

## Rouf: The popular folk style of Kashmir

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### Abstract

Folk tradition consists of folk literature, folk stories, folklores and folk music and the richest part of the folk tradition is folk music and in folk music folk songs play a leading role. In Folk songs a common man expresses his/her feelings freely without intention of Sur, Laya and Tal etc. like classical music or Shastriya Sangeet. Shastriya Sangeet bounds with the principles of Shastra. Folk songs of Kashmir present considerable variety of themes, content and form. They can be broadly classified into opera, dance songs and folk songs etc. There are many folk songs in Kashmir which are sung during particular seasons or in accompanying to certain occupations, festivals, seasons and social occasions etc.

**Keywords:** ROUF, popular folk, Kashmiri style

### Introduction

“Rouf”, is one of the most popular folk music of Kashmir. The word “Rouf” has been originated from “dwarf-dance”<sup>[1]</sup> as per vedic language, it means a bee, which further develops into a rouf. Rouf is clearly inspired by bee and it is the love-making of the bee that is clearly portrayed in its dance.

Syed Qaiser Qalander describes in his book “Hamari Mousique” that Rouf is not actually a folk dance, Rouf is performed by girls or women of Kashmir in Swaying motion like “Jhoolan Ghan”<sup>[2]</sup>, but according to Dr. Sunita Dhar, the author of the book, “Traditional music of Kashmir”, “In spring and autumn seasons, the black bee comes near the bud but does not touch it, as it seems too shy. It revolves around the bud for a long time, creates a romantic mood by moving back and coming forward again and again. At last, the bud yields and accepts the offer”. This movement of the bee might have led to the creation of ‘Rouf’.



Fig 1

Rouf is a combination of Kashmiri folk dance and Kashmiri folk song, performed by Kashmiri women or girls on different

occasions in Kashmir like Eid, Ramdhan (fasting month of muslims), harvesting season etc, but the most essential occasion being the one that falls during the month of Ramadan. In past every village, towns even streets of Srinagar were resounding with rouf. Rouf songs include Naats and Kalam, besides folk songs.

In Rouf two rows of women or girls take part with their arms interlocked facing each other. The steps and dance movements of rouf are simple. On rhythmic beats they come one step forward and on the next go one step backward in swaying motion. The song that is sung during the performance is in the form of question/answer, where one group questions and the other group replies to it in a rhythmic way. Traditionally, no musical accompaniment is used with rouf songs as it is being sung, while doing the daily activities. But when performing on stage or in an informal gathering, folk musical instruments like Noet, Tumbakhnari, Rabab etc are used.

Rouf is delightful to watch and hear. During the performance of Rouf, Women, wearing colourful pharans (the traditional dresses of Kashmiri women) and Kasaba (the head gear).

Rouf songs are not the same during different occasions in Kashmir except the presentation or dancing style. The rouf which are sung by the Kashmiri ladies/girls during different occasions depicts different themes like joy, happiness, sorrow, welcome songs, spring songs etc. Few examples of Rouf with their meaning and composition are as:

### Eid Rouf

*“Eid aye ras ras*

*Eidgah waswai*

*Eidgah waswai .....<sup>[3]</sup> (In Kashmiri Language)*

### Meaning

*O’ friend Eid has come slowly and slowly. Let us go to Eidgah to offer prayers.*

<sup>1</sup> Kashmiri Lok Sangeet by Dr. Usha Bhagati P-132

<sup>2</sup> Hamari-Mousique by Syed Qaiser Qalander P-216

<sup>3</sup> Band Pather by Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Ajiz P-210

## Composition

Table 1

MaMa Eid	Ga A	Re A	Sa Ye	Re Ra	Re S	Sa Ra	Sa S
ReRe Eid	SaSa Gah	MaGa Was	Ma Wai	GaRe Eid	Sa Gah	ReRe Was	Sa Wai
Pa Ye	Pa Mi	Dha An	Ni D	Dha Na	Pa Bi	PaDha Sa	PaMa Eb
MaMa Te	Ga Mi	Re An	Sa D	- -	Re Wa	Re s	Pa Wai
MaMa Te	Ga Mi	Re An	Sa D	- -	Re Wa	Re s	Pa Wai

### Ramadan Rouf

Following verses are sung by Kashmiri ladies during the month of Ramadan.

*Retav Manz Reth Kusui Jan*

*Shoubvun Mahi Ramzan ...* <sup>[4]</sup>

(In Kashmiri language)

### Meaning

*O Friend let us sing Rouf on the auspicious month of Ramadan*

*As this month excels in merits than all other months of the year.*

### Composition

Table 2

Sa Re	Re Tav	SaNi Manz	Sa Reth	Sa Ku	Ga Sui
Re Ja	- -	SaNi An	Sa Shu	Sa Bu	Ga Wun
Re Maha	- -	SaNi Rem	Ni Z	Ni A	Ni N
Sa Ye	Re Ha	SaNi Oas	Sa Na	Sa Bi	Ga Sab
Re Ja	- -	SaNi An	Sa Ro	Sa A	Ga Zan
Re Pat	- -	SaNi Laa	Ni Ra	Ni A	Ni N

Its modern popularity in Kashmir has led to the use of new musical instruments and electronic sound sampling. Present day Artists in Kashmir make different types of Kashmiri music albums and provide many special effects in Rouf. In this regard, Television plays an important role in its development.

Hence the Rouf songs evince the physical expression of inner response to the joy and beauty of nature around.

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<sup>4</sup> Bhand Pather by Ghulam Mohi-ud\_Din Aajiz. p. 210.