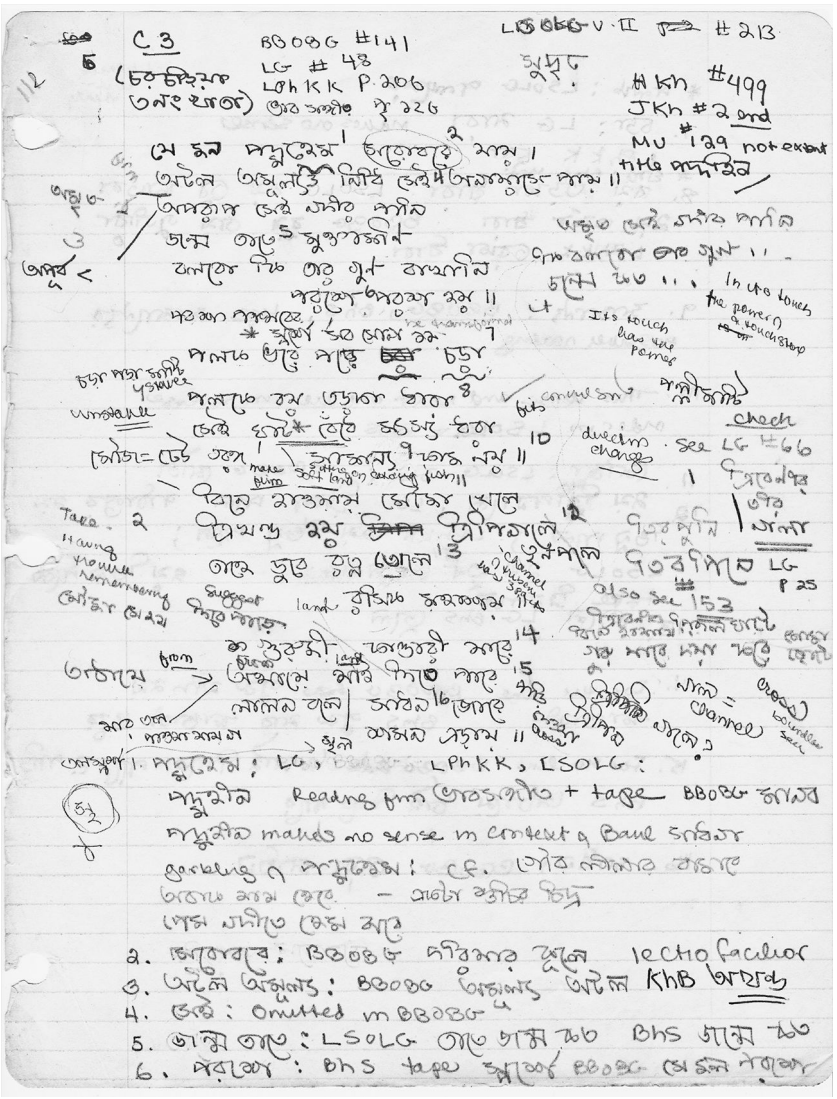
6. [Emendations:] All the manuscripts I examined have *ẏe jan padmahīn sarobare ẏāẏ* ("He who goes to the pond with no lotuses"). Abdul Karim Shah, however, in his rendition of the song, sings *padmahem sarobar* (lit. "the golden pond of lotuses) for *padmahīn sarobar*. This reading is also given in *Bhāb saṅgīt* [Haque 1985], 128, no. 354. All other published editions of Lālan's songs I have seen, however, agree with the reading of the manuscripts. *Padmahīn*

Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy

The "golden lotus-river" symbolizes the menstrual flow in the woman's *mūlādhār-cakra*. The jewels found in its waters, in particular the pearls, represent "the germinative force of the water in which they were formed" (Eliade 1969, 439), or in other words the essence of the Śakti present in menstrual blood. When Lālan describes the river as "silting up" one minute and "rushing on," he is alluding to the unpredictability of the menstrual flux, which can vary even on a single day from light to heavy. On "without wind waves surge," see the notes to "Dil dariyāy ḍube dekho nā," LG no. 153 [**68**]. The "jewel" also symbolizes the active form of the absolute, as does the "fish." It can be caught by the vigilant adept on the third day of a woman's menstrual period at the *ghāṭ* of the "Triveṇī," [Bng. *tribeṇī*] the confluence of the three *nāṛi*s, *iṛā*, *piṅgalā*, and *suṣumnā*, in her *mūlādhār*.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 18 no. 31; Mitra, 206; LG no. 48; BBOBG no. 141; T^2 no. 128; LS no. 163.]

sarobar is inconsistent with the imagery of Bāul songs; the pond or river of the menstrual flow in the *mūlādhār-cakra* is always described as a flower, and often as a lotus. See for example this line of Ramaṇ Dās's song, BBOBG no. 530: *candra thāke gagan pare padma sarobare*, "The moon is in the sky, and the lotus, in the pond." T: In verse 3 read *khele* for *thele*, and in the last verse read *ẏāre* for *ẏāro*. In the refrain Mitra misreads *amalya* for *amūlya*, and in verse 3 *bhinnapale* for *tinnapale*. J^1 has *tṛnapale*. *Tinnapale* and *tṛnapale* seem to be either dialectal variants or corruptions of *tripināle*, another term for the Triveṇī (see Dimock 1966, 259). LG: In verse 2 read *caṛā for ẏārā*. In verse 3 LG has *triś pale* for *tinnapale* or *tṛnapale*.



Salomon's MS for "Ẏe jan padmahem sarobare ẏāy."

113

যে জন সাধকের মূলে ড়া

Ẏe jan sādhaker mūl-goṛā

যে জন সাধকের মূলে ড়া
বেমুরিদ বেতালিব সে ে
ফিরছে সদায় বেদছাড়া ॥

নূরে হয় তার সৃজন
ভাবে করছে মণ
নূরেতে নূর নবি হে
সেই কথা দেশ ে ড়া ॥

পিরের পিরও দ গীর হয়
মু দের মু দ বলা যায়
চিনতে পারে তারে যদি পায়
পায় সে পথের ে ড়া ॥

কেউ বলে সে মূলাধারের মূল
মু দ বিনে জানবে কে তার উল
সঁই লালন বলে ভেদ না জেনে
ঝাকমারি তার বেদ পড়া ॥

ẏe jan sādhaker mūl-goṛā
bemurid betālib se to
phirche sadāy bed-chāṛā ॥

gupta nūre hay tār sṛjan
guptabhābe karche bhramaṇ
nūrete nūr nabi halo
sei kathāṭi deś joṛā ॥

pirer pir-o dastagīr hay
murśider murśid balā ẏāy
cinte pāre tāre ẏadi pāy
pāy se pather goṛā ॥

keu bale se mūlādhārer mūl
murśid bine jānbe ke tār ul
sãi lālan bale bhed nā jene
jhākamāri tār bed paṛā ॥

The one who's the goal[1]
of the devotee—
he has no disciples;
no students.
Excluded from the Vedas,
he roams eternally.

He was created from a hidden light[2]
and travels undercover.[3]
But the light Muhammad's light came from
is known by people all over.

He's the patron of the saint of saints.[4]
He's called the murshid of murshids.
But only if a man knows
the ways of the road
can he recognize him.[5]

Some say he's the root at the base.[6]
Without a murshid
he's impossible to trace.[7]
Lālan says, If you don't know the mystery,
reading the Vedas is sheer stupidity.

[Annotations are missing for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 234; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 85; LS no. 488.]

1. *mūl-goṛā*: lit. "root." The translation is tentative.

2. *gupta nūre.*

3. *guptabhābe.*

4. *pirer pir[-o] dastagīr.* It is not clear whether *dastagīr* "patron" is compounded with *pir* or stands separately. It is also possible to translate the sentence as "He's the saint of saints and (your) patron."

5. *cinte pāre tāre ẏadi pāẏ se pather dā̃ṛā* [alternatively: *goṛā*].

6. *mūlādhārer mūl:* The *mūlādhār* is the *cakra* located between the anus and the genitals.

7. *jānbe ke tār ul:* lit. "Who can know his whereabouts?" *Ul: sandhān* ["wherabouts"].

114

যে দিন ডি ভরে ভেসেছিলেন সঁই

Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sãi

যে দিন ডি ভরে ভেসেছিলেন সঁই
সে দিন কে হ তার স
  কাহারে ধাই ॥

পয়ার প ধরিএ এসে
দেখা দিল ঢেউতে ভেসে
কি নাম তার পাই নে কিশে
আগমে ইশারায় বলে কহে তাই ॥

সৃ না করিল যখন
কি ছিল তার আগে তখন
  নতে অস ব সে বচন
একের কুদরতে দুজনে তারাই ॥

তারে না চিনিতে পারি
অধরে কেমনে ধরি
লালন বলে সে যে নূরী
  দার ট নবির বড় কেহ কয় ॥

ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sãi
se din ke halo tār saṅgī
  kāhāre śudhāi ॥

payār rūp dharie ese
dekha dilo ḍheute bhese
ki nām tār pāi ne kiśe
āgame iśārāy bale kahe tāi ॥

sr̥ṣṭi nā karilo ẏakhan
ki chilo tār āge takhan
śunte asambhab se bacan
eker kudarate dujane tārāi ॥

tāre nā cinite pāri
adhare kæmane dhari
lālan bale se ẏe nūrī
khodār choṭa nabir baṛa keha kay ॥

On the day the Lord floated
in an egg on the waters,[1]
who was his companion?
Who can I ask?

When she took the form of a bubble[2]
and came floating on the waves,
what was her name?
I don't have a clue.
The scriptures are vague.[3]

Who was there
before the world was created?
This story sounds impossible:
Two came from the creative power
of the One.

1. Although it is not explicitly stated, it can be inferred from the myth of the cosmic egg discussed in the annotations that the egg floated "on the waters."

2. The translation is highly tentative, since the meaning of *payā* in this song is obscure. I have not come across the word elsewhere in Bāul poetry, either in a song by Lālan or by another Bāul poet. The three fakirs I questioned about its meaning each gave a different definition. Khodā Bakṣ said it meant a flower; Karim Shah defined it as a bubble (*bimba*); and Jharu Shah, taking the word to be *payār* as it is given in some notebooks (see note 4 below), said it denoted a bird's feather. S. M. Lutfar Rahman in his unpublished dissertation "Bāul Sādhanā o Lālan Śāh" (1977, 295) glosses *payār* with *ṣūkṣma*, "subtle." Of these suggestions, "bubble" seems to best fit the context, although flower, symbolizing the Śakti, is also possible. According to Jharu Shah, *bimba* is the second of three stages in the development of the cosmic egg, the first being *ābimba*, "not from a bubble," that is, "not womb-born" (probably for *abimba*, as initial *a* often becomes *ā* in nonstandard Bengali; see Lālan's song "Sadāy se nirañjan tire bhāse" [LG no. 225]), and the last being *ḍimba*, "the cosmic egg." This translation, however, is only speculative.

3. *āgame iśārāy bale kahe tāi*. Alt. trans.: "The scriptures only give hints."

If I can't know this power,[4]
how do I catch the Uncatchable?
Lālan says, That light
ranks below Khodā
but above the Prophet[5]*—*
so some people say.[6]

4. Lit. "If I can't know it." The pronoun "it" (*tāre*) may refer either to creative power in the preceding verse or to "light" in the *bhaṇitā*.

5. Alt. trans.: "That light is inferior to Khoda, but greater than the Prophet"; "That light is greater than the Prophet, but not as great as Khoda"; "That light is inferior to Khoda, superior to the Prophet."

6. Emendations to exemplar: In verse 1 read *dharie ese* for T (and M) *dhari ese* (could also be segmented *dharie se*). LPhKK misreads *adhare* in verse 3 as *adhār*. Manuscripts: In the refrain J and C^1 give *ke chilo tār saṅge*, whereas T and M have *ke halo tār saṅgī*. J has *kāhār* instead of *kāhāre*. In verse 1, J has *paẏā rūp*, whereas T, M, and C^1 have *paẏār rūp*. In either case, the word may be *paẏā*. In the first instance, *paẏā* is in compound with *rūp*, and in the second instance it has the genitive ending *r*. If this analysis is correct, then the phrase means the form of *paẏā*, and *paẏā* cannot be the adjective "auspicious," but rather must be a noun. See note 1 for a discussion of the possible meanings of the word. J and C^1 also have *tāhār*, whereas T and M have *tār*. In verse 2 M gives *ki* for *ke*, as does KhB. Published editions: In the refrain LG and LSOLG have *bhesechilen*. LSOLG has *ke chilo tār saṅge*. In verse 1 LG and LSOLG have *dharie se*. LG and LSOLG give *pāi ne* instead of *nā pāi*. LSOLG has *balā kaoyā* instead of *bale kahe*. In verse 2 LSOLG has *koi* for *ke* and *tarāi* for *tārāi*. In verse 3 LSOLG gives *adhar* for *adhare*.

Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sā̃i

Although this song does not mention the *acin mānuṣ* "unknown person," common imagery connects the unidentified persona it alludes to with this enigmatic figure. Of the two identities of the *acin mānuṣ*, the *sahaj mānuṣ*, the active from of the Supreme who appears in menstrual blood, and the Śakti, the female power, the latter best answers the questions concerning the figure's role in creation that Lālan asks here.

The egg is the *hiraṇyagarbha*, "the golden egg" from which the Creator was born. According to the version of the myth told in Manusmṛti (1.7–9), the Absolute deposited his seed on the primal waters. The seed became a golden egg from which the god Brahmā was born. Lālan gives a possible answer to the question "On the day the Lord floated alone in an egg on the waters, who was his companion (*saṅgī*)?" in his song "There's an unknown person in religion and the world" ["Āche din duniyāy acin mānuṣ ekjanā," LG no. 90; **9**]: "On the day the Lord, the one and only God, floated alone in the void, the unknown person kept him company" (*dosar*). Here the "unknown person" is probably the Śakti, as she was the receptacle or womb for the cosmic egg. As the Bāul poet Ramjān (Śarīph 1973, 66, no. 5) sings: "My Lord floated on Mother Śakti's chest." In his song "If you worship Mother, you'll find out Father's address" ["Māyere bhajile hay se bāper ṭhikānā," LG no. 215; **104**], Lālan asks a similar question: "Who was in the egg? When he came out, whom did he see?" The title line implies that it was the Śakti whom the Lord saw. The fakirs I asked all confirmed that the Lord's companion and the one he saw when he came out of the egg was Fatima or the Primal Mother. Khodā Bakṣ explained that when the egg broke, the Lord cried "mother" three times, an incident often mentioned in Bāul songs. For example, Fakir Cā̃d sings: "Why did Khodā call out 'mother'? Was he in her womb? (Fakir Cā̃d in Śarīph 1973, 52, no. 33).

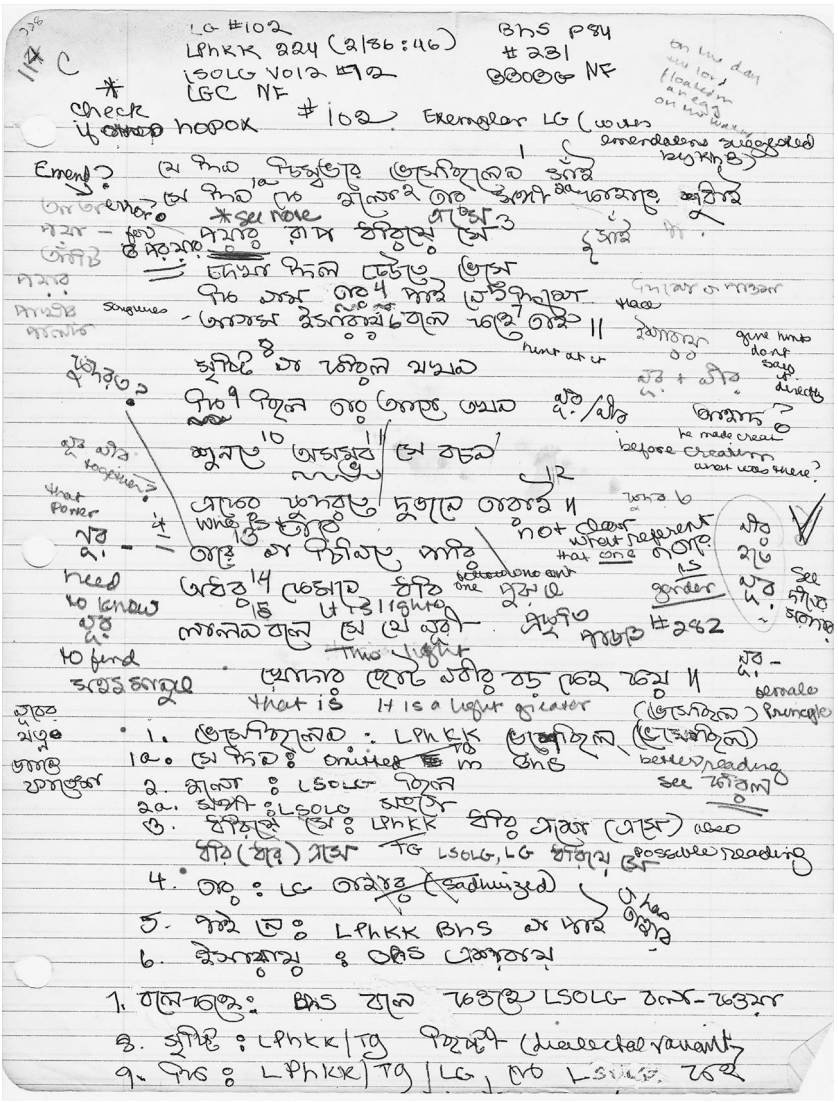
Lālan then asks, "Before he created the world, who was there?" Again evidence points to the Śakti. In the words of Fakir Cā̃d: "There was no one before Mother." According to Duddu Shah (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 63), the Śakti was created before the four states when neither bubble nor egg existed. In the enigmatic statement "Two came from the creative power of the one," the "creative power" is the Śakti, and "the two" refers to the splitting of one Absolute into Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the primal male and his Śakti. Lālan asks, "If I can't know this power, how do I catch the Uncatchable?" The question is a paradox, for only through the Śakti can the uncatchable Lord (*adhar mānuṣ*) be caught. The Śakti refers both to women in general,

who are considered incarnations of the primal Śakti and in whose bodies the *adhar mānuṣ* becomes manifest, and to the *śakti* in menstrual blood to whom the *adhar mānuṣ* is attracted.

The phrase "ranks below Khodā but above the Prophet" (*khodār choṭa nabir baṛa*) that characterizes the "light" directly links this song to the *acin mānuṣ* cycle. Not only is the identical phrase found in "An unknown person is behind religion and the world," where it describes the *acin mānuṣ*, but, as explained in the annotations to "An unknown man roams the land" ["Ai ek ajān mānuṣ phirche deśe," LG no. 233; **34**], it also appears in the cryptic form "zer on alif, zabar in mīm," which, when decoded, expresses the same notion—that the *acin mānuṣ* holds an intermediate position between Khodā and the Prophet. Lālan's disciple Duddu Shah is more explicit than his guru about the figure's identity. In his opinion, "the Śrīrūp ranks below Khodā but above the Prophet." The Śrīrūp, "venerable form," is the Śakti, as indicated by "Śrīrūp nadī, "the river of the Śrīrūp," a metaphor for the menstrual flow (see BBOBG, songs no. 326 ["Śrīrūp-nadīte ebār nāite nebo nā"] and 441 ["Śrīrūp-nadīṭi ati camaṯkār"]).

Since Duddu uses the same words as Lālan, *khodār choṭa nabir baṛa*, it is probable that his song was composed in answer to at least one of the songs by Lālan containing this phrase. Whether or not it was the song under discussion, there can be little doubt that by "light" Lālan is hinting at the Śakti who is termed Fatima Zohura (Ar. *zahrā* "luminous"; *al-zahrā'* is the surname of Muhammad's daughter Fatima) or Zohura's Light by Muslim Bāuls. The Śakti is consistent with the answers to the other questions that have been discussed. She ranks below Khodā because she is the manifestation of his creative power. Duddu Shah sings (Jāhāṅgīr 1964, no. 63, "Nīre nūrī gupta bārī rākhilen tāre"): "When the sole Lord was alone in the void, by the strength of his infinite power (*śakti*), he brought his Śakti out of his own power (*śakti*)." And she is above the Prophet because she was God's first creation, the light from which the Prophet came. As Duddu says in the song just quoted: "She is the Primal Śakti, the beloved one, from whose body the Prophet was born."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 46, no. 86 (LPhKK, 224); M no. 254; J no. 409; C^1; LG no. 102; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 72; KhB.]



Salomon's MS for "Ẏe din ḍimbabhare bhesechilen sãi."

115

যে মে ম ে র হয়েছে

Ẏe preme śyām gaur hayeche

যে মে ম ে র হয়েছে
সামা তার ম জানা
কি সা আছে ॥

না জেনে যে মের অ
আ জি ম করছে কে
মরণ ফঁ সি নি সে ে
প বে শেষে ॥

মারে মৎ না ছোঁয় পানি
হাওয়া ধরে বয় তরণি
তেমনি জে ম করনি
রসিকের কাছে ॥

ে সঁ ই অনুসারী যারা
এবে সে ম জানবে তারা
লালন ফকির পাগলপারা
সে ম লালসে ॥

ẏe preme śyām gaur hayeche
sāmānye tār marma jānā
ki sādhya āche ॥

nā jene ẏe premer artha
āndāji prem karche kato
maraṇ phā̃si nicche se to
pastābe śeṣe ॥

māre maṯsya nā chõy pāni
hāoyā dhare bay taraṇi
tæmani jeno prem karani
rasiker kāche ॥

gosā̃i anusārī ẏārā
ebe se prem jānbe tārā
lālan phakir pāgal-pārā
se prem lālase ॥

The love that turned Śyām into Gaur—
can you achieve it
if you know next to nothing
of its secret?

Lots of people love blindly
without knowing the meaning of love.
They put death's noose
around their own necks.
They regret it in the end.

Catching a fish without touching water,[1]
sailing a boat through the air—
You should know
the act of love's like that
for the true lover.

Those who follow the guru[2]
can know that love.
Lālan Fakir's just going crazy[3]
with desire for it.

1. *māre maṭsya nā chōy pāni*: lit. "killing a fish." The usual form of this proverbial saying, however, is *dhari māch* "catching a fish."

2. *gosā̃i:* a Vaiṣṇava guru.

3. *pāgal-pārā*: lit. "as if mad."

