

Sind and Its Sufis

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SECTION I

SIND

INTRODUCTORY

As a lad, I imagined the origin of Sind, my beloved country, thus : Brahma, the great Architect of the Universe, had planned out His world, and finished the entire structure of the frame from the limited portion of the *Primal Dust* assigned to Him for His creation. The plan being completed, He found to His discomfiture a little of the *Dust* still remaining. He knew not how to dispose of it. For be it known, even the Great Architect has to do His work according to a preconceived model, which philosophers name the *archetypal*. The types in the plan having been exhausted, the little bit remained. The Maker simply knew not what to do, and so, I suppose in utter frenzy, He threw it away, and the poor thing was attached to the tail-end of the Punjab. Thus it was that Sind came to be; and therefore is it that it has come to be called the *Desert Valley*. It is built on no model, hence it is supposed to be a barren country. Not many people undertake with pleasure the journey to Sind through the burning sands of the desert. The J. B. Railway carries passengers through the desert at night, otherwise it would be hardly possible to think of such a journey. Even then it is very trying, as through the gates of the body - mouth, ears and nose - the sand makes inroads. I was familiar from childhood with the hills of Sind, called Ganja Hills. "Ganja" means "bald" and these hills are utterly bald, hardly anything green can be found on them, only rarely on some thing thus brought into existence. Discarded by Brahma, it prayed to Shiva, and Shiva came to its help. He is Lord of the barren grounds and butning-places, so this barren thing sent its supplication to Him from the crown of whose head flow the eternal holy waters that nourish Hindustan. Shiva heard the prayer of my country, and behold ! His mercy changed the original plan inasmuch as He extended the course of the "river of the five waters," so that it flowed into this desert as the river Sindhu. So it is we have the distinction of being called Sindhis.

The queen of rivers made Sind its last abode, and turned the desert into a valley green and fruitful. On both sides of the eternal river grow fields of waving corn, and the soil has become rich. The desert was driven down, and now begins only where Sind ends, at *Chor* its last town. If only the Britisher had maintained the river routes, the journey to Sind from the Punjab would have been the most enjoyable of trips -the broad breast of the Sindhu, with its ever green banks, grassy lands and noble trees instead of the desert railway. The river also saves us from the scorching winds of the desert, and in some places turns them into sweet refreshing breezes. Shiva said to Sind, His humble devotee, "The first shall be the last and the last shall be the first". Hence it is a part of my theory that Sind is not destined to be always the last.

Sir Charles Napier, the English General who conquered Sind, prophesied : "Karachi will be the Queen of the East". Karachi, the capital of Sind, is the port which the Greeks

called "Alexander's Heaven". It did not prove lucky for Alexander; but it is bound to fulfil its destiny in the near future. Since the War it has already become the connecting link between Iraq and India and , geographically, it is the first and the nearest port in India to Europe. Bombay has long usurped the status of Karachi but Karachi is bidding fair to come into its own; and we Sindhis, without wishing other countries to be the last, hope that our land will yet raise her head among the Sister Provinces, fair daughters of India our Mother, and bring credit and glory to Beloved Hindustan. Sind, miscalled the desert valley, has within it a garden of mysticism : it is the land of Sufis and of Saints. It bears a holy flower within its breast : the great mystics of Sind placed this treasure there : it will give its fragrance freely to all who seek. My endeavour in this little volume, written for the Asian Library, will be to narrate something of Sind and its Sufis.

THE PAST

ARYAN, GREEK AND SCYTHIAN

The first mention of Sind is to be found in the Mahabharata, where Jayadratha the Aryan king of Sind fought against Krishna - on the side of the Kauravas against the Pandavas. At first Jayadratha was on the side of the Pandavas; but afterwards he turned against them and joined the Kauravas, and even attempted to take away Draupadi by force. In this, however, he failed, and was driven out by the Pandavas. This is what is told about Sind in the Mahabharata, surely not much to the credit of poor Sind ! Mention is also made in the Upanishads about Sind being famous for horses ! It is not known how long the Aryan kings ruled in the land, but Sind is next mentioned in History about five centuries before Christ, when Darius, the King of Iran (Persia), attacked India, captured the Punjab and then sailed from Peshawar in boats down the river Indus, and conquered it.

No details are to be found about the condition of Sind at this time beyond the statement that Punjab and Sind were both very rich countries paying a million sterling in gold dust as taxes to Darius. How much of Iranian culture and civilisation found its way into Sind by this invasion cannot be ascertained; but it is necessary to notice it, as Sind is the portion of India that has, perhaps, come into contact with more civilisations than any other. For two centuries again the curtain falls, and nothing more is known. The veil is lifted in 326 B.C., when Alexander the Great conquered the Punjab and explored the Indus with a fleet of about two thousand ships. He travelled down the river Jhelum, and pounced on the territory of King Mousikanos, one of the rulers of Sind in that part of the country now called Sukkur. Alexander surprised the King by his onslaught; and the poor man submitted, being so advised by his Brahmana councillors, but soon repented, and rebelled against the conqueror. Alexander seems to have been wildly enraged at this, and in his fury pursued the poor King, captured and executed him. Not satisfied even with this, he went to the length of killing the Brahmanas wholesale. This seems to have had a terrifying effect on the rest of the Province, and Sambos the ruler of Shiva-asthan (the modern Sehwan) also surrendered, while Moeris, the ruler of Patalene (Lower Sind) fled from his territory.

The capital of Lower Sind in Alexander's day seems to have been Patala or what is now known as Tatta. This is not certain; but mention is made of the delta where Alexander built his dockyard. The river Sindhu flowed by Tatta, and it was down this arm of the river that Alexander sailed back towards the Indian Ocean. Tatta, now chiefly in ruins - even in the latter days of Hindu, and afterwards of Muslim rule - was one of the best known centres of commerce and manufactures in India. It is said that the city population numbered many lacs. Muslim histories mention Tatta as one of the most important centres of their civilisation, and as having great institutions of learning, both Persian and Arabian. This same Patala was in the days of Pliny, four centuries later, known to the Romans as one of the most flourishing centres of trade. Alexander fortified Patala and made it the chief base of his further campaigns into unconquered territories; he himself led a long march into Makran and Persia, leaving his fleet under Commander Nearchos, who passed through Kakrala (now known as Shahbunder), but unfortunately suffered obstruction and damage in a place which they called "Alexander's Haven," but which was most probably the port of Karachi.

So then the original Aryan civilisation in Sind had been by this time influenced by the Iranian contact and further by the pressure of the virile Greeks. India was passing through a great upheaval; the religious wave of Buddhism had made inroads into the cherished preserves of the Brahmanas; Gautama's influence had stirred the whole of India; and though Buddhism made its home later on in the Far East, still its influence was indelible and undeniable. It had awakened the country politically, and thus the great Chandragupta was afterwards able to wield his enormous control over this vast territory, from Pataliputra, the modern Patna, his capital. Alexander had gone into the interior of Western India only; and, after the dissolution of his empire, the Greeks had to make a treaty with Chandragupta, and Sind came directly under his rule. Chandragupta's successors, Bindusara and Ashoka, ruled over India. Ashoka being the great pillar of Buddhism, naturally Buddhism made headway during his reign, and Sind came largely under its influence. Even to-day relics are found. A few years back, ruins near Mirpurkhas were unearthed, and revealed a Buddhist Settlement with Buddhist idols, etc. The three magnanimous rulers of the Mauryan dynasty united India into something like a Nation; and their achievement draws from us admiration and wonder when we think of those times when there were neither trains nor steamers, nor telegraphs, nor aeroplanes.

Things changed again after Ashoka, and Sind, the frontier country, suffered much from the inroads of foreigners - this time the terrible, ravaging tribes of the Scythians. Before the Scythians engulfed the land with their hordes, the Greek kings of Bactria had once again begun to claim control over Sind; but in this new onrush of the Scythians the kingdom of Bactria gave way, and the savage hordes attacked India, chiefly through Sind. Hordes and hordes of Scythians entered the fertile fields of Sind. They had more an insatiable greed for possessing the riches of the country, and less an unholy lust of conquest; their savage ruthlessness, well nigh denuded the land of its inhabitants; but the immortal King of Ujjain, the great Vikramaditya, drove them back, and thus put an end to their murderous assaults. It was the desert between Sind and Ujjain that saved the rest of India from the savagery of the invaders who turned back and settled in Sind, which was at this time named Indoscythia. The Scythians made Sind their permanent abode and,

even now, a very large number of its people are of Scythian tribes, specially the Jats and the Meds, were numerous in Sind, and to the present day they are called *juts* meaning illiterate. Even the culture of the Arabs had no influence on these people and up till now Sind is perhaps the most illiterate province in the whole of India. Out of the twenty-six lacs of Muslims in Sind, two percent are literate, and out of seven lacs of Hindus seven percent are literate. This illiteracy is the heritage probably from the Scythian. Jats who lived in huts made of reeds on the banks of the Indus, fish and waterfowl being their chief articles of diet. Even now many of the people live in the same way; they go by the name of *muhanas* or fishermen and some of them still call themselves Meds. Their brother Jats are engaged in agriculture, simple otherwise in their lives, but primeval in their passions.

RAJPUT RULE

The Scythians had no governing genius, hence they were soon over-powered by the kings of India. In those days Buddhism was the chief religion especially of the ruling classes and it spread most easily in Sind where there was less orthodoxy, the Greeks having killed the Brahmanas. Buddhism however did not hold sway in India for long; the Hindu religion again revived and Sind shared in this revival. It came under the rule of Hindu kings; but its population had a good mixture of Hindus and Buddhists. The great Chinese traveller, Hiuen tsang, mentions this fact in his memoirs. Later on, under the Rajput Hindu dynasty, Sind became a powerful country; its borders stretched up to Multan and even to Cashmere; and among the Rajput countries, it held its head high. Rai Sihasi, the Rajput King of Sind, sent his governors to rule in the important centres of his territory, Brahmanabad (now in ruins), Shivasthan, Multan, etc. Sihasi was a relative of the king of Chitore. He had a Brahmana minister named Chach, who was as subtle as he was brave and handsome. The beauty of Chach had captured the heart of the wife of King Sihasi, after whose death the Brahmana seized his throne. He married the widow of his former master, and killed the remaining members of the royal house. He defeated the king of Lassabela who was a Buddhist.

THE COMING OF ISLAM

Chach ascended the throne of Sind in A.D. 631. The great prophet of Islam died in Arabia in the year A.D. 632. Chach ruled Sind for forty years. During these forty years the religion of Islam spread like wild fire and the star of Islam was in the ascendant. The Indian Ocean lay between Arabia and India, and the eyes of the energetic and enthusiastic Arabs were fixed on Sind. They had kept themselves fully informed of the conditions in that country. Their boats had carried merchandise on the Indian seas; their men had landed on the shores of Sind and brought back full accounts of the state of disorder and disharmony prevailing there. Sind was a house divided against itself - diverse peoples, with diverse religions, and political dissensions. The king was a Hindu, but many governors of the forts were Buddhists. Even the Hindus were divided against each other, as many resented the treachery of Chach against the House of Sihasi. The Arabs made experimental attacks on Sind by sea, but they were driven back by the help of the hardy Jats. Chach died in A.D. 671: and after this the efforts of the Arabs grew more persistent,

and the dissensions among the Sindhis more and more serious, until at last the storm burst in the year A.D. 711 when Dahar, the younger son of Chach, was on the throne.

The Arabs had been watching and waiting for the opportunity which now came to them. A vessel that was carrying slaves and presents for Hajjaj, the Ruler of Iraq (Mesopotamia), was raided by some pirates off the Sind coast, near Debal; and the Arabs were either killed or imprisoned. King Dahar was threatened by a then united Arabia; Hajjaj, with the permission of the Khalif of Bagdad, sent his nephew and son-in-law, Mahomed Kassim, with a force of twelve thousand horsemen and camelmen. Kassim was a lad of twenty only ! Dahar prepared for the battle; but treachery had already ruined his prospects of victory. His son Bajhra was the ruler of Shivasthan (Sehwan); but as the people of that part of Sind were Budhists, they refused to fight, even for their king. The Arabs, after releasing the Arab prisoners on the raided vessel at Debal, marched on Sehwan and captured it Then they took Nerun (Hyderabad), and came face to face with Dahar. Dahar had twenty thousand infantry, five thousand horsemen, princes of the royal blood, and sixty elephants. It is said that King Dahar was seated on an elephant with two beautiful girls, one supplying him with arrows as fast as he could shoot, and the other handing him betel nuts ! If this is true it speaks eloquently of the utter degradation that was the cause of the ruin of Dahar's army and the victorious rush of Mahomed Kassim. Very soon marched on to Multan.

The Arabs were relentless in their treatment of any city that did not submit; in that case they put to death every fighting man; but those that yielded and paid full tribute were not treated with rigour. Mahomed Kassim reigned victoriously for three years, and then was suddenly called away to Iraq.

KASSIM'S TRAGEDY

A strange tale has woven itself round Kassim's tragic death. There are some who deny it; but tradition and some written accounts maintain it. When the Arabs took possession of Sind they gathered up the virgin daughters of the land and sent them away to Arabia; it is said that many thousands of girls were despatched, among them the two beautiful daughters of King Dahar, specially meant for the harem of the Khalif of Bagdad. When the girls reached Bagdad, it is said that they took revenge on Mahomed Kassim by betraying him to the Khalif, charging Kassim of first violating their virginity and then sending them on to the Khalif. The anger of the Khalif knew no bounds, specially when he became the victim of the superb charms of the Hindu princesses. He ordered that Mahomed Kassim be relieved of his governorship in Sind, and be packed alive in a raw cowhide and despatched to Bagdad. It is also said that, after this miserable death of Kassim, the King of Bagdad became aware of the treachery of the two girls, or else their sway over him had waned considerably in the meanwhile, for the King ordered that they should be stitched up in the belly of an ass, after being dragged through the streets of Bagdad ! One cannot vouch for the truth of this tale; but one thing is certain, that Mahomed Kassim was sent for and executed at Bagdad by the order of the King. Thus ended his heroic career.

The Arabs settled in Sind permanently, but some places still remained in the hands of the Hindus. Jaisiya, son of King Dahar, rebelled and made a stand against the Arabs; he took Brahmanabad, and in order to confirm his position he became a convert to Islam, but soon picked a quarrel with the Arab governor who ruled on the other side of the river, and was killed. It appears that the rule of the Hindus continued in the region of Brahmanabad and Alore. The favourite pursuit of Arab rulers was to convert the people of Sind to Islam. Those of Scythian origin, after they had been defeated and humbled by the Arab conquerors, seem to have taken easily to Islam, but the Hindus resisted. The Arabs fully utilised their methods of conversion. Their favourite and special tax, *jasia*, was specially levied on those unfortunates who would not give up their religion, they were decried as unbelievers and had to pay double rates in customs and other duties.

Very soon dissensions arose in Arabia itself; the bitter fight for the Khilafat relected itself in Sind in the weakening of Arab rule. About forty years after the entry of the Arabs into Sind, the Abbaside Khalifs gained supremacy over the Ummaiyides; and the Arab governors in Sind were therefore replaced by others sent by the Abbaside Khalif, who became the chief ruler of Islamic countries. The former Arab settlers were not disturbed : they were left in peace. Not much is known about the condition of Sind during the century and a half that followed; but it seems that it was divided between the Arabs, the Hindus and the unruly tribes of Scythian origin, who again took to plunder.

MUSLIM INDIAN INVASIONS

It was at this period, that the terrible series of Muslim invasions of India took place. Mahomed Ghazni thundered at its gates and found no difficulty in entering, and making himself conqueror of the land. In A.D. 1026 he sent his Vazir, Abdur Razak, to conquer Sind. Abdur Razak drove out the Arab governors then ruling and appointed others of his own choice. Mahomed Ghazni was not a friend of the Arabs; and this onslaught of his considerably reduced the Islamic influence and religious control of the Arabs. Thus other forces made their way into the civilisation of Sind. (The culture of Persia had also been penetrating into Sind). The language of the Ghaznis and others that followed was chiefly Persian, and this language became the language of the Sind Courts and began to spread among the peoples. the culture of Persia had a liberalising effect on Islam in Sind.

Sind, during the many invasions that followed, was not however much disturbed. The Ghaznis went and the Ghoris came; the governors were changed, but there was little stir among the people. The Sindhis had by this time become habituated to the change of masters. Shahbuddin Ghori sent a favourite Turkish slave to rule over Sind. So one governor went and another came, who kept an army of mercenaries. After the Ghori came the Khilji dynasty; and, while Altamash, after usurping the throne of Delhi, was trying to extend his authority to other provinces, another event occurred that defeated the efforts of Delhi to control other provinces.

GHENGEZ KHAN

Ghengez Khan, the Mogul, had carried his banner far and wide. Already his name inspired terror in the countries of the East. The Moguls entered the Punjab, ravaged the land, gathered enormous booty, and passed on to Sind, killing ten thousand prisoners in cold blood. They went back laden with booty, but came once again to Sind. This time the Emperor of Delhi resisted them successfully. It was at this period that Sind separated from Multan, as the region near Multan was strongly fortified by the rulers of Delhi in order to ward off the attacks of the invaders through the Punjab. Sind remained under the rule of Delhi, but its governor was virtually independent. For a time the Governor sent by the Khilji Emperor ruled well and kept the people of Sind in hand; but, when he himself ascended the throne of Delhi after the fall of the house of Khilji, Sind was free from the control of the strong man's arm, and again the Sindhis began to assert their independence. A tribe called the Sumras unfurled the flag of freedom and established their own Raj near Tatta, making it the capital of their kingdom. These Sumras were originally Rajputs, but during the course of time had been converted to Islam. The Sumra Rajputs and other Hindus do not seem to have gone altogether out of power during the intervening centuries, but worked under the suzerainty of the Indian rulers.

THE FALL OF BRAHAMANABAD

One of the Hindu rajas who attained to inglorious fame was Raja Dalurai; his country seems to have attained a high degree of prosperity. Tradition says that this king was powerful and brave, but was a devil incarnate of insatiable lust. He deflowered the virgins of the land and ordered that any virgin that was married must first contact the touch of his infamy. A girl of Brahmana family, a pious and pure virgin, found herself in danger. Her virtue and honour were more dear to her than all else. She prayed to the Champion of the pure and the chaste for relief from the power of this demoniacal Dalurai. Already evil portents in the land had not been lacking. Prophets and star-readers prognosticated a huge calamity. It is said that, on the night of the marriage of this girl, a terrific cyclone and a tremendous earthquake destroyed the country of Dalurai, and the huge city was a complete ruin.

Whether tradition is correct regarding the story of the virgin can never be ascertained, but it is a fact that the ruins of Brahmanabad and Alore can to this time be witnessed. They stretch for many miles. The sight at Brahmanabad is awe-inspiring. A solitary tower, mostly dilapidated, stands witness to the terrible catastrophe that occurred centuries back. It is possible that, if delved in, this soil may yield up many marvels of antiquity.

SUMRAS AND SAMMAS

History is not clear about the reign of the Sammas and Sumras. There are some who think that the Sumra Rajputs drove away the Arabs. Very soon after the Ummaiyide Khalifs, and after the expulsion of the Arabs in 750, Sind was chiefly ruled by Sumra Rajputs. Anyhow, one thing is clear, the power did not go out of the hands of the Hindu rajas. How and at what period the Sumra and Samma Rajputs took to Islam cannot be

determined, but it is a fact that many did. Even now the population of Sind contains more than seven lacs of Sammas and about a lac of Sumras. The Sumras made Tatta their capital. The mad King of Delhi, Mahomed Tughlac, made an effort to oust the Sumras from their capital at Delhi. His nephew, Feroz Taghac, was successful for a time; he raised fortifications at Lake Sagrah, appointed a Viceroy at Bukkur and then went back to Delhi. Soon after this, the Sammas, the other Rajput tribe, took the reins of government into their hands and organised their forces so well that they were able to defy Delhi. Arter Tamerlane, the Moguls had well nigh destroyed the power of Delhi. These Sammas who had been converts to Islam ruled well and efficiently. The Samma rulers took the title of *fam*, as did also the convert rulers of Cutch. Many are the stories given of Jams, specially those of Jam Tamachi who married a fisherman's daughter, of the handsome and pious Jam Sanjar, and of Jam Nando, founder and maker of the glory of Tatta, who ruled for fifty years. It is stated that as many as seventeen Jams succeeded each other; of whom were bad rulers, others good.

THE KAZI OF BUKKUR

A story is given about the Kazi of Bukkur who was a judge in the days of Jam Sanjar. This Kazi had a peculiar way of his own, he took bribes not from one party but from both. Jam Sanjar having received complaints sent for him personally and took him to task. The Kazi, although dishonest in his duties, was honest enough to confess. he said, "Yes, I do take bribes. If I could, I would extract money from the witnesses leave the premises before the court closes." The pious Jam could not help laughing. The Kazi continued : "Sire, with all this sin, and with all the hard work of the day, I am not able to keep hunger out of my house, and my wife and children suffer." The Jam took a lesson from this and raised the salaries of his servants. The present British rulers of India ought also to take a lesson from Jam Sanjar. Their lower subordinates often receive too little salary and obviously interpret this as an inducement to take to irregular means of increasing it. The Sumras and the Sammas ruled for two centuries. Their territory extended from the sea coast far into the boundaries of hte Punjab. Tatta, their capital, which was a huge city, is not now an important town in Sind, but its vast ruins stretch out for many, many miles, and its Makli Hill still presents many an object of interest and study.

History repeated itself and luxury corroded the foundations of prosperity. The immorality and laxity of the last kings weakened their strenght; and like Dahar of old, Feroz the son of the great Jam Nando, having neglected his duties for worldly pleasures, lost his kingdom and seriously disgraced himself. But so it was destined to to !