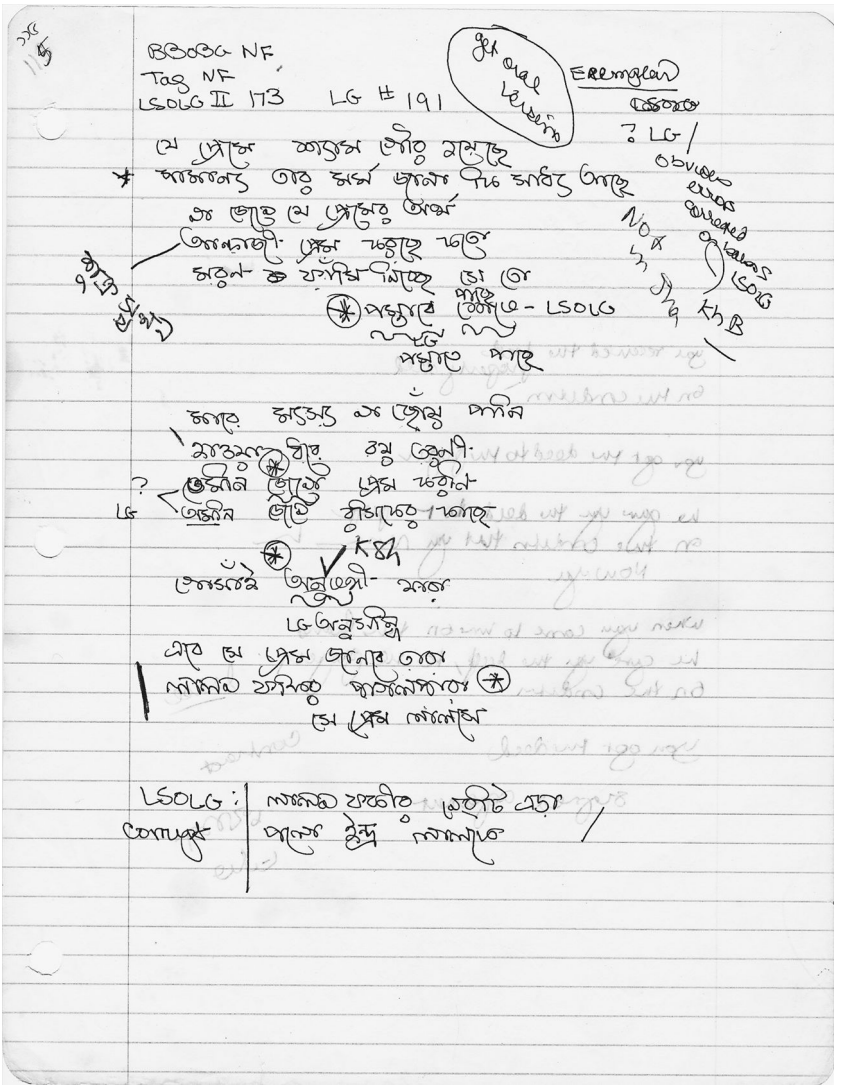
Ẏe preme śyām gaur hayeche

Śyām [commonly transliterated Shyam] is another name for the god Kṛṣṇa [Krishna], and like the word *kṛṣṇa* means "dark," "black." In this song, as in LG no. 143 ["Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ," **62**], Lālan puns on the literal meanings of the names Kṛṣṇa-Śyām and Gaur, black and white, dark-skinned and light-skinned. I have used the names Śyām and Gaur in this translation rather than the colors "black" and "white," since the word "color" (*baraṇ*) is not given after each name as it is in LG no. 143 [**62**]. On the esoteric meaning of the "love that turned Śyām into Gaur," see notes to LG no. 143 [**62**].

To "love blindly" (*āndājī* [or *āndāji*] *prem*) means to engage in sex ending in the ejaculation of semen. Since loss of semen is equated with loss of longevity, Lālan says that those who don't know "the meaning of love," that is, who do not know the practice of seminal retention, "put death's noose around their own necks."

"Catching a fish without touching water" is a proverbial saying that means doing something the easy way without exerting oneself. In Lālan's songs (the saying is also found in LG no. 130 ["Ẏe sādhan-jore keṭe ẏāy karma-phẽsi"]), however, it has the esoteric meaning of having sex without spilling semen. Compare the following lines of a poem by Caṇḍīdās: "You'll bathe in the ocean of scandal, letting your hair hang down, but you won't get wet. You won't touch the water. Joy, sorrow, and suffering will all be the same for you." Compare also these lines of Rasarāj's famous Bāul song, echoing Caṇḍīdās' song: "My braid will stay just as it is. I won't get my hair wet. . . . I'll get down in the water and splash around, but I won't get my hair wet, won't get my braid wet." "Sailing a boat through the air" signifies the practice of breath control and the reversal of the flow of semen. Cf. Lālan's expression (LG no. 49 ["Dharo cor hāoyār ghare phẽd pete," **73**]) "lay[ing] a trap in the house of the wind."

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 191; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 173; KhB; LS no. 558.]



Salomon’s MS for “Ẏe preme śyām gaur hayeche.”

116

যে পে সঁই আছে মানুষে

Ẏe rūpe sãi āche mānuṣe

যে পে সঁই আছে মানুষে
রসের রসিক না হলে
কি পাবে তার দিশে ॥

বেদী ভাই বেদ পড়ে সদায়
আসলে ে লমাল বাধায়
রসিক ভেয়ে ডুবে দয়
রতন পায় রসে ॥

তালার উপরে তালা
তাহার ভিতরে কালা
দেখা দেয় সে দীনের বেলা
( ) রসেতে ভেসে ॥

লা ে কামে আছে নূরী
এ কথা অকৈতব ভারী
লালন কয় সে রের রী
আ মাতা সে ॥

ẏe rūpe sãi āche mānuṣe
raser rasik nā hale
ki pābe tār diśe ॥

bedī bhāi bed paṛe sadāy
āsle gol-māl bādhāy
rasik bheye ḍube hṛday
ratan pāy rase ॥

tālār upare tālā
tāhār bhitare kālā
dekhā dey se dīner belā
(śuddha) rasete bhese ॥

lā mokāme āche nūrī
e kathā akaitab bhārī
lālan kay se dvārer dvārī
ādya mātā se ॥

Can you find out
what shape the Lord takes in man
if you're not a true lover?

Pandits keep studying the Vedas.
But actually, they complicate matters.
The true lover dives into the heart[1]
and finds the jewel in the water of love.

One floor after another;
at the top is Kālā.[2]
He shows up floating
in the water of love,
a raft for the poor.[3]

A light shines
in a non-existent place.[4]
This story can't be told.[5]
Lālan says, The gatekeeper there—
she's the mother of the world.[6]

1. *rasik bheye:* lit. "a *rasik* (true lover) brother; a fellow *rasik*."

2. *tālār upare tālā, tāhār bhitare kālā*: lit. "Floor on top of floor; in it is Kālā." The implication is that Kālā (Kṛṣṇa) is on the top floor, i.e., the *lā mokām* (see commentary).

3. See text notes.

4. *lā mokām:* lit. "no place."

5. *akaitab*: See "Four Colors in a Single Flower" ["Ek phule cār raṃ dhareche," **30**]nı.

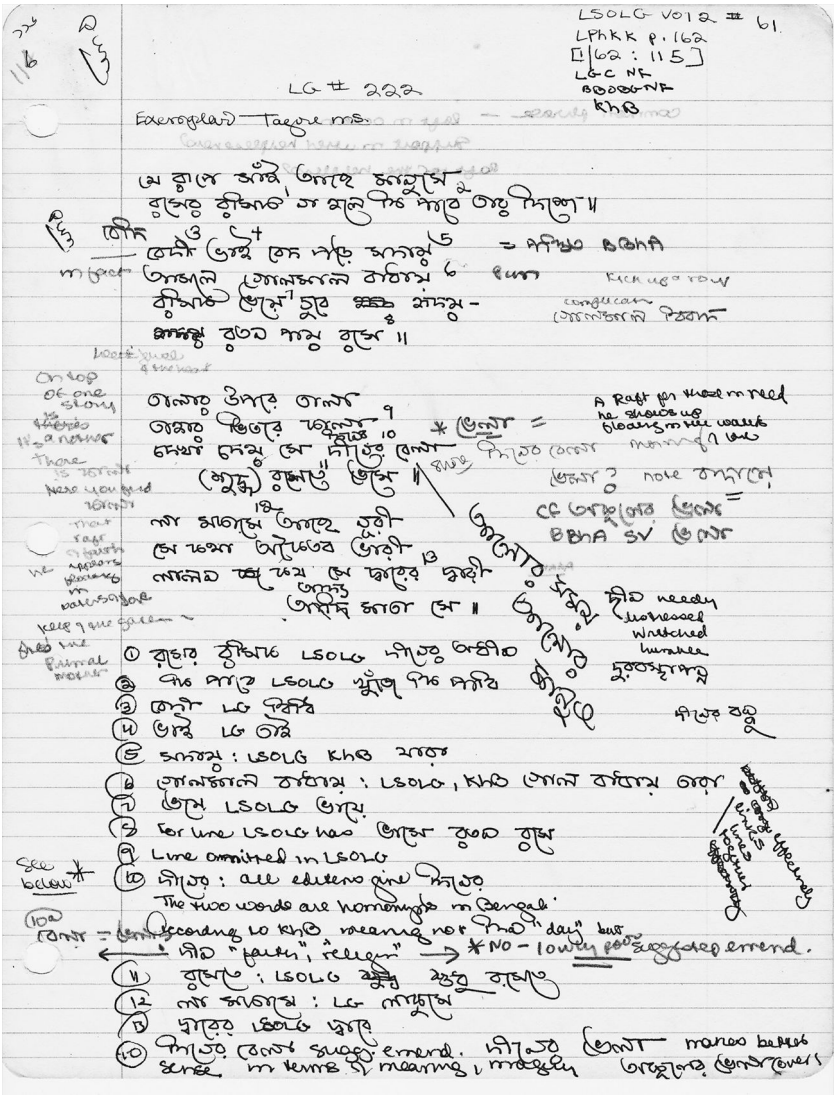
6. *ādya mātā*: lit. "the primal mother."

Ẏe rūpe sẽi āche mānuṣe

The "jewel" is God, and the "water of love" (*ras*) is menstrual blood, which the Bāuls equate with *kāraṇ-bāri*, the causal waters of the universe. Just as God floated in the primal ocean at the beginning of time, so he manifests himself in the body in menstrual blood. The "floors" are the *mokām*s, "places" or "stages," on the mystical path to God. In Bengali Islam, they are homologized with the Hindu *cakra* system (Roy, [1983], 175–177 and Haq, [1975], 378–383); *nāsut* is identified with the *mūlādhār, mālkut* with the *maṇipur, jabrut* with the *ājñā-cakra*, and *lāhut* with the *anāhata-cakra*. A fifth *mokām*, the "non-existent place" (*lā mokām*) where the "light" signifying the Absolute "shines" and equivalent to the *sahasrār-cakra*, is not generally included in the list of *mokām*s because it represents transcendent space. The "gatekeeper" is Fatima, who is considered the primal mother by Muslim Bāuls. (See notes to LG no. 295 ["Āche ādi makkā ei mānabdehe," 7]; also cf. LG no. 147 ["Āmār gharer cābi parer hāte," 15].)

It is interesting to note the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim beliefs in this song. On the one hand, Lālan calls God Kālā (black), that is, Kṛṣṇa; on the other, he uses the Islamic terms *lā mokām* and *nūrī* (see also LG no. 214 ["Paṛoge nāmāj bhed bujhe sujhe"]).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LPhKK, 162 (T^1/62: 115); LSOLG vol. 2, no. 61; LG no. 222; LS no. 488.]



Salomon’s MS for “Ye rūpe sāi āche mānuṣe.”

117

যে যাবি আজ ে র মের হাটে

Ẏe ẏābi āj gaur premer hāṭe

যে যাবি আজ ে র মের হাটে
ে রা আয় না মনে হয়ে খঁ
ধা য় যেন যাস নে ে টে ফাটে ॥

ম সাগরের তুফান ভারি
ধা লাগে পুরি
ক ে গে ধর্মতরি
কা কা তাতে বেয়ে ওঠে ॥

চতুরালি থাকলে বে
ম যাজনে বাধবে ফে
হারিয়ে শেষে দু কুল
কঁ দাকা লাগবে পথে ঘাটে ॥

আগে দুখ পাছে সুখ হয়
সয়ে বয়ে কেউ যদি রয়
লালন বলে ম পরশ পায়
সামা মনে কি মন তাই ঘটে ॥

ẏe ẏābi āj gaur premer hāṭe
torā āy nā mane haye khā̃ṭi
dhākkāy ẏæna ẏās ne coṭe phāṭe ॥

prem sāgarer tuphān bhāri
dhākkā lāge brahmapuri
karmaẏoge dharmatari
kāro kāro tāte beye oṭhe ॥

caturāli thākle balo
prem ẏājane bādhbe phalo
hāriye śeṣe duṭi kul
kā̃dākāṭi lāgbe pathe ghāṭe ॥

āge dukh pāche sukh hay
saye baye keu ẏadi ray
lālan bale prem paraś pāy
sāmānya mane ki man tāi ghaṭe ॥

If you're going today
to Gaur's market of love,
come with a pure mind.
Don't lose your temper
when you get shoved.

A typhoon rages on the ocean of love,
battering Brahmā's city.
Some men are skillful sailors.
Plying boats of truth,
they can survive in those waters.

Pull any tricks
and your worship of love goes amiss.
In the end you lose both shores
and make people everywhere shed tears.[1]

Sorrow at the start, joy at the finish.
Whoever persists, Lālan says,
the touchstone of love is his.
O mind, does a simpleton
stand a chance?[2]

1. Alt. trans.: "Pull any tricks . . . goes awry. In the end . . . and make people everywhere cry."

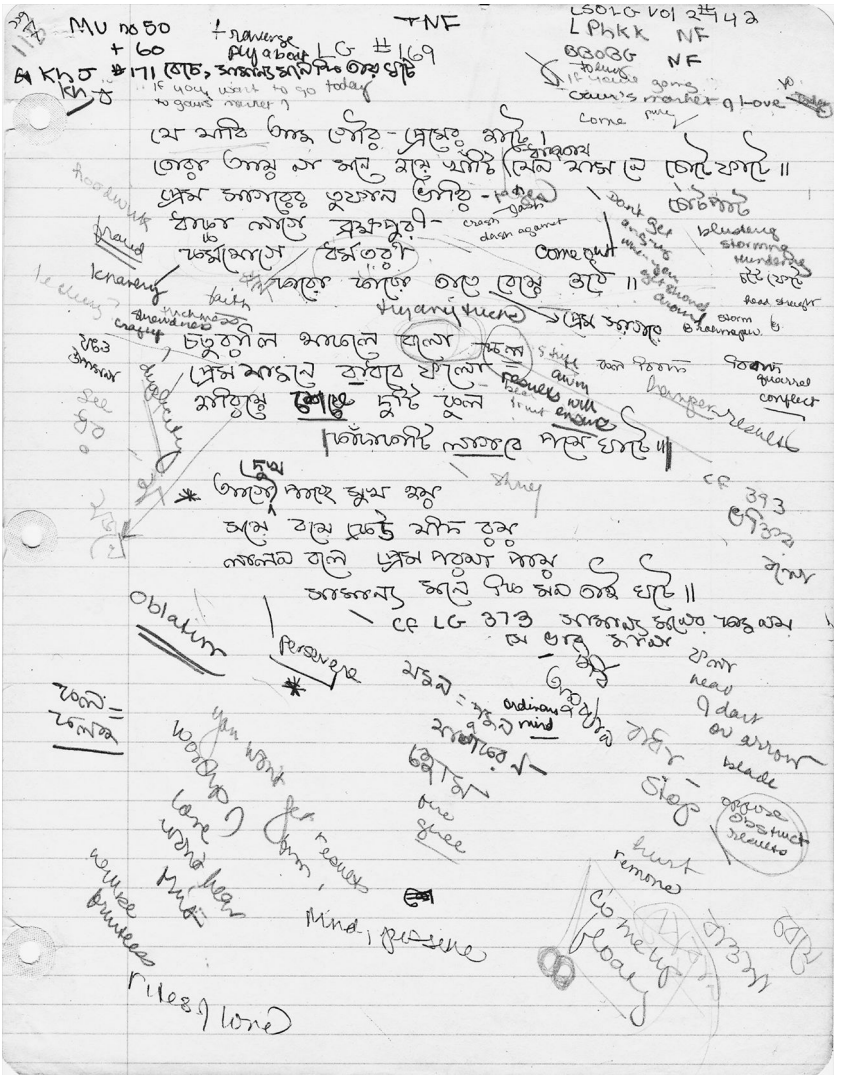
2. [Emendations:] In the second verse read *ẏājane* for *ẏacnāy*. In the last verse read *prem paraś* for *premer paraś*. Insert *man* after *ki* in the final line.

Ẏe ẏābi āj gaur premer hāṭe

"Gaur's market of love" (*gaur premer hāṭe*) is a metaphor for Bāul sexual *sādhanā*. (For other songs mentioning Gaur, i.e., Caitanya, see [LG no. 167, "Gaur prem athāi āmi jhā̃p diyechi tāy," **57**; LG no. 326, "Ẏadi gaurcā̃dke pāi," **110**; LG no. 314, "Śune ajānā ek mānuṣer kathā," **129**; and LG no. 309, "Sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche," **135**]). To "get shoved" means to be attacked by lust. The "typhoon" symbolizes the menstrual flow, and "Brahmā's city" (*brahmapuri*) is an Upaniṣadic image for the body (e.g., Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.1). The "boat of truth" signifies the body that is no longer subject to the control of the ten senses and six enemies. An adept who "loses both shores" has renounced worldly life yet has failed at his spiritual endeavors. In other songs Lālan uses the Islamic terms "religion" and the "world" (*dīn* and *duniyā*) to denote the two "shores."

In this song Lālan remarks on how difficult it is for the adept to control his semen during ritual sexual intercourse at the time of a woman's menstrual period, when the danger of giving way to lust is especially great. If the practitioner is able to persevere, however, he will obtain the "touchstone of love"; that is, he will be able to catch the uncatchable Lord.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 142; LG no. 169.]



Salomon's MS for "Ẏe ẏābi āj gaur premer hāṭe."

118

যেখানে সঁ ইর বারামখানা

Ẏekhāne sā̃ir bārāmkhānā

যেখানে সঁ ইর বারামখানা
নিলে ণ চমকে ওঠে
দেখতে যেন ভুজ না ॥

যা ছুইলে ণে মরি
এ জগতে তাইতে তরি
বুঝে ে বুঝতে নারি
কি করি তার নাই ঠিকানা ॥

আ ত যে জেনেছে
দিব্যজ্ঞানী সেই হয়েছে
কুবৃ সুফল পেয়েছে
আমার মনের ে র গেলো না ॥

যে ধনের উৎপ ণধন
সেই ধনের হলো না যতন
অক র ফল পাকায় লালন
দেখে নে ন হলো না ॥

ẏekhāne sā̃ir bārāmkhānā
śunile prāṇ camake oṭhe
dekhte ẏæna bhujaṅganā ॥

ẏā chũile prāṇe mari
e jagate tāite tari
bujhe to bujhte nāri
ki kari tār nāi ṭhikānā ॥

ātmatattva ẏe jeneche
dibyajñānī sei hayeche
kubṛkṣe suphal peyeche
āmār maner ghor gelo nā ॥

ẏe dhaner uṭpatti prāṇadhan
sei dhaner halo nā ẏatan
akarmer phal pākāy lālan
dekhe śune jñān halo nā ॥

In my Lord's own court—
this will surely shock you[1]*—*
there's something that looks like a snake![2]

What can be deadly to touch,
in this world is the boat to freedom.[3]
I understand, yet I don't.
What should I do?
I don't have my Lord's address.[4]

He who has found out
the truth in the self
gets divine knowledge.
He picks good fruit
from bad trees,
but the darkness of my mind
doesn't lift.

I didn't take care of the treasure
that's the source of life.[5]
Lālan just ripens the fruit
of futile actions. He never learns
from experience.

1. Alt. trans. (lit.): "You'll be shocked to hear this."

2. Alt. trans.: "There's what looks like a snake"; "There's what appears to be a snake"; "It looks to me like there's a snake"; "There seems to be a snake"; "There's a snake, so it seems." Alt. trans. for refrain: "This will surely shock you. In my lord's own court . . ."

3. Alt. trans.: "is the boat to freedom in this world."

4. *tār nāi ṭhikānā*. Alt. trans. (free): "I don't know the way to my Lord"; "I don't know how to reach my Lord"; "I don't know how to find my Lord."

5. *ẏe dhaner uṯpatti prāṇadhan*. Alt. trans.: "From which life springs."

Ẏekhāne sā̃ir bārāmkhānā

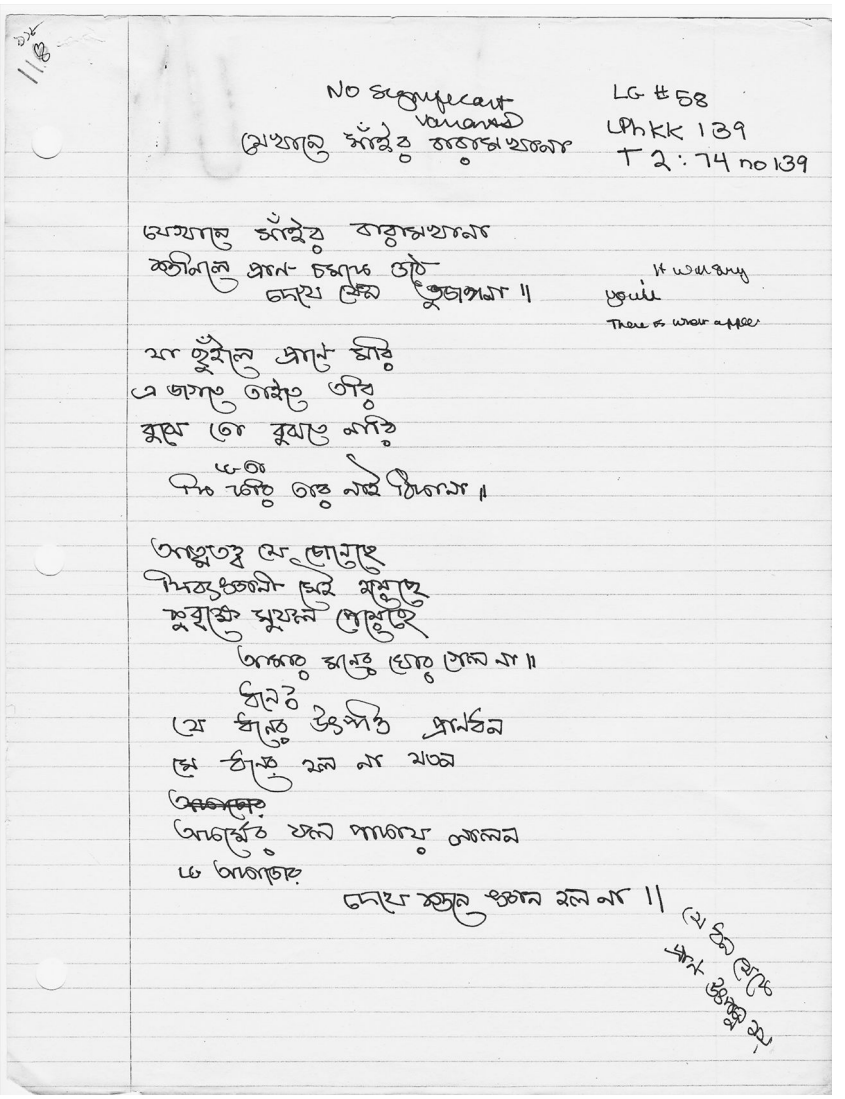
The location of the "lord's court" (*bārāmkhānā*) varies according to the song and poet. Here it refers to the *triveṇī* [Bng. *tribeṇī*] in the woman's *mūlādhār-cakra* where the *adhar* or *sahaj mānuṣ* becomes manifest on the third day of the *sādhikā*'s menstrual period.[6]

The snake represents the *kuṇḍalinīśakti*, the female power described in tantric texts as a snake lying coiled up in the *mūlādhār-cakra*. It also symbolizes women in general.[7] Bāul songs express an ambivalent attitude toward women. On the one hand a woman can be "deadly to touch"—that is to say, she seduces the *sādhak* and makes him lose his semen; she is "the devouring female, the woman who eats the man during intercourse" (O'Flaherty 1980, 53). On the other hand, she is "the boat to freedom." Without her help *sādhanā* is not possible. As Upendranāth Bhaṭṭācārya (BBOBG, 1055) puts it: "Bāul *sādhanā* involving women is like playing with a poisonous female cobra. At any moment death can occur. But it is also the path of worship." The paradoxical nature of the sex act as leading to death if it ends in ejaculation and salvation if the semen is retained is expressed over and over again by Bāul poets, sometimes, as in this song, in strikingly similar language to that used by earlier tantric writers. For example, the Tantric Buddhist author Indrabhūti in his work *Jñānasiddhi* (quoted in Eliade 1969, 263) states: "By the same acts that cause some men to burn in hell for thousands of years, the yogin gains eternal salvation." The "treasure that's the source of life" is semen.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[2]: 74, no. 139 (LPhKK no. 139); LG no. 58; KhB.]

6. See, for example, the song by Erphān Āli quoted in BBOBG, 505 which mentions the *ājñā-cakra* as the place where the *sahaj mānuṣ* holds court (*mānuṣer bārām-dvidale*).

7. See also Lālan's song (LG no. 65) "Ẏe pathe sā̃i cale phere" ("Who asks about the road my Lord travels?").



Salomon's MS for "Ẏekhāne sāir bārāmkhānā."

119

যেতে সাধ হয় রে কাশী

Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī

যেতে সাধ হয় রে কাশী
ক ফঁ সি বাধল গলায় ।
আমি আর কতদিন ঘুরে
এমন নাগরদোলায় ॥

হে রে একি দশা
স নাশা মনের ে লায় ।
ডুবে ডি নি য়
বুঝি জ নালায় ॥

বিধাতা দেয় বাজি কিবা মন পাজী
হয়ে ফেরে ফেলায় ।
বাও না বুঝে বাই
তরণি মে তলায় ॥

কলুর বলদ যেমন ঢাকে
নয়ন পাকে চালায় ।
অধীন লালন পে তেমনি পাকে
হেলায় হেলায় ॥

ẏete sādh hay re kāśī
karmaphẫsi bādhlo galāy ।
āmi ār katadin ghurbo
æman nāgar-dolāy ॥

halo re eki daśā
sarbanāśā maner bholāy ।
ḍublo ḍiṅge niścay
bujhi janmanālāy ॥

bidhātā dey bāji kibā man pājī
haye phere phelāy ।
bāo nā bujhe bāi
taraṇi krame talāy ॥

kalur balad ẏæman ḍhāke
nayan pāke cālāy ।
adhīn lālan palo tæmani pāke
helāy helāy ॥

I want to go to Kashi,
but karma's noose
is around my neck.
How long must I ride
this merry-go-round?[1]

I'm in an awful fix,
ruined by my deceiving mind.
My boat's sure to sink
in the canal of rebirth.[2]

Was I duped by fate,
or did my depraved mind
get me in trouble?
I don't know which way the wind's blowing.[3]
My boat is sinking, little by little.[4]

Through his own negligence,
like the oilman's blindfolded ox,
poor Lālan circles round and round.[5]

1. *nāgar dolā*: lit. "Ferris wheel."

2. *janmanālāy*: lit. "birth canal."

3. *bāo nā bujhe:* lit. "not understanding the winds."

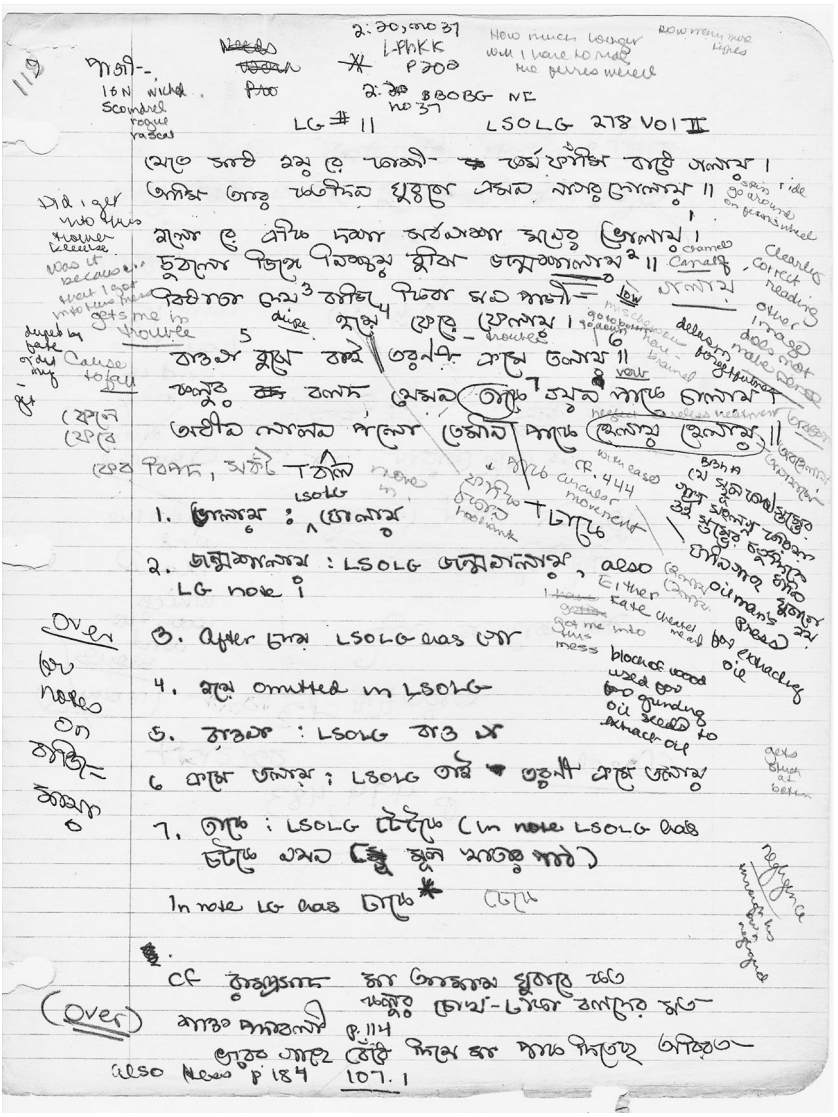
4. *bāi taraṇi krame talāy*: lit. "I'm gradually rowing my boat to the bottom."

5. [Emendations:] T and M^1 are identical. The *bhaṇitā* of T is mistranscribed in LPhKK; *bale* is not in the original. Published editions: LG does not divide the song into verses. There should be a new verse every two [lines], with the first two lines constituting the refrain. In verse 1 LSOLG has *gholāy* for *bholāy*, and LG gives *janmaśālāy* for *janmanālāy*. In verse 2 LG has *bāonā* for *bāo nā*. LSOLG omits *haye*. Although it occurs in both manuscripts, it makes the line hypermetric. In verse 3 LG has *tāke*, and LSOLG has *ṭeṭke* for *ḍhāke*. LSOLG omits *adhīn*, which is the better reading in terms of the meter.

Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī

According to Bāul belief, the means to escape the cycle of death and rebirth is to reverse the biological process by making semen flow upward to the head. The "boat" that is sure to sink in the canal of "rebirth" signifies semen that is in danger of being ejaculated into the vagina. By "not knowing how the wind blows" Lālan means that the *sādhak* has not mastered the practice of breath control that is crucial for arresting semen. The "oilman's blindfolded ox" refers to the ox that is used to grind oilseeds. Blindfolded and made to keep going around the oilpress, it symbolizes man caught in the karmic cycle. Lālan's description of the ox is reminiscent of the Śākta poet Rāmprasād's famous line: "Mother, how many times will you make me go around like the oilman's blindfolded ox?" (*mā āmāy ghurābe kato kalur cokh ḍhākā balader mato*). On the topic of karma, see also "If a life of sin is foreordained" ["Pāp-dharma ẏadi pūrbe lekhā ẏāy," LG no. 386; **83**] and "Who do I ask this question, today?" ["Kāre āj śudhāi se kathā," LG no. 238; **40**].

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 20, no. 37 (LPhKK, 200); M^1 152; LG no. 11; LSOLG vol. 2. no. 278; LS no. 724.]



Salomon's MS for "Ẏete sādh hay re kāśī."

র

120

রংমহলে সিঁদ কাটে সদায়

Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy

রংমহলে সিঁদ কাটে সদায়
(জানি) কোথা সে ে রের বাড়ি
পেলে তারে কয়াদ করে
পায়ে দিতাম মন বেড়ি ॥

raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy
(jāni) kothā se corer bāṛi
pele tāre kayād kare
pāye ditām man beṛi ॥

সি দরজায় ে কিদার একজন
অহ শি আছে সে চেতন
কি প তারে ভেলকি মেরে
চুরি করে ে ন ঘড়ি ॥

siṃ darajāy caukidār ekjan
aharniśi āche se cetan
ki rūp tāre bhelaki mere
curi kare kon ghaṛi ॥

ঘর বেড়িয়ে ে লজন সেপাই
তার এক এক জনার বলের সীমা নাই
তারাও ে রের না পে টের
কার হাতে দিবে দড়ি ॥

ghar beṛiye ṣolajan sepāi
tār ek ek janār baler sīmā nāi
tārāo corer nā pelo ṭera
kār hāte dibe daṛi ॥

পিতৃধন আজ সব নিল লুটে
নে -ঝাড়া করে আমারে
লালন বলে এে ই কালে
ে রের হে কি আড়ি ॥

pitṛdhan āj sab nilo luṭe
neṃṭi-jhāṛā karlo āmāre
lālan bale eko-i kāle
corer halo ki āṛi ॥

A thief keeps breaking
into the hall of colors.[1]
Where does this thief come from?
If I could catch him,
I'd imprison him,
shackling his feet
with the chains of my heart.

At the lion-gate
is a guard,
vigilant day and night.
What spell does the thief
cast over this guard?
At what hour
does he break in?

Sixteen sepoys surround the room,
men of unlimited powers.
Even they can't detect him.
Whose hands should they bind
with rope?

Today the thief stole all my inheritance.
He even swiped my loincloth.
Lālan says, What a grudge
this thief suddenly holds
against me![2]

1. [In Salomon's article "Bāul Songs" (1995, 202) she translates *raṃmahal* (and *raṅmahal*) as "palace." However, in the annotations to "Āche ādi makkā ei mānab dehe" **[7]** and "Ke bānāle æman raṅmahal khānā" **[48]** she gives the compound the more literal rendering of "hall of colors." Both translations are possible.]

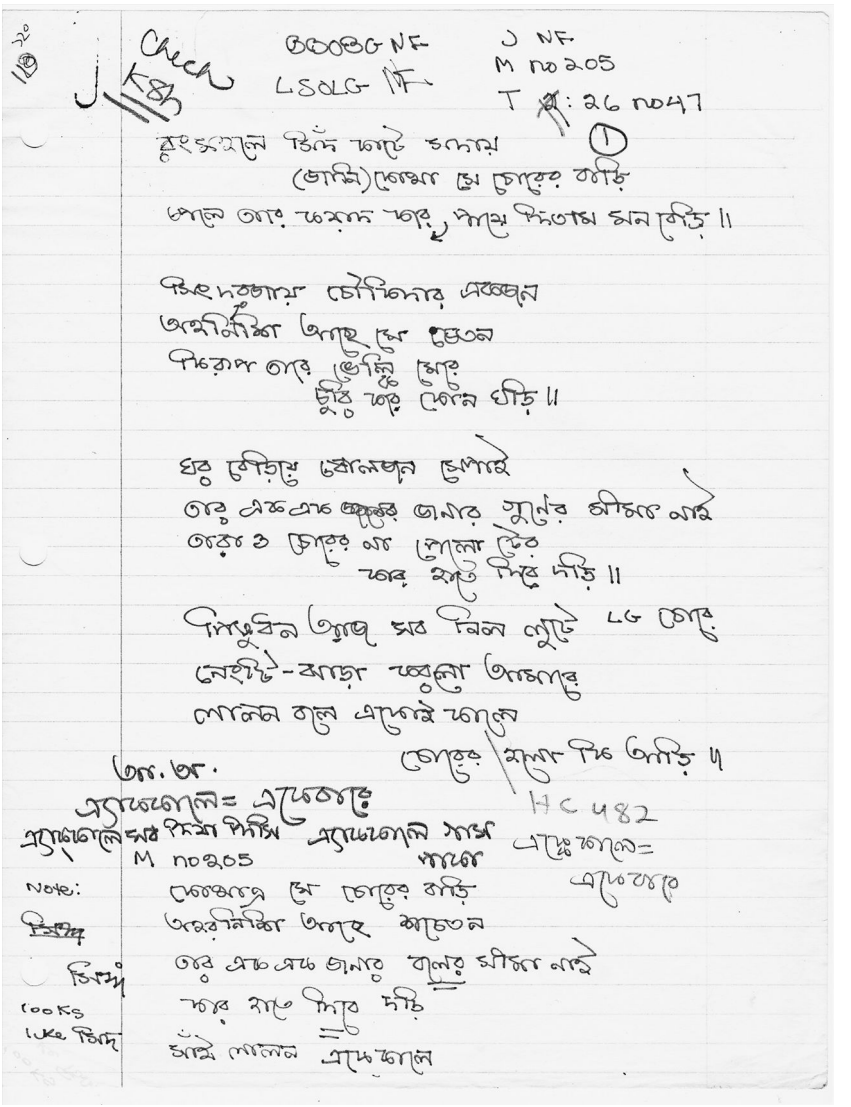
2. [Emendations:] The readings of J¹ and T differ significantly in one respect: In verse 2 J¹ has *baler,* whereas T has *guṇer*. I have translated J¹'s variant, which also occurs in Karim Shah's oral rendition. In verse 3 for *luṭe* LG has *core,* as does the version sung by Karim Shah.

Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy

In this allegorical *dehatattva* song, the "thief" symbolizes the *sahaj mānuṣ* (innate man), the active form of the Supreme who appears in menstrual blood and arouses lust; the "watchman" is the mind; and the "sixteen guards" are the six enemies of man (lust, greed, pride, infatuation, vanity, and envy) and the ten sense organs (i.e., the five organs of perception and the five organs of action). The "music room" is the *mūlādhār-cakra*, the four-petaled lotus located between the sexual organ and the anus, and the "inheritance" that the "thief" steals is semen.

The Bāuls believe that the passive form of the Supreme is in semen; loss of semen leads to a shortened life span, while control of it can make the practitioner immortal. If during ritual intercourse the mind is distracted by worldly pleasure and the six enemies are not held in check, then the adept will give way to lust and be unable to arrest his semen; the "thief"—the *sahaj mānuṣ*—will rob him of his "inheritance," or semen.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1] no. 205; T[1]: 26, no. 47; LG no. 35; KSh; LS no. 424.]



Salomon's MS for "Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy."

121

রসুলকে চিনিলে পরে ে দা চেনা যায়

Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy

রসুলকে চিনিলে পরে ে দা চেনা যায়
  প ভঁ ড়ায়ে দেশ বেড়িয়ে
গেলেন সেই দয়াময় ॥

জ যার এই মানবে
ছায়া তার পলো না ভূমে
দেখ দেখি তাই ব মানে
কে আইল এই মদিনায় ॥

মাঠে ঘাটে রসুলেরে
মেঘে রইত ছায়া ধরে
জানতে হয় তাও নেহাজ করে
জীবের কি সেই দরজা হয় ॥

আহামদ নাম লিখিতে
মিম হরফ হয় নফি করতে
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় লালন তাতে
কি ত নজির দেখা যায় ॥

Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy
rūp bhā̃ṛāye deś beṛiye
gelen sei dayāmay ॥

janma ẏār ei mānabe
chāyā tār palo nā bhūme
dekh dekhi tāi bartamāne
ke āilo ei madināy ॥

māṭhe ghāṭe rasulere
meghe raito chāyā dhare
jānte hay tāo nehāj kare
jīber ki sei darajā hay ॥

āhāmad nām likhite
mim haraph hay naphi karte
sirāj sā̃i kay lālan tāte
kiñcita najir dekhā ẏāy ॥

If you know his Messenger,
you can get to know Khodā.
That Merciful One roamed the land
in disguise.[1]

His Messenger was born a man,
yet no shadow fell on the ground.
Look here, in this world,[2]
and you'll see who came to Medina.

The clouds gave him shade
everywhere he went.
Pay attention if you want to find out.
But can a man[3] *have such patience?*

Write the name Ahmad,
but drop the mīm.
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Lālan,
now you've got some proof.[4] [5]

1. Lit. "That Merciful One suppressed his (true) form and went roaming around the land."

2. *dekh dekhi tāi bartamāne*. See note 5 below.

3. *jīb* [< Skt. *jīva*].

4. Alt. trans.: "Now you've got a clue."

5. [Emendations:] The translation follows the text of T in all but the one instance discussed below. There are virtually no variants among the manuscript and published versions cited. However, LG hypercorrects dialectal *darajā* to its standard educated form *dhairẏa*, a tendency often exhibited by this edition. In contrast, the oral versions of Khodā Bakṣ and Abdul Karim Shah contain several variants, one of which significantly affects the meaning: in the refrain both oral versions add *pare* after *cinile*. In verse 1 instead of *dekh dekhi bhāi buddīmāne* (i.e., *buddhimāne*), "Look, intelligent brothers," both oral versions have *dekh dekhi tāi bartamāne*. I have translated this oral variant, since *buddhimāne* is merely a filler word, whereas *bartamāne* "in the present," "while one is alive," adds a doctrinal dimension to the song that is consistent with the theology expressed in other songs by Lālan. See the discussion in the annotations. In verse 2, instead of *jānte hay* Karim Shah sings *dekh dekhi*, which may be a dittography from the preceding verse. In the last line of verse 3 instead of *dekh re kiñcit najīr* [or *najir*] *dey* Khodā Bakṣ has *kiñcit najīr dekhā ẏāy* and Karim Shah has *kiñcit najīrā dekhāi*.

Rasulke cinile pare khodā cenā ẏāy

This song, like several others by Lālan (e.g., "Ākār ki nirākār sẽi rabbānā" [LG no. 280; **5**] and "O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe" [LG no. 240; **36**]), hints at the identity of Allah and the Prophet. Lālan says that God "roamed the land in disguise"; that is to say, he hid his true form and appeared on earth as Muhammad. The fact that Muhammad cast no shadow and "clouds gave him shade everywhere he went" indicates that he was no mere mortal. Muslim authors commonly attribute his lack of a shadow to his luminosity, to the belief that he is *nūr al-anwār*, "light of all lights." As the thirteenth-century Persian Sufi author Najm al-Dīn Rāzī comments (Schimmel 1985, 129): "'He was, from one point of view, the sun, and the sun has no shadow,' just as he was, from another point of view, 'the monarch of religion,' and 'the monarch is God's shadow on earth,' and a shadow has no shadow." Similarly, the Bāul singer Abdul Karim Shah explains: "It was because of his light. The body of the Messenger was like clear glass, and that's why he had no shadow."

When Lālan admonishes his audience to "look here, in this world" (*bartamāne*, "in the present," "while one is alive"; for a discussion of the technical meaning of *bartamān* and its antonym, *anumān*, see the introduction),[6] he is also identifying the murshid with the Prophet, since the Bāuls consider the murshid to be the living representative of Muhammad (see also the annotations to "Nabi nā cinle kise khodār bhed pāy" [LG no. 206; **76**]). In the words of Pāñja Śāh ([1890], 36): "The murshids of this world are Allah's messenger, the Prophet" (*duniyār murśid nabi rāchulollā*). Khodā Bakṣ illustrated this point to me with the following saying: "The form of the Prophet is in that of the murshid. Thus the form of Khodā can be discerned in that (i.e., the murshid's) form" (*murśid rūpe nabir rūp hay, khodārūp se rūpe nirṇay*). In his song "Pāre ke ẏābi nabir naukāte āy" [LSOLG vol. 1, no. 26; **84**] Lālan himself explicitly states this identity: "The murshid is the Messenger. There's no mistake about it. He is Khodā himself" (*ẏe murśid sei rāsul tāhāte nāi kono bhul khodā se hay*). Abdul Karim Jīlī [d. 1406–1417] in his work *al-Insānu 'l-kāmil,* "The Perfect Man," discussed and translated in part by R. A. Nicholson ([1983], 77–142), equates the murshid with the Prophet but

6. [This introduction was never completed. However, it is likely that Salomon would have referred to Openshaw's detailed description of the terms *anumān* and *bartamān* (2002, 5, 113–117).]

stops short of identifying man with God: "I once met him in the form of my Shaykh (i.e., murshid) Sharafu'uddin Ismā'il al-Jabarti, but I did not know that he (the Shaykh) was the Prophet, although I know that he (the Prophet) was the Shaykh."

Lālan's pun on the similarity in the spelling of Ahmad (a name of Muhammad) and Ahad (Ar. *aḥad* "the One")—that is, that Ahad is simply Ahmad with the letter *mim* (m) (Ar. *mīm*) left out—is based on one of the most popular *ḥadīthqudsī*s in the eastern Islamic world (Schimmel 1975, 224): *anā aḥmad bilā mīm*, "I am Ahmad without the mīm." (See also Lālan's songs "Ākār ki nirākār sā̃i rabbānā" [LG no. 280; **5**] and "Paṛe bhūt ār hos ne manurāy" [LG no. 215].) Lālan takes this saying as evidence not just of the closeness God and the Prophet, as it is generally interpreted, but of their identity. Like other Bengali Sufis, he considers the Prophet to be an incarnation (*avatār*) of God (see the annotations to "Apārer kāṇḍār nābiji āmār" [LG no. 269; **4**]). In Lālan's opinion, only the letter *mim*, which Dimock (1987, 378) notes represents the principle of incarnation, distinguishes Ahmad from Ahad. In actuality they are just different forms of the same being.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 64, no. 118 (LPhKK, 37); KhB; KSh; M^1 no. 283; LG no. 261; LSOLG vol. 1, no. 31); BhS no. 7; LS no. 11.]