FEROZ THE COWARD

By this time Babar had invaded India and had established himself on the throne of Delhi. Babar's power lay in Afghanistan, its neighbouring countries and India. The Ruler of Kandahar by name Shahbeg Arghun belonged to the House of Halaku, grandson of Ghengez Khan. Shahbeg began to get jealous and nervous of the growing power of Babar in India. he frlt his own position insecure and therefore wanted to establish a new

kingdom for himself in India. Sind was the nearest and most handy for his purpose, so he resolved to try his luck. This was in the days of Jam Nando. Shahbeg sent an army to invade Sind; but Darya Khan, the great General of nando, beat it back. Soon afterwards Nando died and his effeminate and foolish son, Feroz, came to the throne. He disregarded the advice and guidance of Darya Khan and began to have in his service the Mogul subjects of Shahbeg Arghun, who was surreptitiously working for access into Sind again. Feroz gave land to these Moguls for colonising; the site of the colony still exists, and goes by the name of Mogulwara. Babar had, after establishing himself in India, gone to end taken Kandahar; then Shahbeg Arghun found himself deprived of his old kingdom and his vision of a new one still unfulfilled. But his emissaries in Sind were busy creating opportunities for him, which was very easy in the days of Feroz whose folly had brought about division and disintegration. Shahbeg attacked Sind again, the brave Darya Khan was killed, and the Sammas defeated. The cowardly Feroz had remained hidden in his harem at Tatta. He now fled; and left Tatta to the tender mercies of the invaders, who continued their sack till Shahbeg, after many entreaties from the Sayeds of Sind, descendants of the Prophet and priests of Islam, stayed his hand. The despicable Jam presented himself with a sword tied to his neck in utter submission before Shahbag. This is how he made his penance before Shahbeg, who took pity on him and left him with some territory to rule over. Shahbeg then directed his attention to the extending of his territories. He conquered the Baluch tribes, destroyed about forty-two villages of the Baluchis, and then thought of invading Gujerat, so that the strong arm of Babar might not reach him easily; but death frustrated his ambitions.

After the death of Shahbeg, his son Mirza Shah Hussain came to the throne of Sind. This son had separated from his father in anger, while still in Kandahar, and had gone to Babar in Delhi. He remained in his court, and Babar treated him so well that, when he was called to reign over Sind after his father's death, he refused to declare himself an independent Ruler, but ruled in the name of Babar, and said that as Babar was the head of the Moguls and a descendant of Tamerlane, he was satisfied to be his subordinate. Thus Sind was again linked to the throne of Delhi. Feroz, the weakling, after the death of Shahbeg bestirred himself; but he was defeated by the Mirza. Feroz fled to Cutch, received help from the Roi of Cutch, and returned with an army of 50,000 men. The unfortunate man however did not succeed. A tragic story is told, that when the army of Feroz found victory hopeless, his men took off their turbans, tied them all end to end and bound themselves together with this one long rope, desiring to die together. It is said 20,000 of them perished thus. The Mirza now began to rule in the proper sense of the word. He extended the frontiers of Sind as far as Multan, conquered that place, and gave it as a present to Babar. He also attacked Cutch, anticipating an attack from that direction on Tatta; he obtained great booty.

THE FATHER OF AKBAR

We now come to a very interesting period in the history of India as well as of Sind, when Humayun was driven out by Sher Khan. The unfortunate Humayun took shelter in Lahore with his brother who was ruling there, but not feeling himself safe he ultimately thought of Sind. Humayun wrote a letter to the Mirza of Sind, touching upon the cordial

connections that had existed between his father and the Mirza. The Mirza was a diplomat. He invited Humayun to his kingdom. He knew that, if he refused, Humayun with his remaining forces would attack Sind. He sent his people to receive the King royally at Bukkur (near Rohri), with a respectful message that the mirza would be willing to help him with an army to attack Gujerat. The aim of the Mirza was to get rid of Humayun, as naturally he thought that two lions in the same forest would not do ! Poor Humayun remained at Rohri expecting the Mirza to come in person as he had so stated in his message, but the Mirza never came. He treated Humayun Shabbily. By his instructions the Governor of Bukkur had shut himself up in the

fortress and had ordered all the boats to be removed from the river Indus, on the opposite banks of which Rohri and Sukkur are situated. He also laid waste the neighbouring part of the country.

Humayun had come with two lacs of followers - countries, soldiers and retinue; and thus found himself in an absurd and awkward situation ! The Governor of Bukkur by these tactics calculated the early departure of Humayun after growing utterly weary. Humayun waited for five months, then getting impatient and angry, he attacked Sehwan, but the wily Mirza had anticipated this and Humayun found before him the fortress of Sehwan well prepared. He laid siege to it for seven months but was not successful. The miserable King, in grief and despair, contemplated going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. For a time his despair was relieved by a letter he received from Raja Maldeo of Jodhpur, inviting him to his capital with a promise to help with 20,000 soldiers. Humayun turned towards Rajputana; but while at Bikanir the unhappy Monarch learnt from reliable sources that the Raja of Jodhpur was preparing a trap for him, being in league with his enemy, Sher Khan. Humayun's position can be better imagined than described. His followers were decreasing in numbers; his mercenaries were dropping away gradually, as lack of funds increased. Many died of thirst in the sands of Rajputana and the King on account of his poverty began to lose control over them. The few men that at last remained showed disrespect to him. Sometimes the King had no horse to ride upon, as he gave the only one he had to his wife and himself walked on foot, while his nobles remained in their saddles without any shame. Such was the plight of the parents to be of Akbar the Great.

AKBAR, THE GREATEST SINDHI

Humayun thus wandered about with his wife after his retreat from Bikanir. The Queen was an expectant mother at this time. The poor King knew not what to do; he reached Umerkot, the capital of Thar Parkar district in Sind, with seven attendants only. This place was in the hands of the Soddhas, a Rajput tribe that had not been converted to Islam. Rana Wan Sal was the Ruler of the frontier fort in Umerkot. What moved the heart of this Rajput Rana ? In spite of the enmity borne to Humayun by the Chief Ruler of Sind, this Hindu Rana gave up all selfish considerations on knowing the circumstances of the poor King and his wife. Perhaps it was the Devas who moved men's minds- the Devas who knew that a great son of India was soon to be born. The Rana came out of his palace, welcomed Humayun in a truly touching fashion, kissed his stirrup and gave the castle to the King for his use. On the 14th of October, 1542, Akbar was born in Umerkot. The

paternal care which the Hindu Rana took of the Muslim King was itself an indication of the coming national unity in India; the sense of unity was thus ingrained in Akbar from his very birth.

THE SPIRIT OF UNION

The coming of this son gladdened the sad hearts of his father and mother. The King had no riches to distribute in honour of the birth; but he had with him a little pod of musk, which he broke and distributed among his attendants, with the prayer that the fame of this new-born babe might spread far and wide as the fragrance of the musk. And that prayer did rise to the Throne of the Almighty and draw forth a full response. In Tatta at this time lived a holy saint, Sayed Ali Shirazi. This holy man had his own vision of the coming of the great soul of the mighty Akbar. He brought gifts to Humayun welcoming him on his own behalf and on behalf of his followers. Humayun had the child's first shirt made out of the clothes of the pious Sayed thus enwrapping him in the garments of piety. Humayun soon left Umerkot and went to live in Junpur, a place situated on the river and known for its beautiful gardens and cool streams. The town is now not in existence; perhaps it was in the Gunni Taluka, Hyderabad District, as there is still a place called Jun there, and possibly some small river like the present Phuleli (flower stream) than flowed by the side of Junpur. If it was so, then the place must have been really idyllic, as even now the scenery by the Phuleli in Gunni is really charming. Mirza Hussain, the King of Sind, did not desire that Humayun should stay in the land, and therefore friction and conflict continued; but Bairam, the loyal henchman of Babar and afterwards the regent for young Akbar, brought about peace between the two monarchs. The Mirza, whose one anxiety was to get Humayun out of Sind, agreed to give Humayun 300 horses, 300 camels and one lac of gold miskals. Humayun thus departed to Kandahar which was part of his kingdom.

MASSACRE BY THE PORTUGUESE

We now come to the time when the nations of the West were coming to India like so many wasps to suck and to sting. In the year A.D. 1555 the Portuguese were growing powerful, as division and disunion increased among the Indians. Sind was suffering intensely from this disharmony. After the death of the powerful Mirza Hussain, there was bitter conflict between the various claimants. One of these, Mirza Tarkhan, hearing of the strength of the Portuguese, sent his ambassador to the Governor of Bassein, asking for military aid to resist what he called the rebellion of his opponent. The Governor sent one Pedro Rolim with a fleet of twenty-eight ships and 700 men. The Portuguese duly arrived at Tatta. The Mirza was absent. When he heard of the arrival of the Portuguese, he sent word that he had made peace with his opponent, and was therefore not in need of the help of the Portuguese. He is said to have also refused to defray the expenses of the Portuguese expedition. Pedro flew into a rage, sacked the city of Tatta, killed 800 people, destroyed property worth two million miskals and departed with such an amount of booty as no other looter of Asia had ever carried away with him.

A WRETCH OF A KING

Sind was at this time in the worst of conditions, especially in the days of the last of the Mirzas, Mahomed Baki, who is depicted by historians as a villain and a wretch, a heartless monster, who tortured people, cut off the breasts of women, had his victims trampled under the feet of elephants, and massacred travellers lest they should defame him in other countries. Akbar the Great was the Ruler of Delhi. This wretch, Mahomed Baki, Knew of the immense power of Akbar, and in order to gain his favour he sent his daughter to the Emperor with a valuable dowry, but Akbar returned the girl to the disgraceful father, whose black soul must have been scorched at this rebuff. He ultimately sought death by suicide and was buried on the Makli Hill at Tatta.

GREAT SINDHIS

Akbar now took possession of Sind, appointed another Mirza as Governor and things went on well. The two great lights in the Durbar of Akbar, Abu'l Fazl and Mulla Faizi, are said to have been Sindhis, residents of Sehwan, proofs of which are not lacking. The great humourist of Akbar's court, Birbal, is said to have been a Sindhi, born near Nassarpur. Sind bore a creditable part in those days of India's greatness; it gave not only the two great men that were real makers of Akbar's glory, but it also gave birth to Akbar and cradled and nursed him. After the reign of Akbar and of Jehangir dissensions broke out in the Mogul Royal House. This had its effects on Sind too, which again became a disorganised province. Shahjehan, the son of Jehangir, took shelter in Tatta after his quarrel with his father; and afterwards, when he became Emperor, he built a magnificent Jama Masjid in Tatta in memory of the hospitality he had received in Sind. This Masjid still exists.

THE FAQIR DYNASTY

Sind again became a battle-ground of many fights and quarrels between many rulers. It came for a time under the rule of the Kalhoras who were the descendants of a great faqir, Ahmed Shah, whose piety had gained for him a great name. The members of the Faqir Dynasty were rulers, spiritual as well as temporal. They were also called *Daudpotas*, that is belonging to the family of Daud, which flourished in Sind, Daud is supposed to have attained to the age of two hundred years.

THE COMING OF NADIR SHAH (1739)

Another terrible event occurred in the days of Nur Mahomed Kalhora. It was the monstrous attack of Nadir Shah who after looting Northern India marched to Sind; and one morning King Nur Mahomed found Nadir Shah at the gate of Umerkot. Be it said to his credit that the proud Kalhora fought with Nadir Shah, who was, however, too powerful for him and made him prisoner at Larkana, and after exacting from him a crore of rupees and a promise of tribute, left him to rule. The cruel Nadir took away two of the sons of Nur Mahomed as hostages, but was humane enough to compensate the aggrieved father by bestowing on him the title of Shah Kuli Khan. Nadir Shah returned from

Larkana to Kandahar, as Larkana is a frontier town between Sind and the hills, on the way to Afghanistan.

After the eventual murder of Nadir Shah, Nur Mahomed tried to make himself independent of Kandahar. Ahmed Shah Abdali who succeeded Nadir Shah bestowed another title on Nur Mahomed; but Nur Mahomed took steps to free himself of his control. This enraged Ahmed Shah, who in one of his invasions of India came to Sind to chastise Nur Mahomed. Unfortunately for Nur Mahomed, and Sind the Kalhoras who were also a branch of the Daudpotas did not remain in amity with the other Daudpota branch, which ruled the north of Sind and built the famous city of Shikarpur which is also one of the frontier towns. The Afghans first attacked the north of Sind; the brave Daudpotas of Shikarpur made a splendid stand, but finding it hopeless they killed their women and threw their bodies into the wells, then fought desperately till they were well nigh annihilated. Those that remained escaped towards Multan and built another city known as Bahawalpur. The Afghans under Abdali, consequently found it easier to subdue Nur Mahomed.