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রসিক নাম ধরিয়ে মনা

Rasik nām dhariye manā

রসিক নাম ধরিয়ে মনা
বেড়াও রে জগত মাতিয়ে
ভাব জান না ভাবুক ে
ভাঙলি রে মা তিয়ে ॥

rasik nām dhariye manā
beṛā-o re jagat mātiye
bhāb jāno nā bhābuk roṅgā
bhāṅli re māṭi gutiye ॥

পেয়ে জল সেচা এক চাকরি
পরিয়ে ধরি গেড়ে ড়ি
সেচলি কত আখিরি
রসিক যারা চতুর তারা
আছে হাওয়ায় ফঁ দ পাতিয়ে ॥

peyecho jal sēcā ek cākari
pariye dhari geṛe guṛi
sēcali kata śuru ākhiri
rasik ẏārā catur tārā
āche hāoyāy phā̃d pātiye ॥

নাদায় ড় নাই রে মনা খাবরি
ে ে করে বেড়ায় উড়ে
হে না ে র সাবরি
তুই গেড়ে চুবনি খেলি
তবু উঠিস কুতকুতিয়ে ॥

nādāy guṛ nāi re manā khābari
bho bho kare beṛāy uṛe
halo nā tor sābari
tui geṛe cubani kheli
tabu uṭhis kut-kutiye ॥

পিচাশ ভাব ে র যায় না
ও রে কথায় ধ কাজে শূ
মদন রসে মগনা
লালন বলে ভাব ণে
হলি রে তুই বিজাতিয়ে ॥

picāś svabhāb tor ẏāy nā
o re kathāy dhanya kāje śūnya
madan rase maganā
lālan bale svabhāb guṇe
hali re tui bijātiye ॥

Mind, you go by the name of the true lover
and roam around, charming the world.
But you don't know a thing about love.[1]
You wrecked your boat of love,[2]
rammed it right into the ground.[3]

You got a job bailing water.
Crouched down in a pond,[4]
wrapped in a loincloth,
you'll bail till the bitter end.[5]
But those who are truly clever
lay their traps in the wind.

There's no molasses in the pot.
The pot is shattered.[6]
You're so impatient,
you buzz around like a bee.[7]
You fell in the pond
and nearly drowned,
but still you came up,
with your hunger unappeased.[8]

1. *bhāb jāno nā*.

2. Lit. "lover's boat" (*bhābuk doṅā*). I have tentatively translated the line according to LG's reading *ḍoṅā* "boat," "canoe," since the reading of the manuscripts *roṅgā* is obscure (see note 6 below). *Ḍoṅā* may also mean "a vessel for bailing water." Alt. trans. (covers both meanings, but may be too vague of an image): "vessel of love," "canoe of love."

3. Alt. trans. (translating *roṅgā* as "boat"): "rammed the bow right into the ground."

4. Pond translates *geṛe*, lit. "waterhole." See also "Madman, you keep diving into the ditch" ["Geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā," **56**].

5. "Bitter end": *śuru ākhaṛi* "from beginning to end."

6. *khābari* may mean either "earthen pot," or "potsherds." The line is translated according to Khodā Bakṣ's oral rendition of it. The reading of J^1 and M^1, *khābari phele*, "you threw away the shards" (see note below), is difficult to explain in terms of the symbolism of the song. Moreover, there is a line break between *khābari* and *phele* indicated in J^1 by a comma. If the reading is correct, it would be an example of enjambment, which is rare in Lālan's songs. Khodā Bakṣ's rendition omits *phele*. (Translation according to J^1 and M^1's reading: "So you tossed the shards out.")

7. In the Bengali text this line precedes the following one: (*phele*) *bho bho kare beṛās uṛe* [or *beṛāy uṛe*], *halo nā tor sābari*. Alt. trans: "You go buzzing around like a bee. Patience was never your specialty."

8. "With your hunger unappeased" translates *kut-kutiye*, an onomatopoetic word indicating greed or desire (Shahidullah 1965, s.v. *kutkutāiya*).

You'll never change your fiendish ways.
You're sunk in sensual pleasure.
You've got a flair for talk,
but your work comes to naught.
Lālan says, You're just a bastard by nature.[9]

9. [Emendations:] Manuscripts: J^1 is the exemplar. The version given in M^1 is too faint to read in places. The first and second verses of J^1 occur in the reverse order in M^1 and C^1 and in LG. Since the "wrecked boat" in the second half of the refrain and the "job bailing water" in the first verse of M^1 and C^1 are related images, I have chosen to give the verses in the order that they occur in these manuscripts. Note that unlike the first half of the refrain, the second half is repeated only at the end of the song and not after each verse. Before *bhāb*, M^1 has *tumi*, which is not in the other manuscripts. It also has an extra *pāda* at the end of the refrain, *rasik pārāy gele tomāy, ghuksi bale dey nāthiye*, "When you go to lover's lane, they kick you and call you a whore." This is another example of enjambment in M's version of the song (see note 6 above). In verse 1, C^1 has *dhaṛā* instead of *dhaṛi*, *geṛe garte* instead of *geṛe guṛi*, and *cetan* instead of *catur*. In verse 2, C^1 has *sadāy* as the first word of the second line, whereas M^1 and J^1 have *phele* (see the discussion of the reading in note 6 above). M^1 has *beṛāo uṛe*, and C^1 *uṛe beṛāo*, whereas J^1 has *beṛās uṛe*. In verse 3 C^1 has *bejāte* for *picāś* and *kathāy dekhi premer pāgal*, whereas J^1 has *tor kathāy dhanya kāje śūnya*. $M^{1'}$s reading appears to be similar to $C^{1'}$s, but only the first two words of the line *o re kathāy* and the penultimate word *premer* are clear enough in the photocopy to read. C^1 has *doṣe*, whereas J^1 and M^1 have *guṇe*. LG: In the refrain, *nāme* precedes *rasik*, the first word of the line in the manuscripts. *Man* is given for *manā*, *bhāber* for *bhābuk*, and *ḍoṅā* for *roṅgā*. In verse 1 *jariye* is given for *pariye* and *mere* for *geṛe*. In verse 2 the third line has been omitted. *Khāpri* (manuscripts: *khābri* or alternate transliteration *khābari*) should appear as the last word of the first line rather than the first word of the second line. The edition has *bhāṅgā* for *phele bho bho kare* and *ghure beṛiye* for *beṛās uṛe*. *Halo nā* should appear at the beginning of the third line rather than at the end of the second line, followed by *tor sābri* [alternately transliterated *sābari*], which is omitted in the edition. *Tui geṛe* should open the fourth line. KhB's oral version conforms to J^1, but with the following variants: In verse 1 (i.e., verse 2 in KhB and $J^{1'}$s versions) Khodā Bakṣ gives *sēce paṛli*, whereas J^1 has *sēcli*. In verse 2 (i.e., verse 1 in KhB and $J^{1'}$s versions) he omits *sadāy* at the beginning of line 2, and in line 3 he gives *garte paṛli* instead of J^1 *geṛe pare*. In verse 3 KhB gives *doṣe* as in C^1 instead of J^1 *guṇe*.

Rasik nām dhariye manā

The "boat" (*ḍoṅā*, "a small vessel made from a hollowed-out log," "a canoe") here is a phallic symbol, and the "ground" (*māṭi*) signifies the vagina. According to Khodā Bakṣ *māṭi* is a pun. In addition to "ground," it can also mean "the mother" (*mā* plus the specifying suffix *-ṭi*). "Rammed" translates *gutiye*. The verb *gutāno* literally means "to butt," "to thrust with the head." In Kushtia dialect (Shahidullah 1968a) *gutā* means "to thrust the penis into the vagina." "Wrecking the boat of love" and "bailing water" (see also "I've been bailing water for ages" ["Cirakāl jal chẽce," LG no. 428; **60**] and "So this is the happiness I find here" ["E deśete ei sukh halo," LG no. 403; **27**]) signify the *sādhak*'s failure at seminal retention.

The broken "pot" is the body preyed upon by the six enemies of man and the ten sense organs, and hence unfit for *sādhanā*. Until the *sādhak* gains control over them, he will be unable to keep the "molasses" (semen) in the "pot" (the body). It is imperative that he not be "impatient" and "buzz around like a bee," but rather that he proceed slowly and carefully, avoiding rapid thrusting of the penis in the vagina so as not to spill his seed (see also "You cut your life short by not keeping Āmāvatī" ["Āy hārāli āmābatī nā mene," LG no. 247; **19**]). "Falling into a pond," like "diving into the ditch" (see "Madman, you keep diving into the ditch" ["Geṛei gāṅge re kṣepā," **56**]), symbolizes ejaculating into the vagina.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J^1 no. 168; M^1 no. 103 (and V^2; see exemplar below); C^1 no. 132; LG no. 129 (LSOLG vol. 2, no. 320, taken from LG); KhB; LS no. 399.]

Exemplar M no. 103 and V2, which are almost identical. In some places the writing in M is too faint to read. There are some discrepancies with the translation, since I decided to use a different exemplar [J^1; see text note 9]. I did not see V^2 when I originally edited the text. I have changed the order of the first and second verses (note the opening verse is the refrain) to agree with M and V^2. In the refrain both M and V^2 have an extra line, which I will have to add to the translation. Also, for the second line in the last verse I translated a slightly different reading (*o re kathāy dhanya kāje śūnya*).[10]

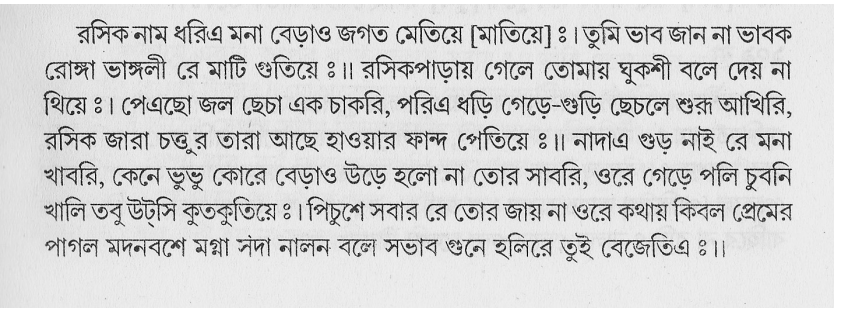
10. [This additional exemplar was found accompanying Salomon's manuscripts for this song, and it appears that she had drafted it at a later date than her translation and annotations above. The exemplar contains an extra line that she had intended to use in revising her translation above.]

rasik nām dhariye manā beṛāo re jagat māṭiye /
bhāb jāno nā bhābuk roṅgā bhānli re māṭi gutiye //
(rasik pāṛāy gele tomāy ghuksī bale dey nāthiye //)

peyecho jal sẽcā ek cākri
pariye dhaṛi geṛeguṛi sẽcli śuru ākhri /
rasik jārā catur tārā āche hāoyāy phād pātiye //

nādāy guṛ nāi re manā khābri
phele bho bho kare beṛās uṛe halo nā tor sābri /
o re geṛe paṛli cubni kheli tabu uṭhis kutkutie //

picāś svabhāb tor jāy nā
o re kathāy kebal premer pāgal madan rase magnā /
lālan bale svabhāb guṇe hali tui bejātie //


রসিক নাম ধরিএ মনা বেড়াও জগত মেতিয়ে [মাতিয়ে] ঃ। তুমি ভাব জান না ভাবক
রোঙ্গা ভাঙ্গলী রে মাটি গুতিয়ে ঃ।। রসিকপাড়ায় গেলে তোমায় ঘুকশী বলে দেয় না
থিয়ে ঃ। পেএছো জল ছেচা এক চাকরি, পরিএ ধড়ি গেড়ে-গুড়ি ছেচলে শুরু আখিরি,
রসিক জারা চত্তুর তারা আছে হাওয়ার ফান্দ পেতিয়ে ঃ।। নাদাএ গুড় নাই রে মনা
খাবরি, কেনে ভুভু কোরে বেড়াও উড়ে হলো না তোর সাবরি, ওরে গেড়ে পলি চুবনি
খালি তবু উট্‌সি কুতকুতিয়ে ঃ। পিচুশে সবার রে তোর জায় না ওরে কথায় কিবল প্রেমের
পাগল মদনবশে মগ্না সদা নালন বলে সভাব গুনে হলিরে তুই বেজেতিএ ঃ।।

Salomon's MS for "Rasik nām dhariye manā."

123

রসের রসিক না হলে কে ে জানতে পাই

Raser rasik nā hale ke go jānte pāi

রসের রসিক না হলে কে ে জানতে পাই।
কোথা সে অটল পে বারাম দেয় ॥

মন-চোরা ে র সেই হি নাগর
তলে আসে তলে যায়
উপর উপর খুজে বেড়ায়
জীব সবাই ॥

শূ ভরে শ করে
পাতাল পুরে শয়ন দেয়
অরসিক ঘুরে বেড়ায়
ে র ধঁ ধায় ॥

[মা ছেড়ে লাফ দিয়ে উঠে
আশমানে গিয়ে হাত বাড়ায়
অমনি সে পড়ে ফাকের
মাঝখানায় ॥]

তলে ধরে তলে খুজে
তবে সে ধন হাতে পায়
ফকির লালন বলে
উচা মনের কা নয় ॥

raser rasik nā hale ke go jānte pāi।
kothā se aṭal rūpe bārām dey ॥

man-corā cor sei hi nāgar
tale āse tale ẏāy
upar upar khũje beṛāy
jīb sabāi ॥

śūnyabhare śaẏyā kare
pātāl pure śayan dey
arasik ghure beṛāy
ghor dhā̃dhāy ॥

[māṭi cheṛe lāph diye uṭhe
āśamāne giye hāt bāṛāy
amani se paṛe phāker
mājhkhānāy ॥]

tale dhare tale khũje
tabe se dhan hāte pāy
phakir lālan bale
ucā maner kārẏa nay ॥

Can you know
where the steady man holds court,[1]
if you're not a true lover?

He's a thief of hearts, that rake.
He lies low when he comes,
lies low when he goes,[2]
while people search for him
up above.

He makes his bed in the sky,
and goes to sleep in the underworld.
False lovers roam around
in utter confusion.

[They jump up in the air
and stretch out their arms
only to land in a ditch.][3]

Go down below!
Search down below![4]
That treasure will be in your grasp.
Fakir Lālan says, No highbrow
can accomplish this task.[5]

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 229; LS no. 714; KhB.]

1. *aṭal rūp*: lit. "steady form."

2. *tale āse tale ẏāy: tale* means "bottom surface," "ground," or "underground" and hence can be a synonym of *pātāl*, "underworld" (e.g., *saptatal pātāler tale mūl rayeche gopane*). It also has the sense of "stealthily."

3. [Salomon translated this verse, but it is omitted in the KhB oral version (sung by Manaora Begum) and some publications. It is unclear whether or not the verse was included in the earliest versions of the song.]

4. Alt. trans.: "Go way down! Search way down!" "Get down on the ground! Search the ground!" "Go down underground! Search underground!"

5. Alt. trans.: "No highbrow is equal to this task."

124

রাত ে য়ালে পাখিটে বলে দে রে খাই

Rāt poyāle pākhiṭe bale de re khāi

রাত ে য়ালে পাখিটে বলে দে রে খাই
তখন কা মাথায় থুয়ে
কি করি রে কেমনে যাই ॥

আমি বলি আ রাম
নেও রে মুখে কৃ নাম
যাতে মু পাই
সে নামে ে হয় না রত
খাে খাে রব সদাই ॥

এমন পাখি কে ে ষে
খেতে চায় সাগর চুষে
কেমনে ে গাই
আমার বু গেলো সা গেলো
সার হলো ধু পেটে বাই ॥

আমি লালন লাল পড়া
পাখিটে ে র সেই আড়া
ও তার সবুরি কিছুই নাই
(তাইতো) লালন বলে পেট ভরলে হয়
কি আর গোসাঁই ॥

rāt poyāle pākhiṭe bale de re khāi
takhan guru kārẏa māthāy thuye
ki kari re kæmane ẏāi ॥

āmi bali ātmārām
neo re mukhe kṛṣṇa-nām
ẏāte mukti pāi
se nāme to hay nā rata
khābo khābo rab sadāi ॥

æman pākhi ke poṣe
khete cāy sāgar cuṣe
kæmane ẏogāi
āmār buddhi gelo sādhyi gelo
sār halo śudhu peṭko bāi ॥

āmi lālan lāl paṛā
pākhiṭe mor sei āṛā
o tār saburi kichui nāi
(tāito) lālan bale peṭ bharle hay
ki ār guru gosãi ॥

When dawn breaks,
my bird announces:
"I'll eat now."
I resolved to follow
my guru's orders,
so what can I do?
How can I leave?

I answer: "My soul,
say Krishna's name
and set me free."
But he doesn't care for the name.
He just keeps screeching,
"I want to eat."

Who can raise such a bird?
He'd like to suck the ocean dry.
How to satisfy him?
I've lost my senses,
been sapped of my strength,
turned into a total glutton.

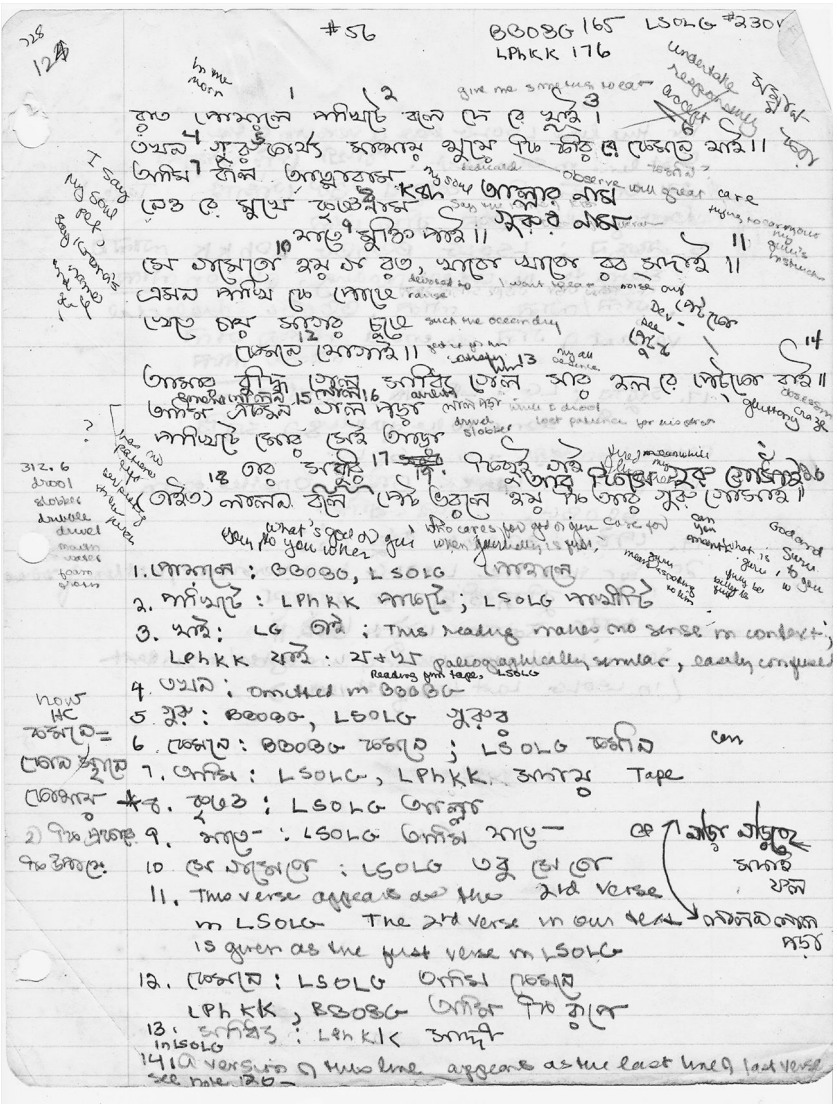
I'm Lālan, the drooler.[1]
My bird got sick of its perch.
Lālan says, What's a guru to you, anyway,
on a full stomach?

1. *āmi lālan lāl paṛā*: a pun on Lālan's name and *lāl* "saliva."

Rāt poyāle pākhiṭe bale de re khāi

This is one of a group of songs Lālan composed about the soul bird who defies all efforts to tame it (see LG nos. 67 ["Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi," **137**], 78 ["Ki ek acin pākhi puṣlām khā̃cāy"], 89 ["Pākhi kakhan jāni uṛe ẏāy," **81**], 224 ["Khāke gaṭhlo piñjire"], and 299 ["Khā̃cār bhitar acin pākhī kæmane āse ẏāy"]).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 56; BBOBG no. 164; LSOLG no. 230; LPhKK no. 176; KSh.]



Salomon's MS for "Rāt poyāle pākhiṭe bale de re khāi."

ল

125

লীলে দেখে লাগে ভয়

Līle dekhe lāge bhay

লীলে দেখে লাগে ভয়
ে কার উপর গ ে ঝাই
ডা য় বয়ে যায় ॥

আব-হায়াত নাম গ সে যে
সং পে কেউ দেখে বুঝে
পলকে পাউড়ি ভাসে
পলকে কায় ॥

ফুল ে টে তার গ জলে
ফল ধরে তার অচিন দলে
যু হয়ে ফলে ফুলে
তাতে কথা কয় ॥

গা ে ড়া এক মীন ঐ গা
খেলছে খেলা পরম র
লালন বলে জল কালে
মীন যাবে হাওয়ায় ॥

līle dekhe lāge bhay
naukār upar gaṅgā bojhāi
ḍāṅgāy baye ẏāy ॥

āb-hāyāt nām gaṅgā se ẏe
saṃkṣepe keu dekhe bujhe
palake pāuṛi bhāse
palake śukāy ॥

phul phoṭe tār gaṅgājale
phal dhare tār acin dale
ẏukta haye phale phule
tāte kathā kay ॥

gāṅga joṛā ek mīn ai gāṅge
khelche khelā param raṅge
lālan bale jal śukāle
mīn ẏābe hāoyāy ॥

The Lord's game is terrifying to watch:
a boat loaded with an entire river
sails on dry land.

The river's name is the Water of Life.
You can find it in the microcosm.
In the wink of an eye
it overflows its banks,
and in the wink of an eye
it dries up.

Flowers bloom in river water.
Fruits grow on unknown branches.[1]
When flower and fruit unite,
they talk.[2]

A fish that fills the whole river
plays in the water.
Lālan says: The fish vanishes in the air
when the river dries up.[3]

1. *acin dale*: lit. "unknown petal." Branches (*ḍāl*) rather than petals, however, seem to be meant here.

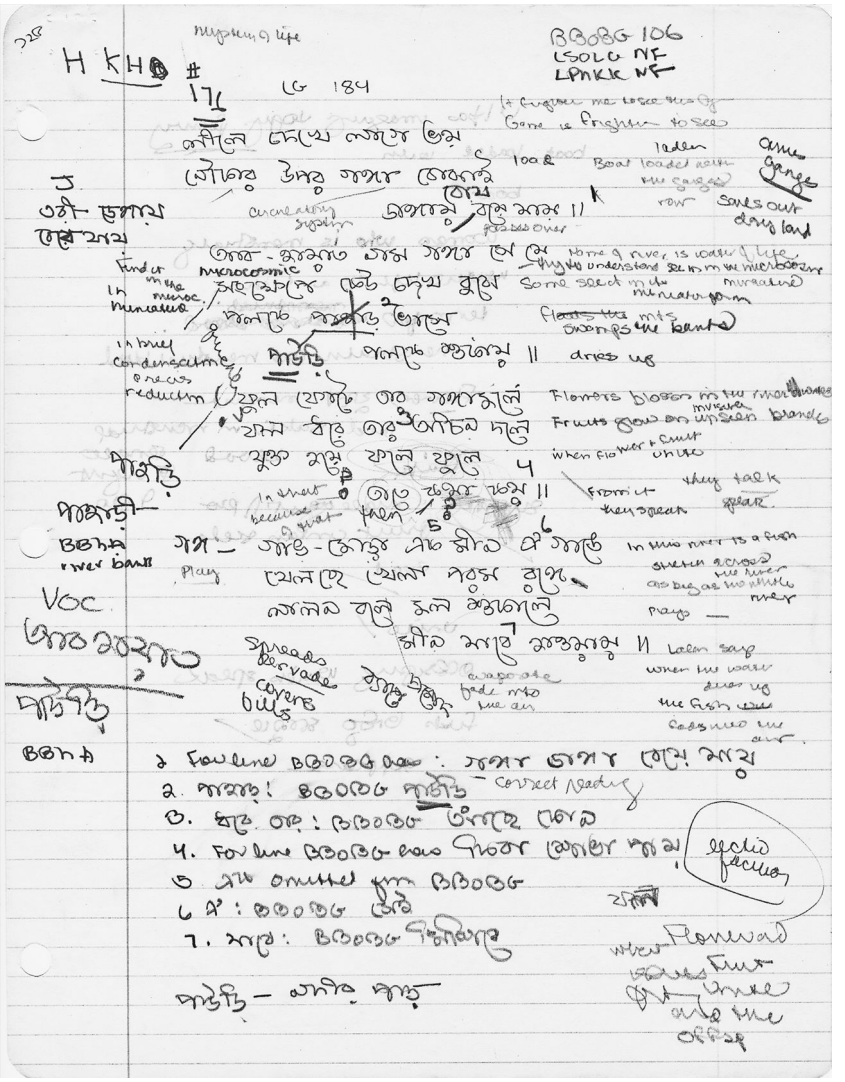
2. A literal translation of this verse is as follows: "Flowers bloom in its river waters. Fruits grow on its unknown branches. When flower and fruit unite, they talk in it." The pronoun "it" probably refers to the body.

3. [Emendations:] In verse 1 J¹ has *pāhaṛi*, BBOBG has *pāuṛi*, and LG has *pāhāṛ*. These are all variants of standard Bengali *pāṛ* "river bank." In all other respects J¹ and LG agree. This common text is taken as the exemplar. The readings of BBOBG differ from the exemplar in several minor respects. Only one variant significantly affects the meaning of the song: in verse 2 instead of *tāte kathā kay* given in J¹ and LG, BBOBG has the lectio facilior *kibā śobhā pāy*.

Līle dekhe lāge bhay

This song uses "topsy-turvy" (*ulṭa*) surreal imagery to describe the mystery of procreation. The "boat loaded with an entire river" symbolizes a woman's body when she is menstruating, and the "water of life" is a technical term in Bāul songs for the menstrual flow. The "flower" signifies menstrual blood, the female agent of procreation, and the "fruit," semen, the male agent of procreation. It is the baby produced from their union that "talks." The "fish" represents the uncatchable man (*adhar mānuṣ*), the active form of the Supreme who only becomes manifest during menstruation.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; J[1] no. 176; BBOBG no. 106; LG no. 184; H; KhB; LS no. 503.]



Salomon's MS for "Līle dekhe lāge bhay."

শ

126

শহরে ে ল জন ে টে

Śahare ṣola jan bombāṭe

শহরে ে ল জন ে টে
করিয়ে পাগলপারা নিল তারা সব লুটে ॥

রা র রাজা যিনি
ে রের ও সে শি মণি
নালিশ করে আমি
ে নখানে কার নিকটে ॥

পঁ চ জনা ধনী ছিল
তারা সব ফতুর হে
কারবারে ভ দিলো
কখন যেন যায় উঠে ॥

গেলো ধন মাল নামায়
খালি ঘর দেখি জমায়
লালন কয় খাজনার দায়
কখন যেন যায় লাটে ॥

śahare ṣola jan bombāṭe
kariye pāgal-pārā nilo tārā sab luṭe ॥

rājyeśvar rājā ẏini
corer o se śiromaṇi
nāliś karbo āmi
kon-khāne kār nikaṭe ॥

pā̃c janā dhanī chilo
tārā sab phatur halo
kār-bāre bhaṅga dilo
kakhan ẏæna ẏāy uṭhe ॥

gelo dhan māl nāmāy
khāli ghar dekhi jamāy
lālan kay khājanār dāy
kakhan ẏæna ẏāy lāṭe ॥

Sixteen bandits
are turning the city upside down,
looting everything in sight.

The king of kings is their leader.[1]
So who can I complain to?
Where should I go?

Once there were five rich men;
they're all paupers now.
Their business is in shambles,
ready to fold up.

My money is gone
and all my possessions too.[2]
My only asset is an empty house.
Lālan says, Any day now
they'll auction it off
to pay my taxes.[3]

1. In the original this sentence is not part of the refrain but opens the first verse.

2. *gelo dhan māl(o) nāmāy*: lit. "My money is gone. They brought down my possessions too." Lālan's choice of *nāmāy* seems to be influenced by the underlying symbolic significance of the line; i.e., the thieves caused the spilling of semen. See the annotations.

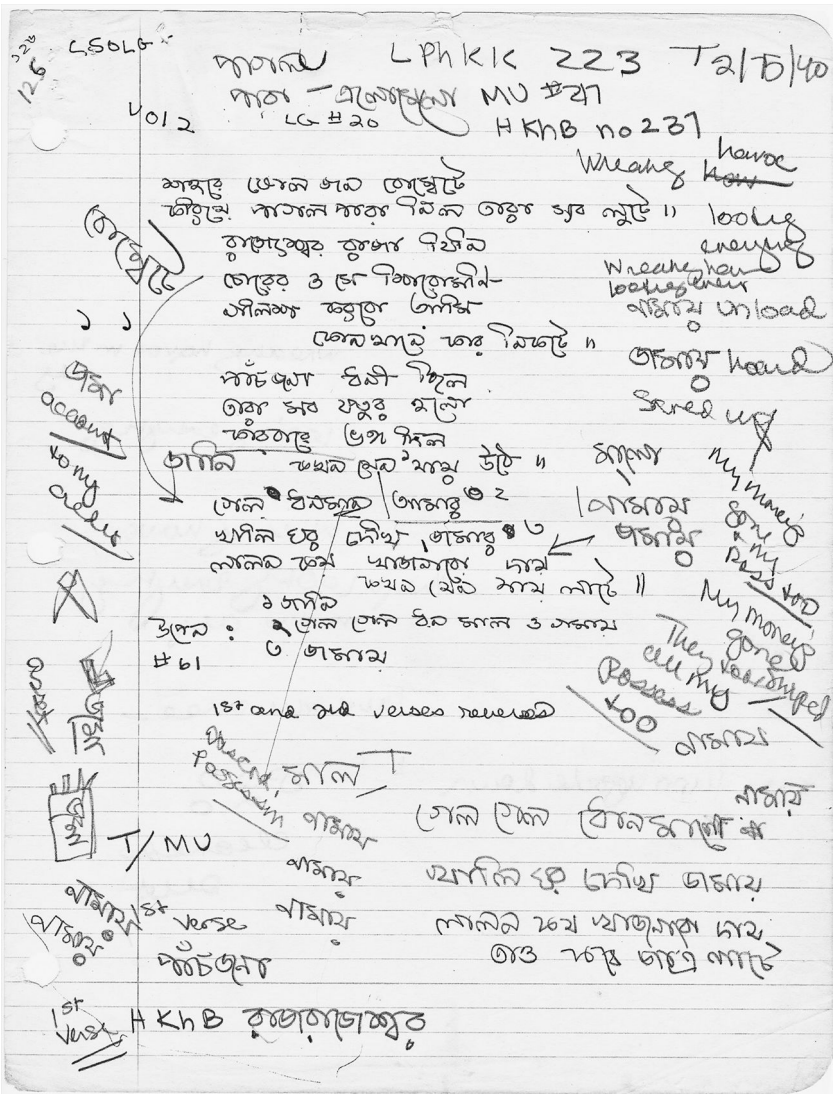
3. [Emendations:] In T verse 1 and 2 are reversed. The order of the verses as given in J[1] agrees with an oral version of the song sung by Kanai Shah and with most published versions. LPhKK: In the last verse Mitra misreads *dhanmāno* for *dhan mālo* [or *dhan māl*]. LSOLG: In the last verse read *mālo nāmāy* [or *māl nāmāy*] for *mālkhānāy*.

Śahare ṣola jan bombeṭe

"The sixteen robbers" are the five organs of perception (ears, skin, eyes, nose, and tongue for tasting), the five organs of action (anus, genitals, hands, feet, and tongue for speaking), and the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and envy). The "king of kings" is the Supreme (on the Supreme as thief, see the annotations to "E ki āsamāni cor" [LG no. 103; **25**] and "Raṅgmahale curi kare"),[4] and the "five rich men" are conscience, wisdom, restraint, renunciation, and devotion. "Money" (*dhan*) and "possessions" (*māl*) signify semen. The "empty house" that is about to be "auctioned off" stands for the body depleted of its reserve of semen and therefore on the point of death.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 20; LPhKK, 223 (T^2: 75, 40); H; KhB; LS no. 385.]

4. [It is unclear which song Salomon is referring to here. It may be a variant of "Raṃmahale sīd kāṭe sadāy," "A thief keeps breaking into the hall of colors, **120**, or it may be an additional song that was not found in her manuscripts. The song is not found in LG, BBOBG, or LSOLG.]



Salomon's MS for "Śahare ṣola jan bombāṭe."

127

ম রসের রসিক মেরে সঁ ই

Śuddha prem raser rasik mere sãi

ম রসের রসিক মেরে সঁ ই
পড়িলে নিলে কি রে তারে পাই ॥

ে জা পূজা ক সবে
আ সুখের কা হবে।
সঁ ইর করণ কি সই পড়িবে
(মনে) ভাে তাই ॥

নী নী মুনি জনা
মের খাতায় সই পড়ে না।
প্রেম পিরিতের উপাসনা
বেদে নাই ॥

মে পাপ কি পূ হয় রে
চি লিখতে না রে।
সিরাজ সঁ ই কয় লালন ে রে
তাই জানাই ॥

śuddha prem raser rasik mere sãi
paṛile guṇile ki re tāre pāi ॥

rojā pūjā kalle sabe
āpta sukher kārẏa habe।
sãir karaṇ ki sai paṛibe
(mane) bhābo tāi ॥

dhyānī jñānī muni janā
premer khātāy sai paṛe nā।
prem piriter upāsanā
bede nāi ॥

preme pāp ki pūṇya hay re
citragupta likhte nā re।
sirāj sãi kay lālan tore
tāi jānāi ॥

Can I reach my Lord,[1]
who enjoys pure love,[2]
by reading and meditating?

Roza and pūjā
will make you feel good,
but do they get the Lord's
stamp of approval?[3]
Think about it!

Yogīs, wise men, and sages
don't sign their names
in the book of love.
The worship of love
isn't found in any Veda.

Whether love is a sin or a virtue
even Citragupta cannot judge.
Sirāj Sãi says, Lālan,
that's why I'm telling you this.[4]

1. Alt. trans.: "Can I find my Lord."

2. *śuddha prem raser rasik*: lit. "the Lord who is a connoisseur of pure love."

3. *sai* "signature" seems to be used in the extended sense of "approval." A more literal translation is "but will it be approved as the Lord's worship?" Alt. trans.: "but will it pass for true worship?"

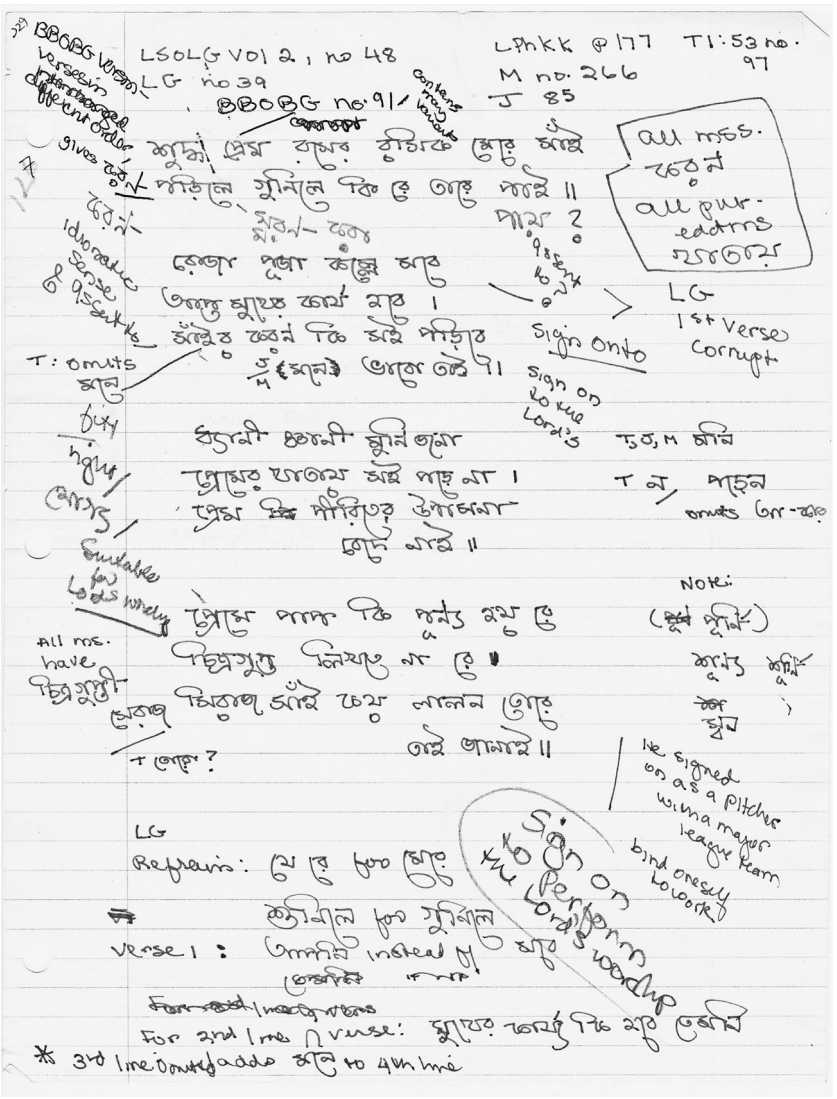
4. [Emendations:] The manuscripts have identical readings, with the exception of an additional word, *mane*, at the beginning of the last line of verse 1 in M and J. LPhKK contains the following misreadings: In the refrain read *prem* for *premer* and *guṇile* for *śunile*. In verse 1 read *ki* for *ni* and *bhābo* for *bhābe*. Other published editions: In the refrain LG and LSOLG give *ẏe re* instead of *mere*. LG has *śunile* for *guṇile*, and LSOLG reverses the order of *paṛile guṇile*. In verse 1 LG has *āpani* instead of *sabe*. For *āpta sukher kārẏa habe* it gives *sukher kārẏa ki habe temani*. It also omits the third line of the verse. LSOLG has *khādāẏ* instead of *karaṇ*. Both LG and LSOLG add *mane* as in M and J. To the beginning of verse 2 LG and LSOLG add *karo*. In verse 3 LSOLG has *prem*, whereas all other versions have *preme*.

Śuddha prem raser rasik mere sā̃i

In this song Lālan explains that the Supreme cannot be grasped intellectually, but must be experienced through Bāul *sādhanā* based on sexual love. External rituals such as the *roza* (fast) of the Muslims, the *pūjā* (worship) of the Hindus, or the sacrifices of Vedic religion have no relation to the Bāul religion of love; they only serve to delude man and hide from him the truth that is found in his own body. The followers of the path of ritualism, be they yogīs, sages, or wise men, don't sign their names in the book of love.

Lālan says that Citragupta, keeper of the records for Yama, the god of death, cannot judge "whether love is a sin or a virtue" because by means of the rite of sexual union the *sādhak* transcends good and evil and exists in a state of *coincidentia oppositorum*. Since the adept has been able to pass beyond the earthly realm over which Yama rules, he becomes free of his power.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 53, no. 97; M no. 266; J no. 85; LG no. 39; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 48; LS no. 760.]



Salomon's MS for "Śuddha prem raser rasik mere sãi."

128

মরাগে সদায় থাকরে আমার মন

Śuddha prem-rāge sadāy thākre āmār man

মরাগে সদায় থাকরে
আমার মন
স্রোতে গাও ঢালান দিও না
বেয়ে যাও উজান ॥

নিভাইয়ে মদন জ্বালা
ওহি মু কর গে খেলা
উভয় নেহার ঊর্ধ্ব তালা
মের এই ল ণ ॥

একটি সাপের দু ফণি
ে মুখে কামড়ান তিনি
প্রেমবাণী বি মে
তার সনে দেও রণ ॥

মহারস মুদিত কমলে
ম শৃ রে নেও রে খুলে
আ সামাল সেই রণকালে
কয় ফকির লালন ॥

śuddha prem-rāge ḍube thākre
āmār man
srote gāo ḍhālān dio nā
beye ẏāo ujān ॥

nibhāiye madan jvālā
ohi muṇḍe karo ge khelā
ubhay nehār ūrdhva tālā
premer ei lakṣaṇ ॥

ekṭi sāper duṭi phaṇī
do-mukhe kāmaṛān tini
premabāṇe bikrame
tār sane deo raṇ ॥

mahāras mudita kamale
prem sṛṅgāre neo re khule
āpta sāmāl sei raṇakāle
kay phakir lālan ॥

My mind,
always live in pure love.[1]
Don't give way to the current.[2]
Row upstream instead.

Extinguish lust's flames.
Play the snake and frog game.[3]
Both you and she gaze up
at the top floor—
this is the sign of love.

One snake has two hoods
and bites with two mouths.[4]
Attacking with the arrow of love,[5]
put it down.[6]

Make[7] *love and open*
the lotus filled with nectar[8]
that's shut tight.
Fakir Lālan says,
Maintain self-control[9]
through that fight.

1. Alt. trans.: "dwell." [At least one oral variant has *ḍube* "after diving" for *sadāy* "always."]

2. *sõte gā ḍhālān dio nā*: lit. "Don't pour your body onto the current."

3. Alt. trans.: "Play the game of snake and frog."

4. *do mukhe kāmaṛāle tini*: lit. "When it bites with two mouths." Alt. trans.: "It bites with two mouths."

5. Alt. trans.: "Attack it with the arrow of love."

6. *tār sane deo raṇ*: lit. "fight it." Alt. trans.: "take it on"; "wipe it out"; "battle it out"; "(Attack with the arrow of love) and put it down."

7. [At least one oral variant gives *lao ge* for *neo re*.]

8. *mahāras:* lit. "excellent nectar." Alt. trans.: "the lotus filled with nectar."

9. Alt. trans.: "Don't lose self-control."

Śuddha prem-rāge sadāy thākre āmār man

"Pure love" refers to sexual intercourse without seminal emission; "rowing upstream" to the "return" of semen to the *sahasrār*, the *cakra* at the top of the head; and "giving way to the current" (lit. "pouring your body onto the current") to seminal discharge.

The frog and snake represent the male and female, respectively. In addition, the snake is a symbol of lust. Lālan says that it is by playing "the game of snake and frog"—by engaging in sexual intercourse and by fighting with the snake of lust itself—that lust can be conquered. As he puts it elsewhere: "Lust is the vine to true love" (LG no. 161 ["Kari kæman śuddha sahaj prem sādhan"]). Whereas normally the snake causes the death of the frog, that is, lust (woman) causes the man to spill his seed, the aim of Bāul *sādhana* is for the snake and frog to come to live together in harmony. When the *sādhak* and *sādhikā* who are engaged in sexual intercourse both remain composed (cf. LG no. 127 ["Mukher kathāy ki se cā̃d dharā ẏāy"]: "When both snake and frog are calm . . .") and "gaze up at the top floor," that is, maintain concentration, the *sādhaka* will be able to defeat lust and retain his semen. The "two mouths" of the snake are the mouth and the vagina, and "the arrow of love" is the penis.

The "lotus that's shut tight" refers to the virgin, and the "nectar" (*mahāras*: lit. "the best nectar"), according to Karim Shah, is the blood of a girl's first few menstrual periods, which is considered to contain the most *śakti*.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; V[1]b no. 154 (not present in M); J no. 94; LG no. 168; KhB; LS no. 172.]

Exemplar: V2 no. 234

śuddha prem rāge sadāy thāk re āmār man /
sōte gā ḍhālān dio nā (rāge) beẏe ẏā[9] *ujān //*

nibārie[10] *madan jvālā, ahimuṇḍe kari*[11] *ge khelā /*
ubhaẏ nehār[12] *ūrdhva tālā, premer ei lakṣaṇ //*

9. V[1]b has *beẏe*; J has *beẏe ẏāo*.

10. V[1] has *nebhārie*, and M has *nibhārie*.

11. V[1]b has *kar*. The *i* in *kari* is emphatic.

12. V[2] has *nihār*

ekṭā sāper duṭi phaṇi, domukhe kāmṛān[13] *tini /*
prem bāṇe bikrame[14] *tār sane deo raṇ //*

mahāras mudita kamale, prem chiṅgāre neo re khule/
āpta sāmāl[15] *sei raṇkāle, kay phakir lālan //*

13. V[1]b has *kāmṛāle* [also transliterated *kāmaṛāle*].

14. KhB has *bikramaṇe*

15. V[2] has *samle*.

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নে অজানা এক মানুষের কথা

Śune ajānā ek mānuṣer kathā

নে অজানা এক মানুষের কথা
ভু ে রচাঁদ মুড়ালে মাথা ॥

হায় মানুষ ে থায় সে মানুষ
বলে ভু হে বে শ
দেখে সব নদীয়ার মানুষ
বলে না তা ॥

কোন মানুষের দায়ে ে র পাগল
পাগল করলে নদেয় সকল
রাখে না কে জেতের ে ল
(মে) একাকার করলে সেথা ॥

যার চি জগৎ চি
তার চি কার চি
লালন বলে হে চি
কে ে আছে সেই অচিনতা ॥

śune ajānā ek mānuṣer kathā
prabhu gaurcā̃d muṛāle māthā ॥

hāy mānuṣ kothāy se mānuṣ
bale prabhu halo behū̃ś
dekhe sab nadīyār mānuṣ
bale nā tā ॥

kon mānuṣer dāye gaur pāgal
pāgal karle nadey sakal
rākhlo nā kāro jeter bol
(preme) ekākār karle sethā ॥

ẏār cinte jagaṯ cinte
tār cinte kār cinte
lālan bale halo cinte
ke go āche sei acinatā ॥

When he heard about the unknown man,
Lord Gaurcãd shaved his head.[1]

"O, the man! Where is that man?"
cried the Lord in a fit of delirium.
He looked over everyone in Nadīyā
and said, "That's not him."