DIWAN GIDUMAL (1754)

Nur Mahomed was now nervous as he had aroused the wrath of Abdali, but he had a very wise Vazir by name Diwan Gidumal. Diwan Gidumal was a Hindu of great political skill and learning. The Muslim rulers of Sind and their nobles did not take kindly to education, and the tradition of the old Scythian illiteracy seems to have still persisted among them. The pleasures of the hunting-ground, and the harem, were much more congenial to their nature than plodding at letters. True, there was a class of Muslims, very much cultured; but many of them were Sufis, radical and heterodox, and therefore chiefly in conflict with the orthodox priests and their heads, the Kalhora kings. I shall deal with these Sufies at full length in the second part of this book, but here it is necessary to note how Hindus became the ministers of Muslim rulers in Sind. Diwan Gidumal was a great *Amil*. The word *Amil* means an educated man as well as an official. The *Amils* of Sind are a class by themselves. Some of them are said to have migrated into Sind from Punjab; they made their homes first in Khudabad, and afterwards most of them came to Hyderabad, Sind, which in the days of Nur Mahomed was one of the capitals. It was known formerly as Nerun, an important place at the time of Alexander's invasion. These *Amils* are at present perhaps the most cultured of Sindhis, their chief habitat being Hyderabad. Diwan Gidumal was one of their ancestors. Nur Mahomed consulted Diwan Gidumal as to how to appease the anger of Ahmedshah Abdali, who was camping at Naushahro Feroz, a town further north of Hyderabad. Diwan Gidumal came in person to Ahmedshah who was struck by his personality and the intellectual power of his face. The Diwan is said to have placated Abdali in this way. It is said that the Diwan had with him two bags which he had brought with other gifts for Abdali. Abdali enquired what these bags contained. "Your Majesty," said the diplomatic Diwan, "these bags contain the most valuable of Sind's gifts, they contain the holy dust from the tombs of numerous saints and Pirs of Sind."

The Muslims have always had reverence for the ancient saints of Sind, as the earliest great followers of the Prophet of Islam first came to Sind. Ahmedshah was for a time

pacified by Diwan Gidumal, but it seems Nur Mahomed, by the good offices of Diwan Gidumal, Abdali agreed that Murad Tarkhan, the son of Nur Mahomed, should continue as ruler. The King of Kandahar was very exacting in his demands. He soon deposed Nurad and instated Aturkhan, his brother, who had been taken to Kandahar as a hostage by Nadir Shah. Aturkhan was now sent to rule Sind, because the King of Kandahar expected Aturkhan to collect more and more tribute. The people grew poorer and poorer and altogether had to pass through a great amount of misery. Very soon the rule of the Kalhoras was changed to the rule of the Talpurs who were originally the ministers of the Kalhoras, but who were afterwards more or less compelled to take the reins of Government into their own hands as the last Kalhora rulers were thoroughly unfit to rule.

We now come to the last period of the history of Sind before the arrival of the English. But before taking up that story it is necessary to note that these Talpurs failed to rule properly. The Afghans had occupied the North of Sind, Shikarpur, etc., and the Talpurs had begun to attack the Hindu rulers of Sind in Thar. The Hindu Rajput rulers, of the Soddha caste, had been ruling amicably and well, and during the reign of Akbar had cultivated friendly relations with Mussalman rulers. They even inter-married with them, a custom which has been in existence to some extent up to the present time among the Soddhas. Some of the Talpur rulers were tyrannical in their treatment of the Hindus, and their relations with the Hindus grew bitter. They were more or less ignorant; and had it not been for the Amils, who helped them in their Government, their rule would have been even more stupid. It was this misrule and especially their ill-treatment of the Hindus, that lost them Sind and made it possible for the British to annex it. When the stupidity of the Talpurs coupled itself with religious bigotry, the tyranny became will nigh intolerable. So much so that old people have been heard to declare that if a man said *raso*, which means a rope, it would be taken for granted that he had said *Rasul* which means "the Prophet" and thus be said to have embraced Islam. It may be that some of these stories are exaggerations. Evidence is not lacking that they treated the Hindu Amil with some respect. That was because the Amil was indispensable to them, but other Hindus, as well as poor Muslim peasants, were their victims. Men of the present generation have heard from old Amil relatives who had seen the Talpur rule, about the terror which hung over them, especially the women, who were never considered safe outside and therefore were kept rigidly indoors; thus the social life of the Hindus of Sind received a deadly injury, as the women had to be kept in the purdah, devoid of education. One must not conclude that all the Talpurs and their chief nobles were of this kind; some of them must have been estimable person; but the general impression of the people at the present moment still remains the same.

Their tyranny over the people in the villages of Sind was such that even now in the terror of the word *Sirkar* it is apparent. They were not only the victims of the chief rulers but also of their servants, both Hindu Amils and Muslims. This tradition of tyranny has descended to the present police and revenue servants of the British Government; but that is a tale that need not be anticipated here. There was no one ruler of Sind, but there were dozens of rulers. The Talpurs had divided Sind into three divisions, each division under a separate Talpur. But even these divisions had more than one ruler. A good instance is Hyderabad, which was under as many as four Talpur brothers who were so suspicious of

each other that they slept in one room, lest any of them should conspire against the other in the night. How could a house thus divided resist an encroacher with the capacity of the Britisher ?

THE STORY OF THE BRITISHER

It was in the days of Kalhora Ghulam Shah that the East India Company established itself in Tatta in the year 1758. Long before this, the Englishman had acquired power in India and was then establishing himself as the chief master of the country. Sind was one of the Company's last conquests. It is said that Ghulam Shah, the Ruler of Sind, permitted the Company to establish itself at Tatta, which was one of the most magnificent centres of trade and prosperity in India. The English Lieutenant, later known as Sir, Henry Pottinger visited Tatta in the year 1809, and he wrote after his visit, "Even so recently as the period of Nadir Shah's visiting Tatta on his return from Delhi, it is said there were 40,000 weavers of calico and loongis in that city, and artisans of every other class and description to the number of 20,000 not inclusive of bankers, money-changers, shop-keepers and sellers of grain, who were estimated at 60,000 more, whereas the aggregate population of it, at the present moment, is overrated at 20,000 souls".

Nadir Shah came in the year 1739. Nadir Shah did not sack Tatta, he did not even go there. After he left Sind, Tatta continued to be so prosperous that it attracted the attention of the ever-watchful East India Company which is said to have received permission to establish itself there in the year 1758. What is the population of Tatta now ? Not even 20,000, which figure Sir Henry Pottinger given in 1809, but only 10,000 or less. This ruin was accomplished by the misrule of the later rulers, Kalhora and Talpur, and also by the machinations of the Honourable Company, which by this time had ruined the general trade of India, more or less completely. I do not think that Ghulam Shah the Kalhora was glad to see the Company in Tatta, as seems to be made out by the official English historians. The latest chronicler of the "Sind Gazetteer" says : "It was in the time of Ghulam Shah, and perhaps on his invitation, that the East India Company established a factory in India." The word 'perhaps' cuts both ways. It is certain that this entry of the Company into Sind was resisted and detested by the people. The Company did its nefarious work for seventeen years, but after this period the resistance became so intense that the Company's factory at Tatta had to close down. Sarfraz, the then Kalhora, was a wise man who could see the ruin that the Company was bringing to the swadeshi industry and it was he who made the Company move out.

But soon after the Kalhoras had given place to the Talpurs and in the year 1799, that is, twenty-four years after the closure of the factory, the British Government sent a deputation under one Mr. Nathan Crow to Sind calling him their political and commercial agent. By this time the British influence was very strong, and the so-called deputation imposed itself on the Talpur Ruler; and Mr. Crow exacted from him permission to build for himself a 'nest' at Karachi. Karachi was not then an important place, though its position as a harbour and a port is now second to none in the East. Its geographical

situation is such that it is now making its way and possibly will soon be the "Queen of the East". But Karachi at the time of Mr. Crow was just in its embryonic state and the keensighted Britisher knew this, when his Government sent him as a commercial and political agent. That the permission to Mr. Crow to build his bungalow at Karachi was an unwilling exaction from the Talpurs is proved by the fact that Mr. Crow had to spread his wings and fly back to Bombay within ten days. The Company began to roar and laid a claim for a lac of rupees, as the amount of the loss supposed to have been incurred in this greedy campaign called the "sending of a deputation". The company pressed its claim for the precious lac of rupees. The Talpur Ruler, Mir Fateh Ali Khan, could not recognise the justice of paying this bill. Little did the poor Mir realise, that the sending of Mr. Crow was merely a preliminary to the despatch of more birds prey to Sind. For a while the Company became quiet and waived its claim as it had begun to feel nervous; for the rumour of Napoleon Bonaparte's designs on India had reached them, and already the long arm of Napoleon from Europe was threatening complications for the British in Persia. But as soon as this danger was over, the company sahib, called this time the Supreme Government, began to insist upon a settlement, and sent Mr. Smith of the Bombay Civil Service to forge fetters for Sind. This time it was not called a deputation by the demand to negotiate a fresh treaty. But why in the name of honesty and common sense was Sind expected to have a treaty ? Justice echoes still `Why?'

HIS ENGLISH MAJESTY'S HORSES

Lieutenant Pottinger reached Karachi and wanted to proceed to Hyderabad in order to negotiate a treaty with the Talpurs. By the right of might, the Mirs were compelled to negotiate with the British, the conditions of the treaty being that Americans and all Europeans, except the British, should be excluded from Sind; that the British and the Talpur Governments should appoint Vakils who would be links between these Governments; and that the subjects of both Governments should live in each other's territory. The sole purpose of the British Government was to pave the way for its entry into Sind. Another opportunity soon occurred. His Majesty the King of England sent a gift of five horses to Ranjitsing, the lion of Punjab, whose favour the English were seeking at this time. His Majesty's horses duly arrived at Bombay. The Bombay Government thought it absolutely necessary to send these horses to Ranjitsing at Lahore, via Sind and by the river route. Lieutenant Burns (afterwards Sir Alexander Burns) took his boats up the river Indus. The Mirs indirectly tried to obstruct him, but the irresistible Britisher had his way. The Mirs knew that any open defiance would mean providing the Bombay Government with an excuse to annex Sind; therefore, when Lieutenant Burns reached Hyderabad, the capital of Sind, the Mirs had to eat humble pie and provide facilities for the Lieutenant to sail up the river. The nobles standing by the side of the Mirs looked on this unjustifiable encroachment upon their rights with the greatest bitterness, for they knew that the pretext of sending His Majesty's horses was only meant as an excuse for the English to explore the river Indus, and study it for future use. One Sayed, who was at the Court when this permission was granted to Lieutenant Burns, sadly said : "Woe be to us, Sind is now lost." And so it was to be.