For the love of which man
did Gaur become mad
and drive the people of Nadīyā mad?
He didn't listen to any talk of caste.
He made them all one.

The man whose thoughts are the world's thoughts—
whose thoughts are his thoughts?[2]
Lālan says, I've been thinking.
Who is that unknown one beyond thought?[3]

[There are no annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 314; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 158; LS no. 556.]

1. Lord Gaur Cãd [or Gaurcãd]: Sobriquet of the sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava reformer Caitanya.

2. Alt. trans.: "The man whose thoughts the world thinks—whose thoughts does he think?"

3. "Unknown one beyond thought": translates *acintā*, which seems to be a pun on the words *acin* "unknown" and *acintya* "inconceivable."

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সকলি কপালে করে

Sakali kapāle kare

সকলি কপালে করে	sakali kapāle kare
কপালের নাম ে পালচ	kapāler nām gopāl-candra
কপালের নাম য়ে ে বরে ॥	kapāler nām guye gobare ॥
যদি থাকে এই কপালে	ẏadi thāke ei kapāle
র এনে দেয় ে পালে	ratna ene dey gopāle
কপালে বিমতি হইলে	kapāle bimati haile
দূর্বা বনে বাঘে মারে ॥	dūrbā bane bāghe māre ॥
কেউ রাজা কেউ ভিখারি	keu rājā keu bhikhāri
কপালের ফের সবারি	kapāler pher sabāri
মনের ফেরে বুঝতে নারি	maner phere bujhte nāri
খেটে মরি অ কারে ॥	kheṭe mari andhakāre ॥
যার যেমন মনের ক ণা	ẏār ẏæman maner karuṇā
তেমনি ফল পেয়েছে সে না	tæmani phal peyeche se nā
লালন বলে ভাবলে হয় না	lālan bale bhāble hay nā
বিধির কলম আর কি ফেরে ॥	bidhir kalam ār ki phere ॥

Everything rests on fate[1].
Fate names one man
Gopālcandra,
another Cow Shit or Crap.

If fate treats you well,
Gopāl brings you jewels.
When it's not in your favor,
even in a meadow
you can fall prey to a tiger.

One man's a king,
one's a beggar—
it's all in the twists of fate.
But I can't understand.
I'm too thickheaded.[2]
So in darkness I strive and suffer.

As is the kindness of your heart,
so are the fruits you reap.
Lālan says, Why worry?
Does fate ever make revisions?[3]

1. "Fate" (*kapāl*) literally means forehead. According to common South Asian belief, a person's fate is written on his or her forehead soon after birth by Vidhi (Brahmā), god of fate.

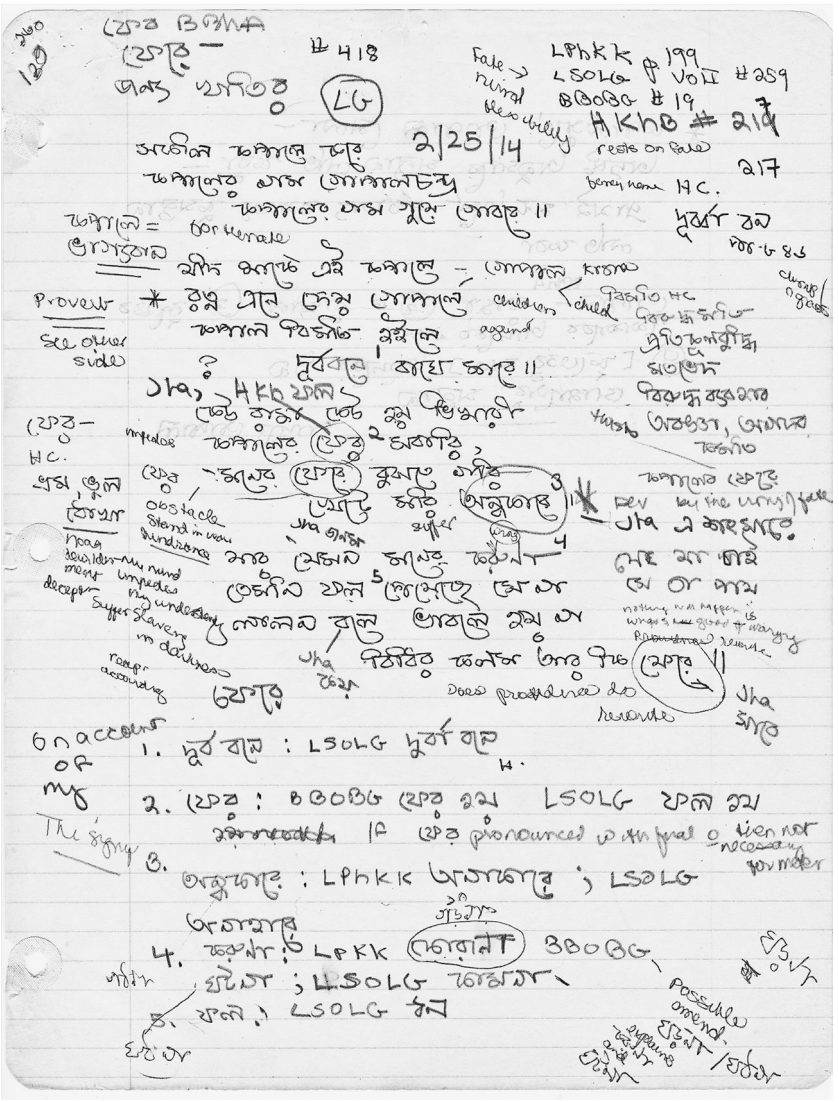
2. *maner phere bujhte nāri:* lit. "Due to the obstacle of my mind, I can't understand."

3. [Emendations:] Manuscripts: In verse 2 T has *kapāler pher,* whereas J¹ has *kapāler phal.* In verse 3 T has *phal,* whereas J¹ has *dhan.* Published editions: In verse 2 instead of the obscure and probably corrupt reading *anākāre* given in T and J¹, LG and BBOBG have *andhakāre,* and LSOLG has *anāhāre.* It is clear at least in the case of LG, which is based on T, that *andhakāre* is an emendation made by the editors, although no note to that effect is included. The LSOLG reading *anāhāre* also seems to be an attempt to make sense out of *anākāre.* Unfortunately, I do not have an oral text of this song at present to use as comparison. I have translated *andhakāṛe,* which makes better sense in the context than *anāhāre.* In verse 3 instead of *karuṇā,* BBOBG has *ghaṭanā,* and LSOLG has *kāmanā.* Other significant variants: LSOLG has the same readings as those given above for J¹.

Sakali kapāle kare

"Crap" (*gu*) and "Cow Shit" (*gobar*) are common nicknames in Bengal given to ward off Yama, the god of death (S. Sen 1979, 56). This song is based on several Bengali proverbs, each known in a number of variants: "Some have the good fate to be called Gopāl" (*kapāler nām gopāl*; Gopāl is a common name of Kṛṣṇa); "If shit is in your fate, even a crow will give it to you" (*kapāle thākle gu kākeo ene dey*); and "If fate is not in your favor, even in a meadow there's danger of tigers (*kapāle ẏadi manda hay, dūrbākṣete bāgher bhay*).

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 14, no. 25; Mitra, 199; J^1 no. 217; LG no. 418 (based on T), BBOBG no. 19; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 259; LS no. 480.]



Salomon's MS for "Sakali kapāle kare."

131

সকালে যাই ধেনু লয়ে

Sakāle ẏāi dhenu laye

সকালে যাই ধেনু লয়ে
এ বনেতে ভয় আছে ভাই
মা আমায় দিয়েছে কয়ে ॥

আজকার খেলা এই অবধি
ে ছা রে ভাই ধেনু আদি
ণে বেচে থাক যদি
কাল আবার খে আসিয়ে ॥

নি নি বন ছাড়ি
সকালে যাইতাম বাড়ি
আজ আমাদের দেখে দেরি
মা আছে পথপানে চেয়ে ॥

বলেছিল মা য দে
কানাইকে দিলাম বলাইর হাতে
ভাল ম হলে তাতে
লালন কয় কি বল যেয়ে ॥

sakāle ẏāi dhenu laye
e banete bhay āche bhāi
mā āmāy diyeche kaye ॥

ājkār khelā ei abadhi
gochā re bhāi dhenu ādi
prāṇe bẽce thāk ẏadi
kāl ābār khelo āsiye ॥

nitya nitya ban chāṛi
sakāle ẏāitām bāṛi
āj āmāder dekhe deri
mā āche pathapāne ceye ॥

balechilo mā ẏaśode
kānāike dilām balāir hāte
bhālo manda hale tāte
lālan kay ki balbo ẏeye ॥

Let's round up the cows and leave early.
This forest is full of danger, brother.
Mother told me so.

Let's quit playing for today, brother,
and gather our cows and things together.
If you're still alive tomorrow,
you can come again and play.[1]

We return home early
from the forest every day.
So today, when mother sees we're late,
she'll watch the road for us.

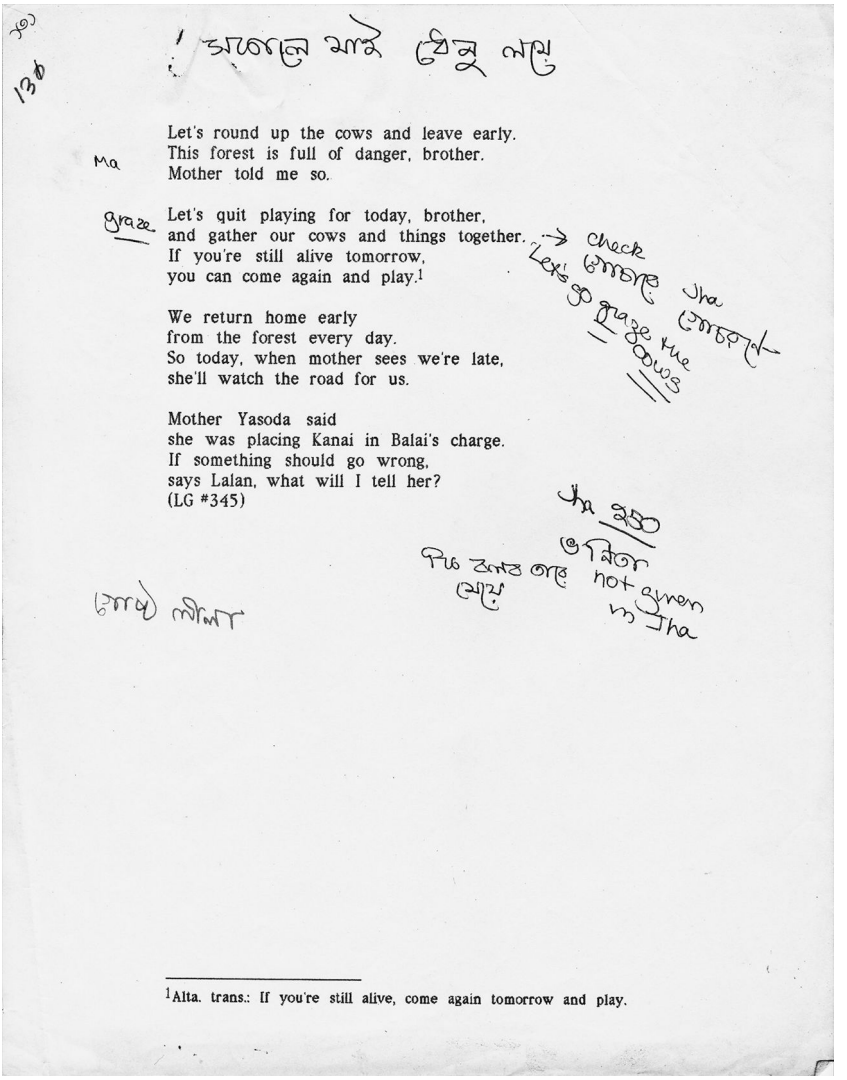
Mother Yaśodā said
she was placing Kānāi in Balāi's charge.
If something should go wrong,
says Lālan, what will I tell her?

1. Alt. trans.: "If you're still alive, come again tomorrow and play."

Sakāle ẏāi dhenu laye

Kānāi is the colloquial and familiar form of Kṛṣṇa, and Balāi is the familiar form of Balarām, Kṛṣṇa's older brother.

[Salomon's manuscript is missing for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: LG no. 345; Jhā no. 250; LS no. 233.]



সকালে যাই ধেনু লয়ে

Let's round up the cows and leave early.
This forest is full of danger, brother.
Mother told me so.

Let's quit playing for today, brother,
and gather our cows and things together.
If you're still alive tomorrow,
you can come again and play.[1]

We return home early
from the forest every day.
So today, when mother sees we're late,
she'll watch the road for us.

Mother Yasoda said
she was placing Kanai in Balai's charge.
If something should go wrong,
says Lalan, what will I tell her?
(LG #345)

[1] Alta. trans.: If you're still alive, come again tomorrow and play.

Salomon's MS for "Sakāle yāi dhenu laye."

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সঁইর লীলা দেখে লাগে চমৎকার

Sãir līlā dekhe lāge camaṯkār

সঁইর লীলা দেখে লাগে চমৎকার	sãir līlā dekhe lāge camaṯkār
সুরাতে করিল সৃ	surāte karilo sṛṣṭi
আকার কি সে নিরাকার ॥	ākār ki se nirākār ॥
আদমেরে পয়দা করে	ādamere paydā kare
ে দ সুরাতে পরওয়ার	khod surāte paraoyār
সুরাত বিনে সুরাত কিসে	surāt bine surāt kise
হইল সে হঠাৎকার ॥	hailo se haṭhāṯkār ॥
নূরের মানে হয় ে রানে	nūrer māne hay korāne
কি ব সে নূর তাহার	ki bastu se nūr tāhār
নিরাকারে কি কারে	nirākāre ki prakāre
নূর চুয়ায়ে হয় সংসার ॥	nūr cuyāye hay saṃsār ॥
আহামদি পে হাদি	āhāmadi rūpe hādi
দুনিয়ায় দিয়েছে বার	duniyāy diyeche bār
লালন বলে মনে দেলে	lālan bale mane dele
সেও ে বিষম ে র আমার ॥	seo to biṣam ghor āmār ॥

It amazes me to see the Lord's play.
He gave form to creation,
but has He a form of His own?[1]

Our Protector created man
in His own image.
But if He has no form,[2]
did man's image come out
of the blue?

The Qur'an explains the meaning of light.
But what is His light made of?[3]
How could the light of a bodiless God
ooze to create the world?

He appeared in the world
as Ahmad, to guide us.
Lālan says, My heart and mind
are in total darkness.[4]

1. Alt. trans.: "but does He Himself have a body?"; "but does He have a body or is he bodiless?"; "but does He have a body or not?"; "but has He a body?"

2. Alt. trans.: "But if He doesn't have one"; "But if He has no body."

3. *ki bastu se nūr tāhār.*

4. Manuscripts: In the refrain C^3 has the synonym *paydā* for *sṛṣṭi*. In the first verse LPhKK misreads *murāt* (*mūrti*) as *surāt*. C^3 has the variant *murād*. The last two verses are missing from C^3. Published editions: In the first verse LG and BBOBG have *surāt* (BBOBG *churāt*) for *murāt* and *paydā kise* instead of *surāt kise*. BBOBG has additional *ki* preceding *haṭhāṯkār*. In the second verse BBOBG has *nūrbastu se nirākār pramāṇe* for *ki bastu se nūr tāhār* and omits *nirākāre* from the beginning of the second half of the verse. In the last verse instead of *hādi* LG has *āhādi*, and BBOBG has *chādi*, although in his explication of the song, Bhaṭṭācārya [BBOBG, 508] gives *hādi* in parenthesis. For *mane dele* LG has *śune dekhe*.

Sā̃ir līlā dekhe lāge camaṯkār

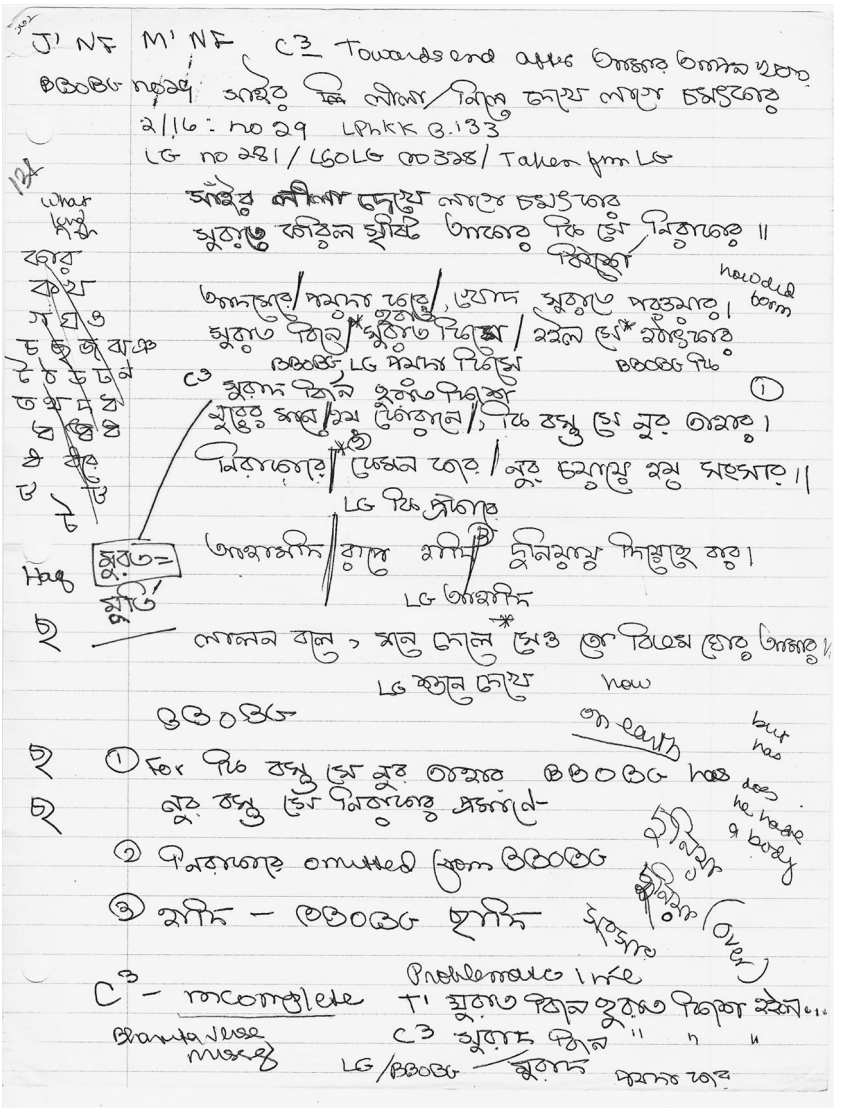
This is another song concerning the question of whether God is formed or formless. Here again, Lālan remarks on the apparent paradox that God is believed to be incorporeal, yet according to the *ḥādith*, "God created Adam in His form" (see also the annotations to "Ākār ki nirākār sā̃i rabbānā" [LG no. 280; **5**]). For Lālan, however, there is no contradiction, since, as Dimock notes (1987, 378), he believes that "God is both formed and formless." As stated previously, the relation of God's formed to his formless aspect is that of attributes to essence (see the annotations to "O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe" [LG no. 240; **36**]); attributes are in essence, essence in attributes.

Lālan answers his question "What is light made of?" (lit. "What substance [or] *bastu* is light?) in his song "Murśid jānāy ẏāre marma sei jānte pāy" [LG no. 239; **106**], where he calls light a liquid substance (*pāni bastu*). Light is equated with the *ādi bindu*, the primal drop from which the world was created, and so also with semen. For the answer to the question "How could the light of a bodiless God ooze to create the world?" see the annotations to "O duṭi nūrer bhed bicār jānā ucit baṭe."

When Lālan says that God "appeared in the world as Muhammad to guide us," he is saying that God is only knowable in his formed, manifest aspect as the Prophet Muhammad. Bhaṭṭācārya ([BBOBG], 508) comments, "Consequently God cannot be called formless. The form of man is his form."[5]

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^2: 16, no. 29; LPhKK, 133; C^3; LG no. 281; BBOBG no. 294; LS no. 319.]

5. [A handwritten note below the typescript reads: "See also LG no. 16, 'Ke bojhe sā̃ir līlākhelā.' "]



Salomon's MS for "Sāir līlā dekhe lāge camaṯkār."

133

সা কি রে আমার সে প চিনিতে

Sādhya ki re āmār se rūp cinite

সা কি রে আমার সে প চিনিতে
অহ শি মায়া-ঠুসি ন-চ তে ॥

(ঘরের) ঈশান ে ণে হামেশ ঘড়ি
সেই নড়ে কি আমি নড়ি
আমি আমায় হাতড়া পাড়ি
পাই নে দেখিতে ॥

আমি আর সে অচিন একজন
এক জায়গাতে থাকি দুজন
ফঁ কে দেখি ল ে জন
চাইলে ধরিতে ॥

ধুড়ে হ মেনে আছি
এখন বসে খেদাই মাছি
লালন বলে মরে বঁ চি
ে ন কাজেতে ॥

sādhya ki re āmār se rūp cinite
aharniśi māyā-ṭhusi jñān-cakṣete ॥

(gharer) īśān koṇe hāmeś ghaṛi
sei naṛe ki āmi naṛi
āmi āmāy hātaṛā pāṛi
pāi ne dekhite ॥

āmi ār se acin ekjan
ek jāygāte thāki dujan
phā̃ke dekhi lakṣa ẏojan
caile dharite ॥

dhuṛe hadda mene āchi
ækhan base khedāi māchi
lālan bale mare bā̃ci
kon kājete ॥

Will I ever be able to recognize him?
Night and day, blinders of delusion
cover my eyes.

Someone keeps stirring
in the northeast corner of my room.
Am I moving or is he?
Groping, I search myself.
I just can't see.

The two of us,
this stranger[1] *and I,*
live in the same place.
But when I try to catch him,
he's a hundred thousand miles away.