A SANCTIMONIOUS TREATY

After a short time the Mirs were compelled to participate in another ceremony of negotiating a treaty. The chief clauses in the pious document were to this effect: The first and foremost laid down for either Government the holy restriction of not converting the possessions of the other, this restriction to bind all the succeeding generations. The third and perhaps the only mundane item of the sacred treaty was that the river Indus was to be opened for trade to all the merchants of Hindustan (of course including the English merchant but no other European merchant). The treaty also made it clear that no military stores should pass up and down the river, nor armed vessels be allowed to enter the Indus. Let us now see how devoutly this holy treaty was adhered to by the Englishman. Sind had been for a time legally and morally independent of the control of both Delhi and Kandahar. The King of Kandahar, Shah Shuja, had made a solemn treaty with the Talpurs, writing the conditions of the treaty on the Holy Koran, by which he relinquished all claims on Sind. The Russian bogey was raising its head, and the British were nervous. Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, soon carried his wars into Afghanistan. Sind stood in the way. The British armies had to march to Kabul through Sind. But the ghost of their own treaty now haunted the British Government, as the Indus was not to be used for any military purposes. But this scrap of paper was unceremoniously torn into pieces, and Lord Auckland made Sind the basis of his war on Afghanistan. This was the last straw that broke the Sind camel's back; and the angry Mirs found no way but to oppose. But what was this opposition to the all-powerful English ! The fight that the Talpurs showed makes a sad as well as an interesting story. They were both unfortunate and foolish; their house was already a divided one; they had split Sind into many parts; they had not kept their Hindu subject happy. All these circumstances made it easy for them to disappear as rulers. Some of them were sent as prisoners to Poona, others to Bombay and the rest to Calcutta. To-day, about eighty years after, many of the Talpurs roam in rags. Thus ends the sordid story of the conquest of Sind. Sir Charles Napier who conquered it himself saw the immorality of the deed and is said to have wired La Peka " I have `sinned'"; by this he meant to say that he had taken Sind as well as had "sinned". He further wrote to say "we have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, humane, and useful piece of rascality it will be". When the story of this ruthless and immoral campaign reached England, many fair-minded Englishmen cried out in horror; but then it was too late. Gladstone is said to have considered returning Sind, but it was not to be. Perhaps all is for the best ! The English in Sind seem to have kept many of the features of the Talpur rule intact. The people are still mostly illiterate. After more than three quarters of a century of British rule only two per cent among the Muslims know how to read and write; and something over seven per cent of seven lacs of Hindus know the use of the alphabet. The condition of the poor peasant is deplorable. More so because the Sind zemindar is generally a tyrant living up to the traditions of the Talpurs with the added vigour and rigour he derives from the British code. Of course there has been compensation in other matters. The city roads are some what better than they used to be in the past, but the country roads are the remnants of roads as they were a century ago. In the cities education has spread, especially among the Hindus. Karachi has grown to be the chief centre of commerce but little of industry is anywhere visible, though the docks are busy sending things out. Tatta is only a memory. Halla, once

renowned for pottery and weaving, is just a shadow of the past. The Police force of Sind has immortalised itself in the twentieth century, having perhaps no prototype in India, or in the world. But these are details into which it is not desirable to enter; so with the prayer that the coming longed-for dawn in India will again soon illuminate the gloom that has hung over our beloved Sind, let us pass to the happier portion of this book dealing with the Light, that makes life possible even in the gloom, of the Holy Fire by which all disharmonies are destroyed and all racial and national bitterness banished.

SECTION II

THE SUFI CULTURE OF SIND

THE STATE OF NEGATION IN SIND

We have seen how Sind for many centuries attracted, and fell under, conqueror after conqueror. Contact with so many religions, with so many nations, with so many civilisations, has had two important results, which form the chief features of this province of India. One is that this province has not been able to build up individuality. Individuality is the result of concentration of forces. For instance, the people of Maharashtra show a clear-cut individuality in matters of race, religion and caste. It is due to circumstances exactly the opposite of those that moulded Sind. Maharashtra being an inland province, surrounded by protecting rocks, was comparatively free from the pressure that bore upon Sind. If these two provinces are compared many important differences appear. Sind, originally Hindu, has been more or less in close contact with the Greek, the Scythian, the Arabian, the Persian and the various sub-nations of Islam; the result has been that it has been flattened into what may be called a state of negation. It is a province which, in the matter of race, is neither Ancient Indo-Aryan nor Arabian Semitic, but is a conglomeration of many elements - Scythian perhaps predominating. In the matter of religion, it is neither prominently Hindu, nor prominently orthodox Muslim. Its population is chiefly Muslim, but its Islamism is quite different, for instance, from that of Malabar. Neither Hindus nor Muslims are orthodox in Sind. Orthodoxy is the result of a concentrated single force. Many conflicting forces result in lack of orthodoxy.

Ancient Hinduism in Sind gave way a good deal to Buddhism because even in those days the population had become floating. But this Hindu-Buddhist religion also was greatly affected by the religion of Arabia. Only one portion of Sind has some Hindu-Buddhist characteristics; and that is Thar, which is adjacent to Rajputana. That too is not rigid, but a mixture of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain. The religion of the Prophet, also, had no orthodox control in Sind, for we have seen how, when the Ummayyide Khalifs gave way to the Abbasides, the Arabs lost much of their prestige in Sind; and when Ghazni came, he, being antagonistic to the Arabs, still more weakened their influence in Sind. Ghazni, Ghor, Ghengez, Tamerlane, Nadir and Ahmed Shah were Muslims of a different type. Their language was Persian, therefore the source of their culture-whatever culture they had-was also Persian; and the Persian phase of Islam being anything but orthodox, the original Arabic Islam could not keep its own strict form in Sind. No doubt there are some very orthodox groups and ancient families of Islam in Sind, but many have lost their old

outlook. Thus we see that both Hindus and Muslims, are very much less orthodox than those in other places in India. Sind is free from the many pernicious social evils, from which other parts of India are suffering. Caste is virtually absent in Sind, the Brahmanas among the Hindus form but a microscopic portion of its population; and, where the priest is not powerful, caste cannot exist. Even the Brahmana in Sind has lost his caste, very few of them are repositories of Hindu culture; they are not much in love with education, and hardly any amongst them are of the Brahmana type in Maharashtra, Madras and Bengal. Caste being absent and the influence of the Brahmana insignificant, the Shastras are more or less little known; the result is that almost all the social evils resulting from religious restrictions and perversity are absent. The problem of the depressed classes is non-existent. It seems strange to Sindhis that, their brethren in India are prohibited by thier scriptures to travel by sea. Widow-marriage is not very frequent in Sind; one reason for this is that child-marriage is not so common. Among those people who marry their children very young, widow-marriage exists.

Sind cannot be said to have no social evils, but they are quite different from those prevalent in other places. One of the chief social evils is *purdah*, which is a gift from our Muslim brothers. However, the Amils throughout Sind are giving up *purdah*. But this *purdah* has kept the women of Sind more or less ignorant. The one great evil from which Sind is suffering is, however, illiteracy. It is an agricultural province, and its peasantry is thoroughly illiterate, as illiterate, in the days of the so-called civilised and enlightened British rule, as it was in the days of the Amirs or of the Scythians. Hence the condition of poverty and degradation among the poor peasants in Sind can only be compared with those of Russia in the past. Even the zemindar is also thoroughly illiterate and therefore more tyrannical than his Russian brother. In a word Sind has been flattened and has been in a state of negation. This is the cause of the many disadvantages from which it suffers; but it has been also the cause of a great blessing, a great advantage of which other places in India cannot boast, something which is priceless in its value, something of which the world, perhaps, is in sore need-Mysticism. The mysticism of Sind is due chiefly to the condition of negation resulting from the causes enumerated above.

THE SIKH AND THE SUFI

In the latter part of the fourteen century, a great movement came into existence in India. It was a movement that later made the political achievements of Akbar possible. This political upheaval was preceded by a wave of religious revival, headed in the north of India by such immortal saints as Kabir and Nanak. National movements always seem to arise out of some such religious revival. Kabir was a Muslim, Nanak was a Hindu; but Nanak was claimed by the Muslims as their leader, being called by them Nanak Shah; and Kabir is claimed by the Hindus as one of their great teachers, his chief *Gadi* being in holy Benares. This was a movement that was intended to unite Hindu and Muslim; and the two great masters, Kabir and Nanak, typified in themselves this ideal of unity. About the same period there came, with liberalising forces, a movement that afterwards went by the name of the Sufi Movement. The religion of Sind is Sikhism and Sufism. The Hindus in Sind are chiefly Sikh, the followers of the teaching of Nanak. Guru Nanak himself visited the north of Sind. The Sikhs of Sind are chiefly Hindu Sikhs, and have very little

in common with the Punjabi Singhs. Sikhism found a strong foothold in Sind, perhaps because of the Buddhist influence there; the Sikhism of Guru Nanak contains in itself the original spirit of Hinduism, minus all the accretions of latter-day Brahmanism. So Sikhism has given back to the Sindhi the spirit of the old religion which he had lost to some extent owing to the causes mentioned above.

But the influence of Sufism in Sind both on the Hindus and Muslims has been tremendous. Many of the great original Islamic families in Sind accepted Sufism. Shah Latif, the greatest poet and mystic of Sind, was a *Kureshi* of the family of the Prophet, and a lineal descendant of the Mughal House of Herat near Afghanistan. Sachal, the next great poet and mystic of Sind, belonged to the House of Khalif Umar, whose very near descendant, Shahabuddin, came with the Arabs and became the ruler of Sehwan. These great families have been the real repositories of the best that is in Islam; they have kept intact its culture.

Sufism is the mysticism of Islam; and Ali, the lion of God and son-in-law of the Prophet, is said to have been the first initiator and organiser of the mystic school of the Sufis; but later on the Sufi Movement took on special colour as in Persia. The great Sufis of Persia, the immortal Rumi, Jami, Hafiz and many other resplendent mystic lights, have shed their effulgent and glorious spiritual rays on India; to this day they are the beloved teachers of Muslims as well as of Hindus. Sind has had a full share of this bread of life from the Persian Sufis. Afghanistan also claims to be the birth-place of one of the greatest of Sufis, Senai, whose influence even to-day is not insignificant.

When Sufism as such first came into India cannot be ascertained. Of course the spirit and teaching of Sufism are completely found in the Vedanta, and in the latter-day saints of India; but the comparatively fresher flowers from Persia added a charm, a beauty, a fragrance, that enriched the mystic treasure. The Sufis of Sind are peculiar in the sense that the garment of their mysticism is neither specially Islamic nor Persian, but it contains in its warp and woof the threads of both the Indo-Aryan Sanatana Dharma and the Arabic-Persian mystic culture. In fact there is hardly a country in the whole of Asia, including India, in which the mystic thought of two great civilisations, the Indian and the Arabic-Iranian, is seen in so beautiful a union as in Sind. There is a good deal of Sufism in the Punjab, and Punjab too has had some very great Sufis, such as Bulashah and Mian Bahu; but many of the Sufis of Punjab were in close touch with Sind, as till comparatively lately Multan was a part of Sind, whose boundaries extended even as far as Cashmere. The Punjab has even now many Sufis, but Sind being singularly free from religious orthodoxy has absorbed more of Sufism than Punjab where, on account of different political conditions, social and religious restrictions are more manifest than in Sind. In Sind at the present moment, there are numerous Hindus and amongst them some of the best brains of Sind, old and new, who are Sufis by religion. In fact, throughout Sind, the Hindu Amils are attached to the chief centres of the Sufis, and are the main supporters and advisers of the holders of the Gadi.

This Hindu-Muslim union is a marvellous phenomenon in Sind. This does not mean that there are no political dissensions in Sind between the Hindu and Muslim, and that

religious bigotry is altogether absent in Hindus and Mahommedans. As a matter of fact there has been enough of it, and it still exists in many forms and is bound to exist in some form or another while the present political policy, that divides race from race, religion from religion, caste from caste, Hindu from Hindu, Muslim from Muslim, exists. Of course these conditions are not due *only* to the present political policy; it is in a good measure due to other, deeper, causes that exist in human nature; and also to the very fact of the variety of religion and sects. But in Sind, owing to its history and other causes, there is less of religious bigotry; and the experiment of the union of religions is to some degree successful and can be witnessed with the physical

eye, not merely in the imagination. If one goes round to the various important centres of the Sufis, especially on the chief days of celebrations, he will be agreeably surprised to see the marriage of Islam with the older Religion. It is the fundamental basis of Sufism that the Truth is one. As the Koran says : "There is nothing new that I give unto you, what I give is as old as the ages." Thus while the Islam of the Arab is old as the hills, as they say, the religion of the Hindu is old as the snows of the Himalayas - even older. Sufism found a congenial soil in Sind, and seems to have spread into every nook and corner.

SECTION III

LAL SHAHBAZ AND OTHER MYSTICS

LAL SHAHBAZ

In the year 1318, in the town of Marwand in Afghanistan, a child was born to a noble *Makhdum*, sayed Ahmed Kabir, who was a close friend of the King of Tabriz. The little child showed from his infancy signs of a deep spiritual nature. The boy's name was Sayed Usman Shah. Having been born in Marwand he was called Marwandi. It is said that even when very young he had developed occult powers. Sayed Ali, the Monarch of Bagdad, in whose court the young man lived, had a considerable regard for the youth.

The call of the Spirit came to this man who was destined to be the mystic light, the light of Sufism to India and specially to Sind. He had three other friends, Sheikh Bhawaldin, Sheikh Farrid Ganj and Sheikh Makhdum Jalaluddin. They are known to the Sufis as the four great friends. Hazrat Usman Shah and his friends conceived the idea of coming over to India. The King of Bagdad, who loved and revered Usman Shah, entreated him not to leave Bagdad; but Usman Shah, who felt the urge from within, could not see his way to remain, and soon after led his three companions on the holy mission that was destined to liberalise Islam in India, and to pave the way for unity with the Hindus. Many are the stories given about their adventurous journey : tradition is resonant with the voice of miracles. It is said that when the party arrived at the Persian Gulf and after they had reached one particular island they could not find a soul. They had to cross to some other place to secure a boat. The teacher, Shah Usman, said to his companions : "Depend upon God and enter the stream; but take care, you must have no attachment to the things of the world, otherwise the waters cannot give you a safe passage. Here is my begging bowl, lay

your hands on it and it shall serve us as a boat." The four entered the stream. In the middle of the river the bowl began to sink and the companions along with it. Usman said to them, "One of you has some burden of the world on your person." Actually Bhawaldin, on of the three companions, had carried with himself a gold brick, calculating that it might be of some use on a rainy day. Marwandi ordered him to throw it into the river, and behold ! as soon as the brick sant, the bowl came up and the friends safely reached the other side.

They came to Mecca and to Medina; and a story is told of how Sheikh Farrid Ganj, who was very handsome, found himself a victim of a woman's wiles. She was a baker's wife to whom Farrid had come to buy some bread. The woman would not loose hold of him, entreated him, cajoled him, but the faqir was made of stern fibre, and soon tore himself away from her. Then the baker's wife began to roar, neighbours came, and the mistress of the oven accused poor Farrid of attempting to assault her. Sheikh Usman when he heard of this is said to have rescued his friend by a miracle. They again set out on their journey.

Sheikh Usman is said to have been challenged on the way by a famous ascetic to bathe in a tub of burning oil. This is a feat which many of the old anchorites seem to have performed. Usman Shah also successfully passed the test. Thus he earned the title of *Lal* (a ruby) as the ascetic said to him, "Thou art indeed the Lal of Lal (the ruby of rubies)". This meant that Usman was real gold having been tested by fire. He received no injury; only his robe turned crimson. He wore a red robe up to the end, and was called Lal Shahbaz. Shahbaz means a falcon. This great Sheikh was a great walker of the skies shining with th e glory of the light of the Spirit.

The friends now reached Sind which included in those days Multan and some other portion of the punjab. They reached Sehwan, probably by the frontier hills; it was known as a very important place. It is a very ancient place and was called originally Shivaasthan. It is now a deserted town, with its ruins covering many miles. It had even in those days numerous priests in holy garbs but with corrupt and perverted hearts. When they heard of the coming of this great man whose fame had preceded him, they sent him a cup brimming with milk, thus suggesting that the place was already full of faqirs and that he should seek pastures new. The great man took a flower and placed it in the cup and returned it to the worldly-minded men, suggesting by this reply that there was ample room for him, as he would remain among them floating as a flower. It also suggested that they had sunk into the mire of irreligion and supersitition, while he was coming to them to teach the road of non-attachment and spiritual living. Thus a sacred flower was planted in the soil of Sind.

His three friends went to other lands. Sheikh Bhawaldin went to Uch in Multan (then in Sind). Uch is still known as a very important centre of the Sufis. Somewhere near, the other two also settled, and these places are well known among the group of Sufis. These flowers of Sufism, planted by them in Sind and the Punjab, spread their fragrance and beauty far and wide. They had numerous followers and their descendants are still living. The sight of the annual fairs is simply wonderful. In Sehwan where Lal Shahbaz, (also called Kalandar Lal Marwandi), lived and died, you find during the annual fair thousar of

Hindus and Mahommedans camped round about the tomb, mixing freely, and singing the Sufi songs that ever melt the heart. Wrong things also have entered into the celebration of these holy days, but that is what always happens. There are other centres where the spirit of the ancient Sufis is still found in its original simplicity and purity : the light still burns clear and bright.

Lal Shahbaz and his friends came about six centuries ago, at the time when another great Sufi, Khwaja Hassan Nizami, came and settled at Delhi. He is also known throughout the length and breadth of the land. History does not give much information about the lives and struggles of these Sufis, or about the spread of their movement in Sind, till we come to the time about two and a half centuries ago. By that time the seed to have grown into a tree, whose anches gave cool spiritual shade to many weary pilgrims on the greatest of Sindhi Sufis, who sang in the language of Sind. In a later chapter something of the life and poetry of a few of these men and their successors will be given, but it must be preceded by a summary of the general doctrine of the Sufis of Sind.

THE MYSTIC DOCTRINE OF SIND

The doctrine of the mystic all over the world is the same; it is what is known as the doctrine of the heart which is, says the Sufi, the "Palace of the Beloved". But this doctrine assumes various names and forms in various climes. The speciality about the poetry of the Sufis of Sind is that its phraseology and imagery are derived from the Arabic-Persian as well as from the Indian spiritual culture. The Sufi poets of Sind are too many to enumerate; in fact, poetry is still the hobby of the Sindhi scholar as well as of the Sindhi peasant. The cultivator in the field, his little son with a herd of cattle, the camelman on the sandy tracks, the driver driving the immemorial bullock cart through broken roads and innumerable little pits - all these, with a hand on one ear, sing the lyrical songs of the immortal poets, and sometimes indulge in the luxury of making original verses.

Among the Sufi poets of Sind, Latif, Sachal, Rohal, Sami, Bedil, Bekus, Dalpat and Sadik are the best known. Some are known by their original names, others by their *noms de plume*, these being very pretty and poetic - Latif, *the Benign*, Sachal, *the True*, Rohal, *the soulful*, Sami, *the Master*, Bekus, *the Impersonal*, Bedil, *the Heart Lost*, Sadik, *the Tested*, and so on. The poetry of these love-intoxicated singers forms the pleasure and the prayer of the people of Sind.

RADICALISM

Extreme radicalism, that is fearless thinking and acting, is the chief characteristic of the Sindhi poet. Deadly opposition to the priest and brave resistance to the cruel autocratic rulers were the marked features of their lives; they shocked the susceptibilities of the orthodox priest to no small extent. In fact Latif made it the basis of his life to care not a straw for conventional thinking. "*Keep a contrary eye, move contrary to the masses. If the world moves down the stream, you move up the stream.*" "*We care not for the people*

of the world even if they kill us." Like Rousseau he despised the common belief of the herd.

The priests of Islam said, "Satan is the worst of the damned." Latif defied them. "*Satan is the only lover, all others are prattlers. Out of the great love of the Lord, the shining one (Satan) embraced disgrace.*" A true thinker indeed. Can mankind develop progress but by resistance; and is not Satan the principle of resistance ? Sachal followed the same tradition. The priests and the orthodox tabooed all free thinking as heresy (*kufur*). Sind Sachal : "But the way of heresy the Murshid (teacher) himself taught me." They told him, "you are misled". "Ah," he said, "but being misled is the first step, then comes the right road."

How can a man attain to knowledge unless he knows that he does not know ? Sachal passed through all the bitter trials of doubt that must precede knowledge. "Oh," he said, "there is no greater pain than that of doubt," but it has to be passed through.

Thus Latif sang :

All speak of the open path,

I want one who suggests the complex one.

Go not near the open road,

Seek after the complex one,

Suffer tribulation and come out raimentless.

Only rare ones enter the complex path;

The abode of the Beloved is all confusion for men.

They that walk the wilds

Are never misled;

Who walk the open road

Get plundered on the way.

With the Mullas and Moulvis, they were in perpetual conflict; Sachal said : "So long as these mosques, these so-called holy places, these raised towers, do not crumble into dust, so long the path of spirit cannot be seen clear". Rohal, the Soulful, was nothing short of a present-day extreme radical. Like Shelley he was very angry with kings, "Oh," he said, "what do these gentlemen do ?"

Many kings of the earth,

Gather lacs and untold wealth,

They forget the truth and hoard money;

But die they will; and laid to dust,

Not a pie will they take with them.

They sit on thrones and hold their sceptres,

they call themselves the Lords of earth,

As if it were the property of their father and grandfather.

These tyrants, how do they rule ?

They deprive others of their rights;

They do not measure justice to the aggrieved.

They live on others' sweat,

They eat what is unholy,

They think they win, but

They will depart as in defeat.

Rohal, however, did not leave the priests, the Kazs and the mullas unreproved.

Look at these kazis, they sit with open Korans,

While they take bribes from men;

They speak the letter of the Book,

They are really buying hell.

The Mullas read traditions and the Koran,

they look like Mussalmans,

They are the very devil,

These will defeated die.

Dalpat was so hot on the subject of priests, that his successors still consider it unwise to publish his poems. Many examples could be given of this fearless thinking and living; suffice it to say that the mystic of Sind is like his brother mystics of the world, an enemy of hypocrisy and convention. Not only in the domain of thought, but in morals also, the Sufi is a radical. The only basis of his morality is the recognition of the one Life which he tries to realise. This means an utter identification of oneself with everything in the Universe. This identification means love; and love can never injure: the giving of injury is immorality, and nothing besides. The Sufi recognises no outside authority but the urge of love from within. Sachal says :

Through virtue and vice, none know God.

Latif said :

Men fight shy of vice;

My Beloved turned his face from me because of my virtue.

Dalpat realising that the higher phase of Compassion cannot tolerate either thus complains :

Oh Lord, it is thou who sinnest and thou who do'st good deeds; why didst thou make heaven and hell ?

Radicalism, both in thinking and feeling, is what contributes so much to the making of the Sufi.