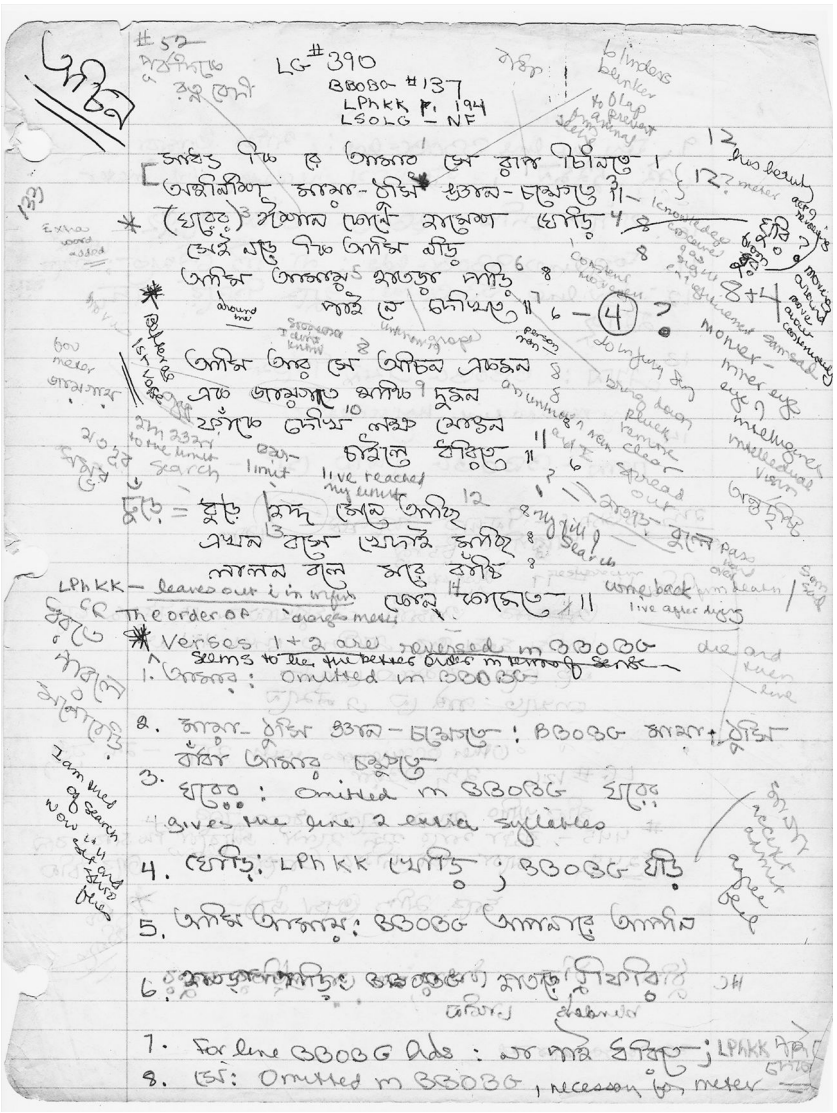
I got tired of searching.
Now I just sit and shoo flies.
Lālan says, What's the trick
of being dead while alive?

1. *se acin ekjan.*

Sādhya ki re āmār se rūp cinite

This is another song about the elusive God in the body. The northeast corner of the room is the corner in which the deity is kept in Hindu households. In the body, it refers to the heart. "To be dead while alive" means to control one's senses and be dead to phenomenal existence.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 390; BBOBG no. 137; LPhKK, 194; LS no. 185.]



Salomon's MS for "Sādhya ki re āmār se rūp cinite."

134

সামা কি সে ধন পাবে

Sāmānye ki se dhan pābe

সামা কি সে ধন পাবে
দীনের অধীন হয়ে চরণ সাধিতে হবে ॥

সাধন পথে কি না হে
বাদশারা বাদশাই ছাড়িল
কুলবতীর কুল গেলো
কালারে ভেবে ॥

কত কত মুনি ঋষি
যুগ যুগা র বনবাসী
পা বলে কালশশী
বসিয়ে তপে ॥

পদে ক জনা
বিনামূ হয়ে কেনা
করে র দা পনা
সে ধনের ে ভে ॥

চরণ ধনের যা আশা
অ ধনের নাই লালসা
লালন ভেড়ের বু নাশা
ে ভাষা ভেবে ॥

sāmānye ki se dhan pābe
dīner adhīn haye caraṇ sādhite habe ॥

sādhan pathe ki nā halo
bādaśārā bādaśāi chāṛilo
kulabatīr kul gelo
kālāre bhebe ॥

kata kata muni ṛṣi
ẏug ẏugāntar banabāsī
pābo bale kālaśaśī
basiye tape ॥

gurupade kato janā
bināmūlya haye kenā
kare gurur dāsyapanā
se dhaner lobhe ॥

caraṇ dhaner ẏāro āśā
anya dhaner nāi lālasā
lālan bheṛer buddhi nāśā
dobhāṣā bhebe ॥

Is it easy
to get that treasure?
You have worshipped those feet,
becoming the meekest of the meek.

What hasn't happened
on the path of worship?
Emperors renounced their empires;
virtuous wives lost their virtue,
thinking of Kālā.

Throughout the ages
countless seers and sages
lived in forests,
practicing penance,
hoping to get the Black Moon.

Following at their gurus' feet,
countless men were bought for nothing.
They served their gurus like slaves
to gain the treasure they craved.

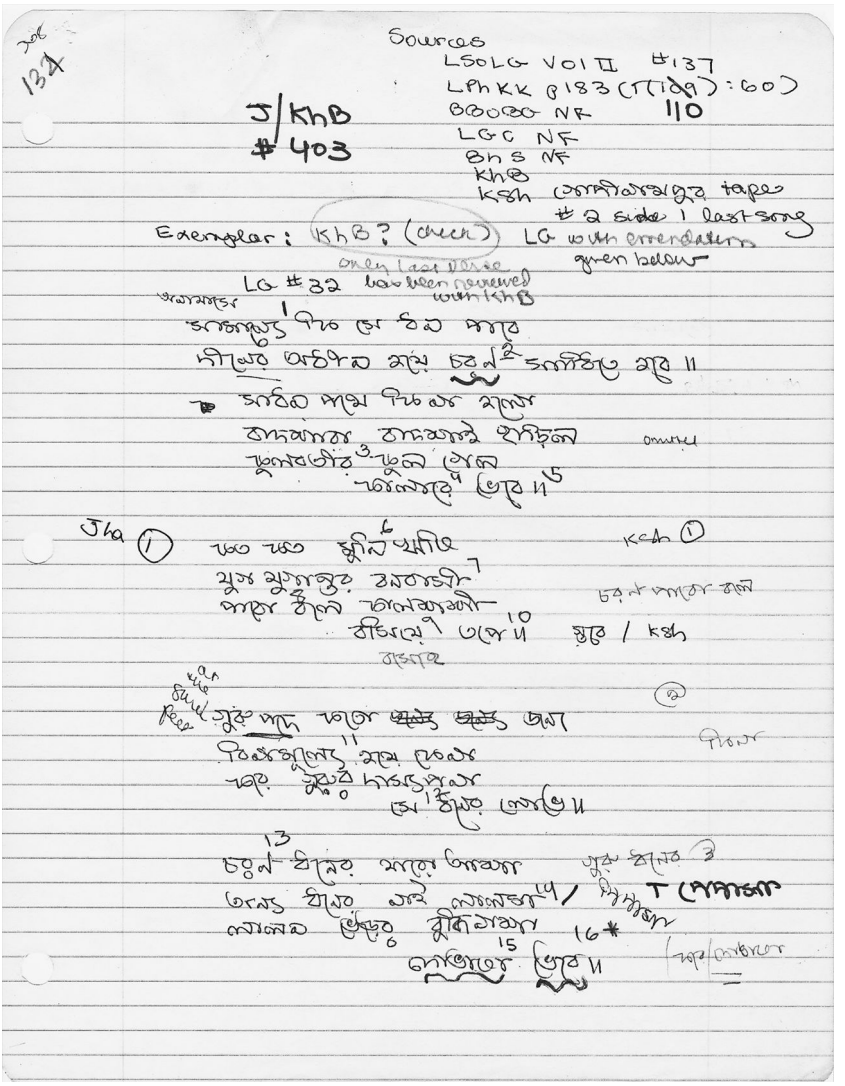
He who wants
the treasure of those feet
desires no other treasure.
But Lālan the fool's lost his senses.
He keeps thinking in two languages.[1]

1. [Emendations:] Mitra misreads the first word of the song, *uparede* (dialectal for *uparodhe*), as *upabede*. Both T and LG omit *caraṇ*, which should precede *sādhite* in the second line of the refrain. Read *bhebe* or *bhābe* for *bhabe* in T and LG.

Sāmānye ki se dhan pābe

In this song Lālan remarks on the difficulty of the path of worship leading to God, here called Kālā and Black Moon, epithets of Kṛṣṇa. In order to "get that treasure" one must renounce the world, giving up one's wealth and family, and devote oneself completely and unhesitatingly to one's worship. In the song's *bhaṇitā* Lālan, in his typical fashion, deprecates himself, taking the role of the failed worshiper who is pulled in two directions, toward worldly life on the one hand and renunciation on the other. "Thinking in two languages" is a metaphor for indecisiveness.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T^1: 60, no. 110 (LPhKK, 183); Mitra, 183; LG no. 32; J/KhB no. 403; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 137; KSh (Gopīnāthpur tape no. 2, side one, last song); LS no. 720.]



Salomon's MS for "Sāmānye ki se dhan pābe."

135

সেই কালাচাঁদ নদেয় এসেছে

Sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche

সেই কালাচাঁদ নদেয় এসেছে
সে না বাজিয়ে বঁশি ফিরছে সদায়
জা নার কুলনাশে ॥

যদি মজবি ও কালার পিরিতি
আগে জেন গে যা উহার কেমন রীতি
উ র ম করা নয় ণে মারা
অনুমানে বুঝিয়েছে ॥

যদি রা পদ ও পদে কেউ দেয়
তবে ও কালার মন না পাওয়া যায়
রাধা বলে বাজে বঁশি
(এখন) তারে কত কঁ দিয়েছে ॥

ও না জে ছিল জলদকা
না জানি কি সাধনে র হ
লালন বলে চি কেবল
দু নয়ন বঁ কা আছে ॥

sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche
se nā bājiye bā̃śī phirche sadāy
brajāṅganār kulanāśe ॥

ẏadi majbi o kālār piriti
āge jeno ge ẏā uhār kæman rīti
uttar prem karā nay prāṇe mārā
anumāne bujhiyeche ॥

ẏadi rājyapad o pade keu dey
tabe o kālār man nā pāoyā ẏāy
rādhā bale bāje bā̃śī
(ækhan) tāre kata kā̃diyeche ॥

o nā braje chilo jaladakālo
nā jāni ki sādhane gaur halo
lālan bale cihna kebal
du nayan bā̃kā āche ॥

The Black Moon has come to Nadīyā—
that fellow who used to roam around,
playing the flute and wrecking the families
of Braj's women.

If you're going to fall head over heels
in love with Kālā, first find out his ways.
Either he returns your love,[1] *or you lose your life.*
So I have concluded.

Even if you lay a kingdom at his feet,
you still might not win Kālā's heart.
His flute sounds Rādhā's name.
But how he makes her cry now.

In Braj, he was black as a raincloud.
I don't know what worship
turned him into fair Gaur.
Lālan says, The only sign of his former self[2]
are two shifty eyes.[3]

1. *uttar prem karā*. Alt. trans.: "Either you're loved in return"; "Your love is returned."

2. "Of his former self" is not in the original text but has been added for the sake of clarity.

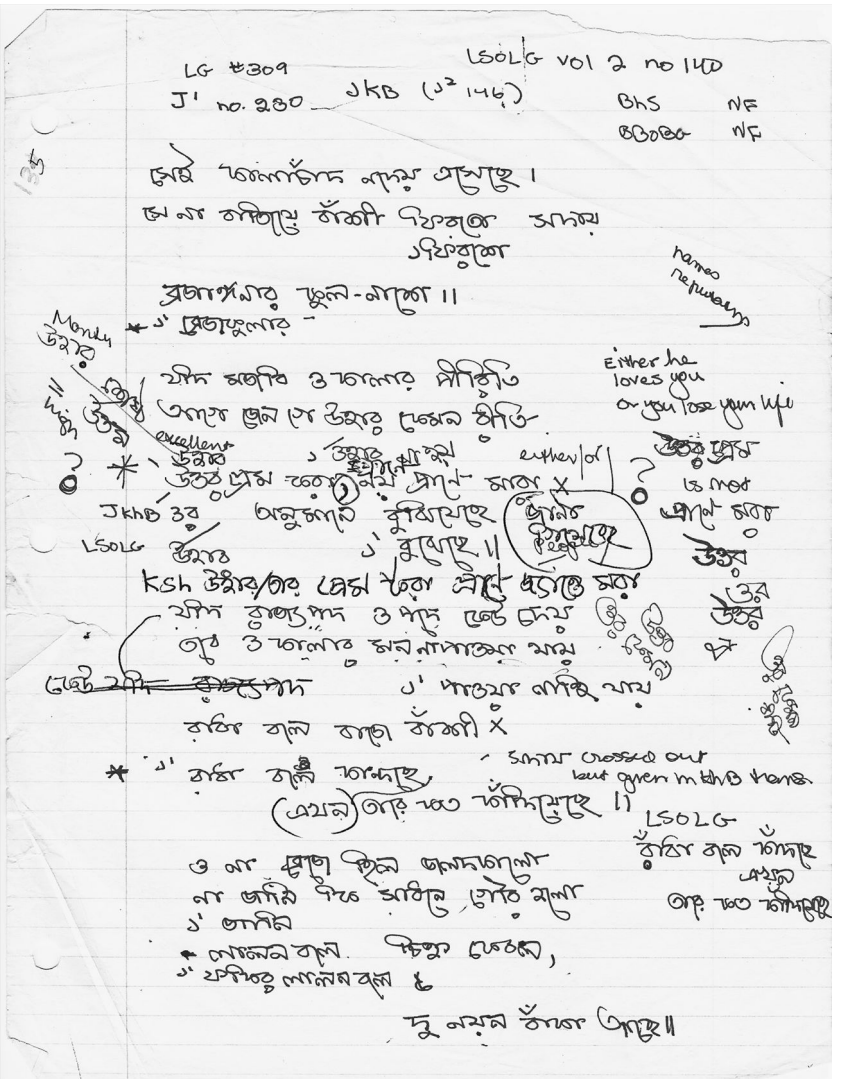
3. *du nayan bā̃kā āche*. Alt. trans.: "are two sly eyes"; "are two furtive eyes."

Sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche

The "Black Moon" refers to Kṛṣṇa, as does the epithet Kālā (Kālā, like Kṛṣṇa, means "black," "dark"). This is another song that remarks on the transformation of dark Kṛṣṇa into fair Caitanya, who is considered the dual incarnation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and whose sobriquet Gaur means "white," "light-complexioned." (See the notes to LG no. 143 ["Jāno re man sei rāger karaṇ," **62**].)

It may seem paradoxical that Lālan speaks of Kṛṣṇa in his subsequent birth as Gaur and yet says that Kṛṣṇa still makes Rādhā cry. In the Vaiṣṇava view of time, however, Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* is eternal. As Dimock (1966, 139) explains: "The *līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the earthly Vṛndāvana is a finite form of what goes on eternally in the heavenly Vṛndāvana. Thus, any given moment of the *līlā*, including the moment of union, is a capsule of eternity." Lālan expresses this paradox directly in another song (LG no. 356 ["Ke bojhe sei kṛṣṇer apār līle"]): "Who understands Kṛṣṇa's incomparable *līlā*? He never left Braj for half a second, so who became king of Mathura? Kṛṣṇa never left Rādhā for half a second. So it says in the Mahābhārata. Then why did that blessed woman tell the world of the unrelenting pain of her separation from him?"

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 309; J^1 no. 230; J^2 no. 146; LSOLG vol. 2, no. 140; LS no. 288.]



Salomon's MS for "Sei kālācā̃d nadey eseche."

হ

136

হলাম না রে রসিক ভেয়ে

Halām nā re rasik bheye

হলাম না রে রসিক ভেয়ে	halām nā re rasik bheye
না জেনে রসের ভেয়ান	nā jene raser bheyān
মরতে হলো গরল খেয়ে ॥	marte halo garal kheye ॥
ে সঁইর লীলা চমৎকারা	gosā̃ir līlā camaṯkārā
বিষেতে অমৃত ে রা	biṣete amṛta porā
অসা কে সা করা	asādhyake sādhya karā
ছুঁলে বিষ উঠে ধাইয়ে ॥	chũle biṣ uṭhe dhāiye ॥
দু যেমন থাকে ননী	dugdhe ẏæman thāke nanī
ভেয়ানে বিভি জানি	bheyāne bibhinna jāni
সুধা অমৃত বয় তেমনি	sudhā amṛta bay tæmani
গরলে আছি ঢাকিয়ে ॥	garale āchi ḍhākiye ॥
দু জলে যদি মেশায়	dugdhe jale ẏadi meśāy
হংস হলে সেই বেছে খায়	haṃsa hale sei beche khāy
লালন বলে আমি সদায়	lālan bale āmi sadāy
আে দ করি জল হদ নিয়ে ॥	āmod kari jal had niye ॥

I didn't become a good confectioner:
I didn't learn to make syrup.
Now I'll have to drink poison and die.

The Lord plays a marvelous game:
Nectar's full of poison.
The impossible becomes possible.
Just a touch and the poison goes.

As butter is in milk
until its separated by churning,
so nectar lies hidden in poison.

If you're a swan,
you extract milk from water.
Lālan says: But I only get pleasure from water.

[There are neither footnotes nor annotations for this song. Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; LG no. 128; LS no. 288.]

137

হায় চিরদিন পুষলাম এক অচিন পাখি

Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi

হায় চিরদিন পুষলাম এক অচিন পাখি
ভেদ পরিচয় দেয় না আমায়
ঐ খেদে ঝরে আঁখি ॥

পাখি বুলি বলে নতে পাই
প কেমন দেখি না ভাই
এ ে বিষম ে র দেখি
আমি চিনাল পেলে চিনে নিতাম
যে মনের ধুকধুকি ॥

পুষে পাখি চিনলাম না
এ লজ্জা তো যাবে না
আজ উপায় করি কি
পাখি কখন যেন যাবে উড়ে
ধু দিয়ে দুই ে খি ॥

আছে নয় দুয়ার এই খঁ চাতে
যায় আসে পাখি ে ন পথে
ে খে দিয়ে রে ভে
দরবেশ সিরাজ সঁ ই কয়
রয় লালন রয়
ফঁ দ পেতে ঐ পথমুখি ॥

hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi
bhed paricay dey nā āmāy
ai khede jhare ãkhi ॥

pākhi buli bale śunte pāi
rūp kæman dekhi nā bhāi
e to biṣam ghor dekhi
āmi cinālo pele cine nitām
ẏeto maner dhukadhuki ॥

puṣe pākhi cinlām nā
e lajjā to ẏābe nā
āj upāy kari ki
pākhi kakhan ẏæna ẏābe uṛe
dhulo diye dui cokhi ॥

āche nay duyār ei khãcāte
ẏāy āse pākhi kon pathe
cokhe diye re bhelki
darbeś sirāj sãi kay
ray lālan ray
phãd pete ai pathamukhi ॥

What a pity!
I spent my whole life
raising an unknown bird.
Yet I never learned the secret
of his identity.[1]
The anguish of it
brings tears to my eyes.

I can hear the bird's chatter, brother,
but I can't see how he looks.
I see only this thick darkness.
If I could find someone
to reveal his identity,
I'd get to know him.
Then my heart would stop throbbing.

But I don't know my pet bird.
There's no end to the shame I feel.
What am I to do now? Any day
that bird's going to throw dust in my eyes
and fly away.

The bird's cage has nine doors.
Through which one
does he come and go,
playing tricks on my eyes?
Sirāj Sā̃i says, Lālan,
lay a trap in his path
and stay there.[2]

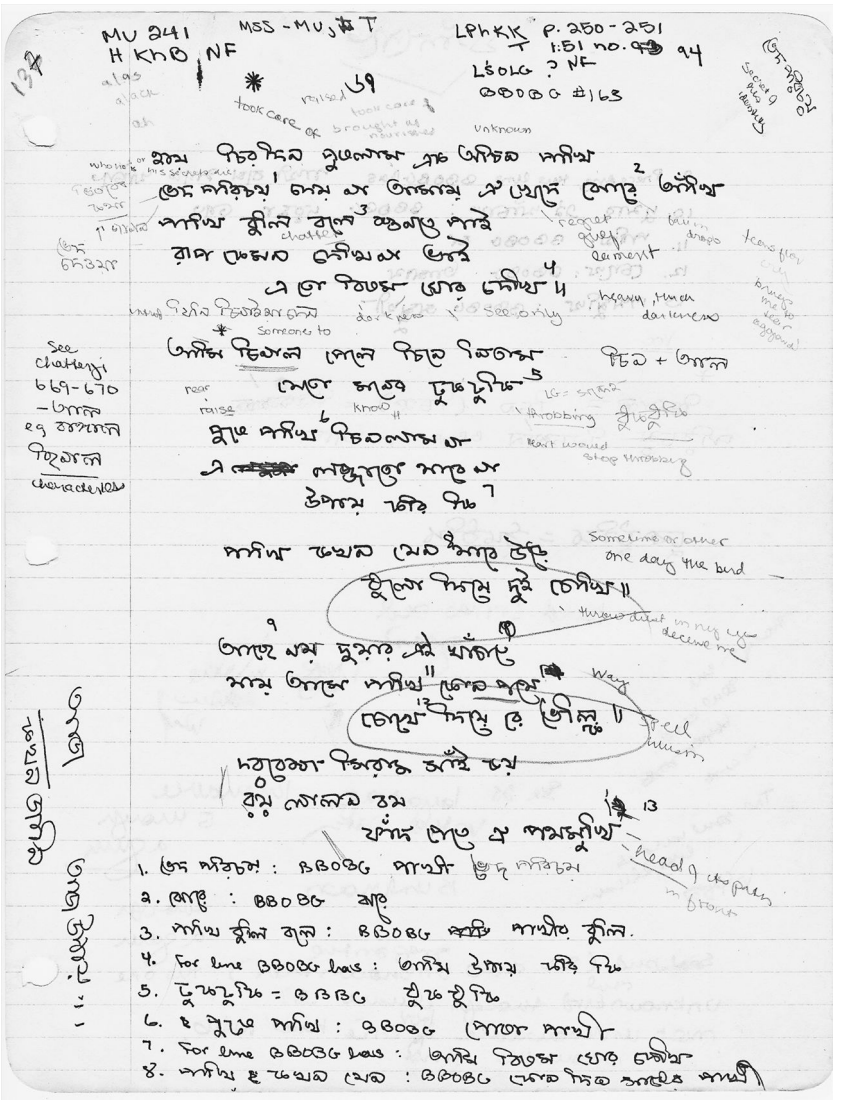
1. *bhed paricay dey nā āmāy.*

2. [Emendations:] Mitra misreads *dekhe* for *khede* in the refrain. *Bay* in the last line is an obvious error in the manuscript for *ray*. The LG version omits *āj*, which should precede *upāy* in the second verse and which is necessary for the meter.

Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi

The "unknown bird" (*acin pākhi*) symbolizing the soul is one of Lālan's most famous images. Though elusive, he is knowable through a guru who "reveals the bird's identity" to the adept and teaches him how to keep the bird from flying away. The "nine doors" are the nine openings of the body: the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, genital organ, anus. In addition to the soul, the bird is equated with semen and breath. The "trap" refers to the practice of breath control, as Lālan indicates in his song "Dharo cor hāoyā ghare phā̃d pete" ("Lay a trap in the house of wind to catch the thief") [LG no. 49; **73**]. By controlling his breath, the adept is able to prevent the ejaculation of semen, which is vital to his existence, thereby also keeping the soul-bird from leaving the body.

[Sources for the original Bangla version include: Salomon's manuscript; T[1]: 51, no. 94; LPhKK, 250–251; Mitra, 250–251; LG no. 67; BBOBG no. 163.]



Salomon's MS for "Hāy ciradin puṣlām ek acin pākhi."

Glossary of Technical Terms

This glossary is an attempt by the editors to clarify some of the more complex technical terms used in the songs of Lālan Fakir (as well as by many other Bāul poets), but it is far from exhaustive. It is clear from her annotations that Salomon originally intended to include such a glossary with *City of Mirrors*, although this has not been found among her manuscripts. Nevertheless, her definitions to many of these terms are also found in the annotations to her translated songs.

***acin pākhi*:** Lit. "unknown bird." This is a reference to the soul-bird who lives in the "cage" of the human body (cf. song no. **81**).

***adhar cā̃d*:** Lit. "uncatchable moon." The term is sometimes a reference to the ritualized ingestion of menstrual blood (cf. song no. **72**).

***ajān(ā) mānuṣ / acin mānuṣ*:** Lit. "unknown person," an identity of the Supreme whose precise nature changes from song to song. In some cases the figure has the "shape of a fish" (*mīn-rūp*), where it represents the manifest form (*prakāśvarūp*) of the Supreme (cf. songs no. **9, 34, 111,** and **114**).

***Ālek mānuṣ*:** Lit. "unseen" or "invisible person." The term *ālek* is derived from Skt. *alakṣya*. The reference is to the Supreme in his formless aspect, Nirañjan (cf. song no. **28**).

āleph (< Ar. *alif*)**:** The first letter of the Arabic alphabet. The letter *āleph* in the songs of Lālan Fakir, as with other traditions with Sufi roots, stands for Allah. However, it is also interpreted by Bāul poets as the *liṅga* or phallus (cf. songs no. **10, 21,** and **34**).

***amṛta*:** Lit. "nectar of immortality." While the term certainly still carries its Vedic connotations, for the Bāuls, drinking this "nectar" is often a code for the oral exchange of sexual fluids (see *ras* and songs no. **93** and **103**n14).

***anumān*:** Lit. "conjecture" or "hearsay." See *bartamān*.

***aṭal*:** Lit. "steady." *Aṭal* typically describes a man who remains celibate and practices *sādhanā* without the aid of a woman. However, Openshaw also notes that *aṭal* can refer to "intercourse without ejaculation of semen" (cf. song no. **103**n13).

***ātmā/ātma(n)*:** Lit. "self." The term in the Bāul context is also equated with *brahman* and semen (cf. song no. **37**).

ātmatattva: Lit. "the truth in the self," a reference to the knowledge of the identity of God and man. The dialectical variant is *āptatattva*.

avatār: Lit. "one who descends" or traverses downward to earth. In the songs of Lālan Fakir both the Prophet Muhammad and Allah are considered to be *avatār*s, as is Caitanya (cf. song no. **4**).

baidik: Lit. "pertaining to the Vedas," i.e., canonical religion or scripture.

bairāgī: A Vaiṣṇava ascetic who traditionally follows a life of poverty.

bartamān: Lit. "the present." Having experiential knowledge in *bartamān*, "here and now," is considered superior to *anumān*, "hearsay." Bāuls who privilege *bartamān* are in some contexts called *bartamān-panthī* (cf. song no. **9**).

bastu: Lit. "substance." In the songs of Lālan this is often a code word for semen and menstrual blood as a primal substance (cf. song no. **132**).

bātun (< Ar. *bāṭin*): Lit. "hidden" or "secret," an adjective that is often paired with *jāher* (< Ar. *ẓāhir*), "manifest." *Bātun* can refer to hidden knowledge, the hidden form of the Prophet, or even a "hidden room," referring to the female sexual organs (cf. songs no. **75**, **76**, and **107**). In Bengali *bātun* can alternatively be spelled *bātin*.

bhakti: Lit. "devotion" or "worship" (from Skt. root < *bhaj*, "to share," "to partake"). Lālan, like many other earlier *bhakti* poets of South Asia, taught that through certain kinds of *bhakti* one can "reach the secret path" that is beyond conventional orthodoxy (cf. song no. **18**).

bhaṇitā: Lit. "signature," i.e., the tagline of a Bāul song that contains the author's name and is usually accompanied by a direct quote.

bhāb (< Skt. *bhāva*): Lit. "state of being"; in the songs of Lālan Fakir the term is used most often in the emotional sense of one's abiding attitude or behavior of love. Embodying the *bhāb* requires renunciation of *jāti* (caste, religion) and *kul* (family); it also requires *sādhanā* (cf. song no. **44**).

bhek: A Bāul ceremony of "initiation." *Bhek* is usually referred to in a Vaiṣṇava context, while the Sufi equivalent is *khilāphat*.

bīj: Lit. "seed"; also can refer to semen in its potentiality.

bindu: Lit. "point," "drop." In Bāul songs *bindu* often refers to semen (cf. *nuktā* and song no. **55**).

brahman: The "supreme reality" of the Upaniṣads, which is unborn and therefore has no beginning or source. Some songs of Lālan do make reference, however, to Kṛṣṇa as the source of *brahman* (cf. song no. **20**).

Caitanya: A sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava reformer who revolutionized *bhakti* practice for the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas. The word *caitanya* in a general sense can also mean "consciousness" or "awareness" (cf. song. **44**).

cakra: Yogic "wheels" of energy that are mapped to different centers in the inherent form (*svarūp*) of the subtle body. In the songs of Lālan Fakir they also correspond to the *mokām* (stations) and *mañjil* (stages) of Sufism (cf. song no. **61**).

cor: Lit. "thief." In the songs of Lālan Fakir the *cor* is linked to the *sahaj mānuṣ* and the practice of breath control to arrest semen (cf. songs no. **25**, **73**, **94**, **98**, and **120**).

darbeś: Lit. "dervish." An elevated stage of attainment in Sufi and Bāul practice that refers to one's mastery of esoteric *sādhanā*.

dehatattva: Lit. "doctrine of the body." *Dehatattva* describes the Bāul teachings and songs that treat the internal and external mechanics of both the yogic and physical bodies (cf. songs no. **12**, **68**, and **120**).

dharma: Lit. "duty," "law." While in modern Bengali the term *dharma* is often used as a translation of the English word "religion," Lālan seems to always use it to describe either moral and immoral behavior (cf. song no. **83**). When referring to caste or birth group, he instead uses the term *jāt*.

ḍor-kaupīn: A loincloth that a male Bāul fakir receives at his initiation ceremony, symbolizing his control over semen. A female *fakirāṇi* usually receives a sari instead of a loincloth (cf. song no. **47**).

fakir (Bng. *phakir*): A Bāul ascetic who practices sexual *sādhanā* under the guidance of a guru or murshid. "Fakir" is the title that Lālan most often applies to himself in his songs.

fanā' (Bng. *phānā*): Lit. "dissolution" or "annihilation." An advanced state in Bāul and Sufi practices that refers to the annihilation of the ego.

Gaur: Lit. "cream-colored with a red tinge." Gaur is an epithet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, specifically in reference to him as an *avatār* of Kṛṣṇa.

Gauṛīya Vaiṣṇava: Followers of the sixteenth-century Bengali reformer Caitanya Mahāprabhu who with his disciples (Goswāmins) significantly reformed the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's love into a highly embodied orthodox system of *bhakti* (cf. song no. **67**).

guṇa: Lit. "strand," "thread." The three *guṇa*s (often translated as "qualities") are primarily derived from Sāṃkhya philosophy and are considered to be constituents of material existence. They are *sattva* "goodness," *rajas* "passion," and *tamas* "darkness." In *dehatattva* terms the three currents signify the menstrual blood of the three days a woman is said to menstruate (cf. song no. **55**).

hetu: An action primarily motivated by selfishness (cf. song no. **103**).

jāher (< Ar. *ẓāhir*): Lit. "manifest." See *bātun*. In Bengali *jāher* can alternatively be spelled *jāhir*.

jap: The practice of reciting mantra or other prayers using either a necklace of beads (*mālā* or *tasbih*) or one's hands to count the number of repetitions.

jāt/jāti: Lit. "birth" (i.e., "birth caste," "birth group," or even more abstractly one's religious identity). For Lālan, the state of *bhāb* (love) requires a rejection of attachment to one's *jāt* (cf. song no. **44**).

jīb (< Skt. *jīva*): An individual, often conceived of as an embodied soul.

jñān: Knowledge or gnosis; in the context of Lālan songs *jñān* is most often obtained through experience or revelation.

jyānte marā: Lit. "dead while alive." This phrase refers to the state in which the *sādhak* or *sādhikā* is "dead" to phenomenal existence and no longer has feelings of lust (cf. song no. **86**).

***kām*:** Lit. "desire," "lust." In the songs of Lālan Fakir *kām* is usually contrasted with *śuddha prem* (pure love). It also can denote menstrual blood.

***khilāphat*:** (< Ar. *khilāfa*, "succession"). See *bhek*.

***kul/Kūl*:** Lit. "family," "society" / "shore." The words are homophonous in Bengali and are also not distinguished in the nonstandard orthography of the MSS. In some contexts the meanings overlap, and both words are appropriate (cf. songs no. **44** and **45**).

***Kuṇḍalinī*:** Lit. "she who is coiled." In Tantric literature the *kuṇḍalinī* is often described as a serpentine power (*śakti*) coiled at the base of the spine in the *mūlādhāra-cakra*. In the songs of Lālan Fakir, when semen is ejaculated in the ordinary fashion, the *kuṇḍalinī* is said to release her poison (*biṣ*), but this poison exists in a purified form when it dwells at the top of the head in the *sahasrār* (cf. song no. **103**). Some Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā texts actually locate the *kuṇḍalinīśakti* in the navel, but Bāul songs refer to the entire region below the navel, including the *svādhiṣṭhan* and *mūlādhār*, as the place of sexual functions (cf. song no. **12**).

***kūp*:** Lit. "well," "pool," "pond." The term can also signify the vagina of a woman who does not help her partner retain his semen (cf. song no. **33**).

***lāhut*:** See *mokām*.

***lām*:** The twelfth letter of the Arabic alphabet. In Sufism the letter is commonly interpreted as the angel Gabriel, who revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad, but in Bāul songs it can also signify the female sex organ (cf. songs no. **10**, **21**, and **34**).

***līlā*:** Lit. "game," "play." The *līlā* most commonly refers to the dalliance between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (cf. song no. **26**) as well as the cosmogonic play of the Lord (cf. song no. **132**), but in a sexual sense it also is a reference to the *līlā* of the *sahaj mānuṣ* in the *mūlādhār-cakra* (cf. song no. **73**).

***liṅga*:** The male sexual organ, both in a physical sense and as a cosmogonic principle.

***maner mānuṣ*:** Lit. "person of the heart." The *maner mānuṣ* is a common motif in the songs of Lālan Fakir, where it simultaneously can refer to a physical lover and the divine beloved or cosmogonic principle that the aspirant seeks to unite with (cf. songs no. **11** and **105**).

mañjil (< Ar. sing. *manzil*)**:** Lit. "stage(s)." In the songs of Lālan Fakir the *mañjil* are four in number: *śarīyat* (Ar. *sharī'a*, "Islamic law"), *tarikat* (Ar. *ṭarīqa*, "path"), *hakikat* (Ar. *ḥaqīqa*, "truth"), and *māraphat* (Ar. *ma'rifa*, "gnosis") (cf. song no. **61**).

***mānuṣ*:** A common Bengali word meaning "human" or "person," which can be either singular or plural in number and can refer to any gender.

māraphat (< Ar. *ma'rifa*)**:** Lit. "mystic knowledge." In contrast to *śarīyat, māraphat* represents what is *bātun*, the secret doctrines that are not accessible to everyone and that lead to a revelation of the divine (cf. songs no. **24** and **107**).

mim (< Ar. *mīm*)**:** The thirteenth letter of the Arabic alphabet. In Sufism the letter *mim* refers to the Prophet Muhammad, but in Bāul songs it can also signify the fetus or child (cf. songs no. **21** and **34**).

mokām (< Ar. sing. *maqām*)**:** Lit. "station(s)." There are four *mokāms* that are the Sufi stages on the journey towards union with God: *nāsut* (Ar. *nāsūt*, "human nature"), *mālkut* (Ar. *malakūt*, "the heavenly world"), *jabrut* (Ar. *jabarūt*, "spiritual power"), and *lāhut* (Ar. *lāhūt*, "divine nature"). Each of the *mokām*s is located in a specific part of the body in one of the yogic *cakra*s and corresponds to one of the four *mañjil*s. Many Bāul songs also refer to a fifth *mokām*, the *lā mokām* where God resides (cf. *mañjil, cakra*, and song no. **61**).

murshid (Bng. *murśid*, < Ar. *murshid*)**:** A spiritual guide or teacher, in Bāul songs synonymous with the guru (cf. song no. **107**).

nabi (< Ar. *nabī*)**:** Lit. "prophet," usually used in a specific sense to refer to the Prophet Muhammad (cf. songs no. **84**, **90**, and **96**).

***nām*:** Lit. "name." The songs of Lālan Fakir (like those of many other Bhakti poets) make reference to many divine names in the context of devotional practice (cf. songs no. **5**, **22**, **67**, **121**, **122**, and **124**), but also are highly critical of mindless repetition of names (cf. songs no. **29**, **32**, and **79**).

nāmāj (< Pers. *nāmāz*)**:** The Islamic practice of praying five times a day according to the *śarīyat* (cf. songs no. **18**, **78**, and **84**).

***Nirañjan*:** The active form of the Supreme, who incarnated in the cosmic egg as the father of the world (cf. songs no. **104** and **114**). The myth of Nirañjan's birth from the cosmic egg, or *hiraṇyagarbha*, as it is often called, can be traced back to the Ṛg Veda (10.121), Svetāśvara Upaniṣad (3.4. and 4.12c), Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.19), Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (II.I6, 1–2), Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (1.3), and Manusmṛti (I.7–9), among other Sanskrit texts.

nirhetu (also *nihetu or niḥhetu*)**:** An action engaged in without selfish motives (see *hetu*).

nuktā (< Ar. *nuqṭa*)**:** Lit. "dot," "point." The *nuktā* is a dot placed above or below a letter to distinguish it from other letters. According to Karim Shah, *nuktā* is a synonym of *bindu*, "point" which also means semen (cf. song no. **21**).

***Nur Muhammad*:** The pre-existent light or essence of Muhammad, thought to have anthropomorphic shape (cf. songs no. **4**, **9**, **36**, **77**, and **96**). In the *Yogakalandar* Nur Muhammad is located in the two-petaled *ājñā-cakra* between the eyebrows (cf. song no. **75**).

***pāp*:** Lit. "sin," "vice." In the songs of Lālan Fakir the only real sin appears to be uncontrolled seminal ejaculation, although even ejaculation is unrestricted in certain ritual contexts that involve the consumption or reintegration of sexual fluids (cf. songs no. **33** and **103**).

***par*:** Lit. "stranger," "other." The stranger, who in Lālan's songs is often in possession of keys to the rooms of the aspirant's body, can refer to Śakti or the female partner whose help is essential to the male adept's success in *sādhanā* (cf. song no. **15**).

***pherestā*:** An angelic being (cf. song no. **52**).

***pūjā*:** Ritual worship, usually in a Hindu context. For Lālan, neither the *pūjā* of the Hindus nor the sacrifices of Vedic religion have any relation to the Bāul religion

of love; they only serve to delude man and hide from him the truth that is found in his own body (cf. song no. **127**).

rāg: Lit. "passion," often used in a spiritual sense of passion out of love for the divine. The term can also be a code word for the menstrual flow (cf. song no. **96**).

ras (< Skt. *rasa*): Lit. "fluid substance." In the songs of Lālan *ras* most often refers to a "nectar" of love (physical or emotional) although it can also refer to menstrual blood (cf. songs no. **19**, **33**, **62**, **93**, **103**, and **128**). The term has a rich history in both Sanskrit aesthetics and Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* traditions as a "savor" that complements the different attitudes or *bhāva*s.

rasik: A connoisseur of *ras* who is the personification of an expert lover (cf. songs no. **34**, **62**, **64**, **72**, **93**, **103**, **112**, **115**, **123**, **127**, and **136**).

rati: Lit. "love," "sexual intercourse." In Bāul songs *rati* can often be a code word for semen (cf. songs no. **13**, **44**, and **103**).

rojā (< Pers. *rozā*): Lit. "fasting." As with *pūjā* and *nāmāj*, Lālan often pokes fun at *rojā* and other external rituals (cf. song no. **78**).

rūp: Lit. "form," "appearance," "beauty," most often in a visual sense of how an object or person looks.

sādhak/sādhikā: An adept or aspirant who practices esoteric *sādhanā*. Among Bāul fakirs *sādhak* is often contracted to *sādhu*.

sādhanā/sādhan: Lit. "exertion," "striving." Both terms refer to the ritual practices of Bāul fakirs, and can even refer to the exertion of learning a new song or how to play a new instrument. When in reference to esoteric practice, *sādhanā* usually refers to the sexual practices engaged in among Bāul adepts (cf. song no. **103**).

sādhu-saṅga: Lit. "company of adepts." Like the medieval Bhakti poets of North India, Lālan stresses the benefits of *sādhu-saṅga* for the adept's progress on the path of *sādhanā* (cf. song no. **45**).

sahaj: Lit. "easy," "natural," "simple." The term *sahaj* can also refer in a metaphysical sense to the transcendent state of Sahaja praised by several Tantric schools including the Buddhist and Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās (cf. song no. **88**).

Sahajiyā: A scholarly term that most often refers to medieval schools of Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist tantric practitioners who celebrated the state of Sahaja in opposition to more orthodox religious communities. The Bāuls derived many of their teachings from these Sahajiyā schools as well as from Sufism (cf. songs no. **45** and **88**).

sahaj mānuṣ: Lit. "natural person," referring to either gender. The *sahaj mānuṣ* is a technical term used in Bāul esoteric practice. When he or she appears at the *triveṇī* in the woman's *mūlādhār* during menstruation, the Bāuls perform their *sādhanā* to catch him or her, at which point the *sahaj mānuṣ* is sometimes referred to as a thief (*cor*). At this time he or she is manifest and can be experienced as bliss by the Bāul adept. At other times, however, the *sahaj mānuṣ* is the *aṭal īśvar*,

the passive form of the Supreme who resides in the *sahasrār* (cf. songs no.**9**, **25**, **34**, **68**, **73**, **90**, **94**, **96**, **104**, **114**, **118**, and **120**).

Sãi (< Skt. *svāmī*)**:** Lit. "lord." The term refers to the supreme principle in Lālan's songs that is at once without form and formless, and is related to the human being in both shape and essence (cf. song no. **5**).

***Śakti*:** Lit. "power." Śakti when referred to in a proper sense is the supreme feminine principle of creation of whom all women are incarnations. The Śakti also refers to the *sādhikā* or female aspirant who joins the *sādhak* or male aspirant in esoteric practice, and as an object can refer to the essence of the Śakti in menstrual blood (cf. songs no. **7–10**, **15**, **30**, **36**, **41**, **61**, **68**, **90**, **100**, **104**, **112**, and **114**).

***sampradāy*:** Lit. "tradition," "sect." A *sampradāy* is a social unit that can contain a wide variety of practitioners and encompass a range of interactive rituals.

saṃsār (< Skt. *saṃsāra*)**:** The cycle of worldly existence; in the songs of Lālan the term is also simply a word for "the world" or "family life."

śarīyat (< Ar. *sharī'a*)**:** Islamic religious law. The songs of Lālan reject *śarīyat,* comparing it to a "cover" that is dispensable in favor of *māraphat*. For Lālan, A true understanding of *śarīyat* (also spelled *śarā*) can be gained only through love. (cf. songs no. **24**, **34**, **84**, and **107**).

***śuddha prem*:** Lit. "pure love." *Śuddha prem* is a reference to the sexual love experienced through Bāul *sādhanā* (cf. songs no. **127–128**).

***suṭal*:** Lit. "correct motion." A primary aim of Bāul *sādhanā* is for the *sādhak* to become *suṭal*, that is, to engage in sexual intercourse with a woman, thereby making his semen descend, but usually not allowing it to be ejaculated. However, the term *suṭal* can also refer to occasional limited ejaculation, which is only to be practiced after the *sādhak* has mastered coitus reservatus (cf. song no. **103**).

svarūp (< Skt. *svarūpa*)**:** Lit. "essential form," "true nature," "one's own image," often described metaphorically as a house. Through the union of the *svarūp*s of male and female the *sādhak* can realize God's true steady (*aṭal*) nature as the eternally blissful true Self of the Absolute (*ātma-svarūp*) (cf. songs no. **10**, **48**, and **100–101**).

***tattva*:** Lit. "that-ness." In the songs of Lālan the term *tattva* can variably mean "doctrine," "principle," or "truth."

***ulṭa*:** Lit. "upside-down," "reverse." *Ulṭa* (also spelled *ūlṭo*) in Lālan's songs often refers to the haṭhayogic practice of arresting semen and returning it to the *sahasrār* by means of the middle tube, the *suṣumnā*. It can also refer to the state of the adept whose senses are drawn inward (i.e., *jyānte-marā*), making him blind and deaf to the phenomenal world (cf. songs no. **44**, **48**, **68**, **70**, and **125**).

***Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā*:** See *sahajiyā*.

***ẏogī*:** A practitioner of yoga. In the context of Lālan's songs the term *ẏogī* often refers to an adept who has assessed the "right time" or "conjunction" (*ẏog*) for ritual practice (cf. song no. **111**).

***ẏoni*:** The female sexual organ, both in a physical sense and as a cosmogonic principle.

Zohura (Bng. *jaharā* < *Ar. al-zahrā*)**:** Muhammad's daughter Fatima, who in the songs of Lālan is a cosmic principle synonymous with the Śakti. When the light and water were separated by churning at the time of creation, Zohura's light (i.e., the light of the Śakti) was produced from the water (cf. songs no. **7**, **9**, **61**, **90**, **114**, and **116**).

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[This list of sources was not present in Carol Salomon's MSS but has been compiled from the sources mentioned in her annotations. The majority of these sources were also cited in her previously published works, but several also reflect an integration of more recent Bāul scholarship (i.e., 1995 or later) into her analysis of Lālan's songs.]

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