BROAD - MINDEDNESS

Broad-mindedness and tolerance are the chief virtues of a Sufi, and the Sufis of Sind have fully lived and preached them. The Sufi is not a sentimentalist. He is a person who studies the various religions and, being a radical in thought and affectionate by nature, he soon shakes off the common prejudices that haunt men, and divide and from man. The great poets of Sind have laid great emphasis on this; they refused to call themselves Muslims or Hindus.

Says Latif:

As breath pervades everywhere, so Sufis live in every heart.

He instructed the Sufi :

Infidel nor Muslim be, Heaven and Hell are not for thee. Sufi is one who says, "Make, oh make the Beloved thine."

The Truth is one, the Beloved is one, why fight over names ? They asked him : "Oh Latif, what are you, a Shiah Muslim or a Sunni one ?" He replied : "Between the two." They said: "But between the two is nothing." "Yes, yes," he replied, "that `nothing' I am."

Sachal was very forcible in his language when condemning formal religion.

Love forgives all religion. The Lover never entangles himself in either Islam or Hinduism.

Bedil says : "The Lover is sick of religion." Rohal says beautifully :

One is a Hindu, another is a Muslim, a third is the enmity between them. The blind cannot be free from darkness. Who can convince them of the truth ? But oh Rohal, when I entered on the path of the Beloved, and saw, I found the Lord the very same, the very same. Now tell me, he that sleeps inside the Kaaba shrine, on which side should he stretch his legs ?

Muslims protest if a person sleeps with feet towards the kaaba, so Rohal put before them this riddle. He that lies secure in the Kaaba of the heart, he sees no difference between Hindu and Muslim.

Dalpat the Hindu Sufi sang :

If the Kaaba is the house of God; why not the temple too ? If the Lord lives in the pipal tree, who lives in the babul then ?

In the Mosque and the monastery,

Shines the one resplendent light.

Oh ! Dalpat, I know not how this disharmony entered into men !

MYSTIC PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Sufis is the result of direct experience; they dug it out from their own being; the experiences being almost the same have resolved themselves into a system that is well-nigh perfect, even as the flawless Vedantic system of Shankaracharya. The Sufis of Sind also delved into themselves, and were conversant with Arabic-Persian mysticism as well as the Vedanta of the Indian. Sachal summed it up in a single phrase: "The mystery of negation-affirmation". Latif spoke of it as "Being-non-being". The Sufi is prepared to pay the price for the finding of the solution of the world-mystery : that is the one object of his life. God says in the Koran, "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery." This is what the Sufi calls the play between the two, him and the Beloved. Apart from his subjective experiences that may not be clothed in words, the Sufi is a hard thinker; but his thinking is accompanied by a longing of the heart and therefore is often more strenuous than mere gymnastics of the brain.

Sami says :

Love and intellect are the two wings of the bird.

The path of the Sufi consists of three steps. He finds himself in the state of lower *affirmation*, in which he has identified himself with the wrappings of flesh, emotions, and thoughts . the second step is that of the struggle in which he seeks to unclthe himself of all these garments; he wishes to see the seer and not the seen. In this undertaking he must not only kill his flesh (*nafs*) and control his emotion (*dil*), but he must give up all prejudices of the mind. As Latif says, "Come out ye all, and stand naked." This is the state of *negation* (*nafi*) which includes the suppression of emotion and thought, as well as of the will, the individuality.

Much misunderstanding has been created by looking at these statements on the surface. For instance, Dr. Iqbal, the poet of Punjab, is scathing in his remarks about the great Sufis concerning this destruction of the individuality; but the Sufis knew better. Latif said :

So long as thou art conscious of thine individuality, so long there is no prayer. Give up your individuality, and then say your prayer.

He also replied to the critic :

This non-being made the servant, Sire; in the subjective they are the same, in the objective they are also the same. Ah, how can you speak of the mystery ? The mystery of the Beloved ! All is mystery.

The third step is therefore that which comes after negation, or vacuum, and that is fulness, full being. This step is again called affirmation (*isbat*); it may be called *re-affirmation*, or affirmation in full, in which the lower affirmation and the struggling negation both dissolve. The experience at this stage, the Sufi says, cannot be given in words. "The dumb enjoys the sweets, can he speak ?" (Sami). The Sufis of Sind have also built the whole of their system on this negation-affirmation . This one problem they pondered over, in all its complications. They were on the wings of ecstasy when they thought they had grasped it: but when doubt again entered, and the solution slipped from their hold, they suffered great tearing of the heart, and were in deep depression. This state they called the "Separation from the Beloved"; while the other they called the "Union with the Beloved". In the union the bird of th e soul flies high to the heavens and is all joy. This is what they called "Wine". In separation the poor bulbul finds its wings clipped and broken, and cries most piteously. Sachal put this so feelingly :

What are we ? Oh, what are we ?

Brethren, we know not what we are.

Now we rejoice and say "We know ourselves"

Now we cry, "What are we ? Oh, what are we ?"

Now clouds pour showers cool,

Now burn fires of hell,

Now my heart is full of peace,

Now tears flow in streams.

What are we, Oh, what are we ?

Oh Sachal thou art the very He !

Why should we illusions weave ?

This struggle between affirmation, negation, (this "am" and "am not,") is given in much detail by sachal.

I am not, I am not,

I swear by the most high

I am not, I am not;

In am, am not; in am not, am;

This secret song, I sing and sing.

Sachal says, "In these cogitations, are a thousand kingships lost." It is this struggle of the "am, and am not," "twixt will and will not" (Shakespeare), that is the path of every struggler. In the world of thought it is "am and am not," in the world of feeling it is "will and will not". These two, affirmation and negation, go hand in hand, simultaneously. the "I" is ever opposite to "not I," the "am" is ever face to face with "am not"; perhaps, these two are always dependent on each other, and the one only lives when the other is; therefore Sachal is surprised when he says, "In am, am not; in am not, am." Latif considered this an endless game. This "veil upon veil" ever rises. This "eternal process going on, from state to state the spirit walks". When the "I" withdraws itself from one cover that is "not I," it again finds itself in another "not I". Both are therefore independent, and the "I", and "am," cannot be seen apart from "not I" and "am not". Shah Latif said, "That is not without this, This is not without That." Your cannot see the "Thing in itself," the real form of anything cannot be seen, therefore "seek not His form; the Beloved thou seekest, upon my word, thou canst not meet Him face to face" (Latif) - "for it ever recedes." (*Light on the Path*). Asked the pupil then from Latif :

"But without the form it cannot be seen !"

"True," replied the teacher, "Therefore seek it not."

"What shall I do?" enquired the pupil.

Replied Shah Latif, "Be thou as is a child. Give up individuality. They that are thus absorbed, they neither stand in prayer, nor do they bend; they enter into the absolute Being, when they enter into non-being." This submitting of the "individual" in the words of Emerson, is what the Sufi calls real existence, real ecstasy (*hal*), not the ecstasy which is temporary but the ecstasy that is final and matured.

The scientist looks at matter, finds one form after another, the "the thing in itself" always eluding him; but the Sufi understands this better, knowing that all these forms are strung as beads on the "individual". As long as there is the individual, so long these "not I's" will always haunt; and, as this individual, the "I," is also a something which forms a subject of his thought, it is a part of the "not I," therefore it must also be negated.

None reached the shore, with the I; give up this I, and thyself will reach. Thyself the Lord, thyself will reach Thyself the Lord. All is beauty; there is no other thought; oh dualist! give up duality. "The duality of negation-affirmation is annihilated into the absolute thought or absolute beauty."

By this process of thinking the Sufi comes to understand that the "am," the "not am," and the nexus between the two, all three form but variations of consciousness or thought (*khial*), and therefore Sachal sang as did the ancient Rishis:

As you yourself think yourself to be, so shall you be; know this with certainty.

These Sufis were the predecessors of Schopenhauer who said, "The world is my idea." Sachal gives us a story of Sikander (Alexander), who went to a mystic and questioned him about the whole world being an idea. The mystic took him to a bathing ghat and both entered the stream for a bath. "Dive for a moment," said the faqir to Sikander. Sikander did so, and what did he see in that moment? He forgot his kingly consciousness; he saw that he was a poor man, had many little children and a wife that were as poor and miserable as he; and that years and years passed away, and one day a terrible calamity befell him. He gave a start and behold! he found himself again a king at the bathing ghat, along with the mystic. He was wonder-struck. Sachal said: "Sikander thought years had passed, but it was merely the history of a moment." So he added: "Thou art only thought (*khial*)."

This whole of this Universe is merely a contraction and expansion of thought, contraction and expansion both disappearing into what is called the Absolute. This is the highest stage of affirmation after negation. This state of consciousness cannot be described in words, but the Sufi whenever he expresses it in ecstasy uses the word "I" (*Ana*). This "I" is not the "I" of individuality, but it is the "I" that exists beyond negation, so it is the "Absolute I". "They that dissolved the individual into the absolute, they said 'I' in ecstasy." (Bedil).

So sang Latif also :

I (*mun*) is created in I; I befits I; I conceives I through I.

Many a misunderstanding is caused by students when they hear the mystic and the Vedantist speaking of reality in terms of "I". But the use of the word is technical in the system of Sufi thought. As one of the oldest Persian texts of the Sufis gives :

When the existence absolute comes into indication it is described by the word "I". - Gulshan Raz.

Shankara expressed it in exactly the same form. "It is described by the word I (*Aham, Shobdena, Vikhyat*). Thus when the Sufi says "*Anal Haq*" (I truth), the "I" here is really impersonal. We should think of it more in the third than in the first person. Anyhow this third or first person is the One Person.

SPECIES AND GENUS (*Sefat and Zat*)

While it is true that the final conclusions of the Sufi are largely the result of a subjective process, manifested in ecstasy, still all the earlier stages are thoroughly logical. Just as in the subjective process he uses the two words, *isbat* and *nafi*, affirmation and negation, he uses two other words, when he reasons - *zat* and *sefat*. These terms mean absolute and qualitative; genus and species; abstract and concrete, and so on.

Beloved ! the colourless came into myriad colours. The drops, the waves, the streams, all these forms conceal the real water. One is the seed, thousands are the green leaves, myriads the fruits and branches. Originally there is clay, but the potter's pots carry numerous names. Originally there is the sugar-cane, many sweets are but its many forms. Gold is one, ornaments are but its forms - Sachal.

The very species, *sefat*, we see, are but the forms of a genus, *zat*, in fact they *are* in their totality the genus. In the same way the various genii in themselves form the species of an absolute genus, the real *zat*, in which all the pairs of opposites in here and dissolve into a unity.

In Unity all the concrete, *sefat*, are one; the coloured and the colourless are both one; in Unity duality is dissolved. It is only in the concrete that myriad names are called; in Unity they disappear - Bedil.

Latif called this genus and species, unity (*vahdat*) and variety (*kasrat*).

The one became the many; many and the one form the totality.

Dalpat went still further: he says why call it even one ?

Oh Dalpt! you could call it one, if there were any tow, when there is no two the word one cannot be used.

This is what the Vedantist calls Superimposition. *Adhyas*, the cause of all illustion, this losing of the one in the many. Why only say chair, table, teapoy, etc., why not think of them as wood ? The forgetting of the one tatality that is forest in the individual trees is the illusion which the Sufi calls *tilsam*. It is this illusion that he tries to overcome by constant cogitation, concentration and meditation, moved by an intense longing (*ishk*). They look within and seek.

Turn thy face inside;

Seek not as does the beast outside.

Seek not in the open fields;

Come in, and close the door - Latif.

Thus sang the simple Sufis of Sind of the Eternal Mystery.

UNDERSTAND THE ILLUSION

Oh brother ! you that tread the path,

Come, understand this illusion;

Dissolve duality, and you will know;

Keep off this gradation.

How could you ever forget the secret of negation-affirmation,

Stop this devotion ?

Why be satisfied with mere stories ?

Break thou the idols of Kaaba,

Know thine own secret, give not ear to miracles.

From the absolute you came. Understand this manifestation,

Oh Sachal, why weep so profusely ? Stop this raining of tears.

To the palace of the Beloved (body)

Why give so much tribulation ? - Sachal

ALL IS HE

The Sufi has by this process of reasoning and mystic experience arrived at what is his great word, the chief mantram, "All is He," (*Hamaioost*). Just as the Vedantist expresses this idea in the word "OM," so does the Sufi express it in the word *Vahiadaoo*, or *Hoo hoo*. It comes from his very being : he is engaged intently upon this Hoo hoo. The Sindhi Sufis who came in contact with Vedantist Yogis, adopted the word "OM" too; hence latif:

"If the Guru were to give thee the one curved word (OM) it would be to thee as light in darkness," therefore "keep *mim(m)* in thy mind, and place *alif (a)* before it".

This word, call it "OM," *Hoo*, or *Vahiadaoo*, is what they call the "Great Word," *Ism-e-Azm*; it is on this that they meditate. I am told it is a practice amongst the Sufis, to concentrate on the word "Ism-e-Azm," which they are given written in an attractive form on a piece of paper; and such is the result of their concentration that they see it everywhere; and their rapturous songs are but the joyful expression of this experience, as sung by an ancient Sufi, the grandfather of Shaha Latif :

ALL IS HE

He Himself is the splendour of the splendid,

He Himself is the soul of beauty,

He Himself is the form of the beloved,

He Himself is beauty complete,

He Himself is teacher,

He Himself is pupil,

He is thought Himself,

All this is known within the soul.

He Himself gives message,

He Himself is the king,

He Himself takes care of Himself,
He Himself sees Himself,
He Himself loves Himself,
He Himself creates abundantly,
He Himself longs for His created,
He is this, He is that,
He is the lord of death, He is the lord of life,
He is foe, He is friend,
He is here, He is there,
He lives in the mind,
He Himself sees the light of Himself.

THE SOUL IS UNCREATED

The Sufis, believing thus in the identification of the universal Soul with the individual soul, do not believe the soul to have been created at any time. It existed, and shall always exist. "Man has no beginning nor end has he." (Latif).

They said to Latif "

god said `Be,' (*Kun*), and it was, (*fayakun*), and so were souls created."

He replied :

"Be and it was" was not,

Whisper nor murmur moved,

We saw the Beloved at that moment face to face.

"Be and it was" was not,

Flesh and limb were not,

Adam was not in body yet

Oh Beloved ! I knew you even then.

"Be and it was" was not,

Form and matter were not,

No thought of virtue,

No care for vice;

Extreme oneness was, the flow of Unity,

The eyes of my Soul knew the Beloved then.

Latif said all souls were knit in unity.

As grains knit in a single sheaf lie in utter rest.

A good illustration of the "Monads," establishing thus the beginninglessness of the soul, is found in what he says to the students:

Call Him not creator, not call Him created, oh raw one !

When Latif spoke of "Be and it was," the coming into existence of the Universe, he did not even then speak of it as *creation*.

The Lord said "Be and it was"

This was his act of sacrifice - Fida.

"In utter reverence he spread the earth." It is not the creation that is brought into being from nothing, but a mere *spreading*, an unfolding - what the Hindu or the Theosophist speaks of as manifestation by an Ishvara, the Ruler of a System. According to the Koran the Lord (*Rab*) said at this moment to the soul: "Am I not your Lord ?"

The soul responded "Yes". Latif says that is true, but at the time of manifesting "I said that with my heart," that is, by his choice and will and not by coercion.

Sachal, the Intoxicated, made this more clear :

I am born of none, i am brought up by none,

I left Heaven, and came to earth,

Within Heaven's gates I could not be contained.

There a thought of the earth reached me;

I came of my own free will.

I am contained in every form.

It was love that rused on me,

No father, no mother have I,

Infinite and eternal am I,

My voyage is everywhere,

By mistake I call myself Sachal.

THE MASTER

Belief in the Murshid (Master) is a cardinal principal with the Sufi. He idolises him; his life is laid at his feet, for he is to him the only support of his life, as the one who knows what he yet does not know. It is the Master who places him on the Path; and therefore the Sufi often sings of the Master in superlative terms, calls him the Beloved and the Beautiful One

The Master and God both are before me,

At whose feet shall I first fall ?

I sacrifice myself for the Master who showed me God - Kabir..

Kabir was one of the greates of Sufis, though not so named. The Sufis believe the great Masters exist still on the physical plane; they believe that forty of them are living now, and call them by the name "Abdal". They assign various titles to them, some are *Ghoans* some are *Kutub*. Kutub is the pole star. It symbolises to the Sufi the *Initiator*. The Sufis of Islam generally accept Ali as the Initiator; he is the Gate (*Bab*) of Initiation. They sing the praises of the Master in abundant joy and in forms of poetic beauty.

Bedil, the Sufi of Sind (Rohri), says:

These men do never die,

They become the Praised Ones,

They shed mercy on the world with myriad hands,

They help the helpless,

They aid the depressed,

They leave not those that follow them when time of danger comes.

They are men only in name,

In reality they are God Himself, These Solitary Ones are marvellous.

The author of this book has been led to believe, after much contact with many descendants and followers of the great Sufis of Sind, that a great occult centre existed in Sind which was the fountain source of *Atma Vdya*, or what the Sufi calls *Tasawwuf* or Theosophy. He has known a very very old Sufi named Kutub Shah, over hundred years old, and benign of face, a holy man and descendant of Sayed Jelani, one of the four who came with Lal Shahbaz centuries ago. This holy man used to say that in Sind, in the district of Kohistan, the mountain regions whose boundaries meet Makran and perhaps Kurdistan, was a place on the mountain tops where great Yogis came and gave teaching to the and that he was also one of the occupants of their teaching. Shah Latif refers perhaps to the same place and calls it Nani, where *Nagas (Yogis)* live. This matter will be referred to again when dealing with the lives of these Sufis. Kutub Shah used to say that at this place there existed no difference whatever between Islam and Hinduism. There is still a place called Hinglaj on this side, where many people go on pilgrimage, but it does not now enjoy the same reputation for sanctity as it seems to have done in the past. One thing however is certain: the great poet Latif of Sind came into contact with some great master of Yoga and received tuition from him. He himself had pupils that were of high order.

THE MASTER

The Yogi came out from inside the abode of ecstasy,

The Master effulgent with the glory of the full moon.

The light of the Yogi dispelled all darkness,

His fragrance suffused the earth,

The Fakir awakened in me grace and love.

The face of the Master is as the sun is at dawn,

Diwan Dayaram Gidumal, I.C.S., retired Session Judge, and my fellow-countryman, wrote thus of his visit to the Bhit of Latif where he met a very old man:

"He then proceeded to inform me that Abdulrahim was directed by Shah Latif, when he disappeared, to go to Girnar where a fakir 500 years old at once addressed him as Shah's balika or disciple." (Something about Sind, 1882).

The turban on his head flashed as lightning on the cluds,

From him fragrant scent of *attar* came.

He showed me the abode where the Exquisite One received illumination.

(The deep and utter reverence with which they think of the Master is heart thrilling.)

When walks my beloved the Lord of grace,

Earth cries *Bismillah*, "Glory to the Lord,"

It kisses the track he makes.

Houris stand enraptured, utterly amazed, By the Lord : The Beauty of the Belove is matchless - Latif.

THE PATH

The path of the Sufi is the same ancient and narrow path, that has been trodden by every mystic worthy of the name. The Sufis of Sind have trodden the same road; it is nothing short of "Give up thy life if thou wouldst live". (*The Voice of the Silence*.)

In fact a fair portion of the poetry of the Sufis consists of the enumeration of the difficulties of the Path.

If thou carest for thy life

Come not into this field. - Sachal.

Love is not a game that children can play.

He that breaks the bonds of body, *Jism*, individuality, *Jio* and *soul, jan*, thus throws himself under the lance; he can play the game. - Latif.

Art thou a Sufi ? Then keep no desire,

Give up thine head and throw it into fire. - Latif.

The whole of the individual man is to be crushed out of existence, before he can attain to anything of the spirit. Latif gives the picture of the Tavern where are kept jars full of wine. The Master who is the keeper of the Tavern sits on a raised seat, with a terrible knife in his hand and wooden blocks running in a row before him. The aspirants, *talibs*, the seekers of the wine, come with utter humility before the *Murshid*, and with bowed head ask the Beloved for a drop of wine. Says the Master: " ` First thine head, then the wine; dost thou accept the condition ?' At the word of the Master some that have craven

hearts, turn away. Others kneel down, look into the glorious eyes of the wine-seller, bend and put their heads on the wooden blocks and say : `Strike, oh strike, thou giver of wine, we lay our heads under the knife."

The wine-seller cuts the head of his pupil but not all at once; he "cuts, cleaves and carves" the flesh of these "bobles". Latif says he accepts not those that are poor (in heart), he wants the heads of aristocrats, those noble souls that are rich in feeling, thoughts and ideals. And behold ! the seekers neither cry nor weep, sob nor sigh. They shed not a tear, but even say with longing in their hearts:

Oh knife, be not sharp! May'st thou be ever dull, so that the hands of hte Beloved tarry onger on thee,

(that is on me). Thus the Tavern-keeper, who is so soft-hearted, tears out the life of the aspirant and the blood doth freely flow. "Oh Latif, wash thy heart with pain." The Tavern-keeper says to the aspirant,

You desire this wine, but the deadly poison of the snake is in this wine.

He replies :

Give us but a sip, Oh Master, of Thy wine, and take this head. Ah! Had I a hundred necks, forth with I would give them; I am utterly ashamed to give a single neck.

Thus does the pupil pass the test of the Tavern-keeper, and lo ! he that was dead is now alive and the pupil and Master both rejoice. It is the promise of the Koran : *Matu kibl*, Die, then live !

So shalt thou,

Dead, feed on death that feeds on other men;

And death once dead,

There's no more dying then, - Shakespeare.

Thus the treader of the path enters into the mysteries of life, through the fire of pain.

The lovers are fond of poisoned drinks :

They see poison and rejoice.

They always love the bitter and painful;

Though their wounds may bleed, they will not murmur.

Thus does Latif describe the trials of the Path. He talks of the guillotine and the gallows, the lance and the knife, the fire in which the moth must burn and so on.

How is it, that lovers on gallows rejoice ?

Ah me ! The place of death becomes the throne of grace,

When the eyes of the Beloved meet theirs.

That is the mystery of the wine, sung of by all Sufis; these love-intoxicated men talk not of ordinary wine, though some who misunderstand these Sufis think so. Latif, Sachal and others did not touch a single drop of wine. Says Sachal, "this is not the intoxication of the drug." It is, as Latif says, "the *surma* of light", that makes the eyes "ruby red," and the whole world appear rosy red.

These earlier ascetics crushed the animal in man. Latif said : "Be thou thinner than a needle." Much of this asceticism is lacking in the present day Sufi, but his forbears touched neither wine, nor flesh.

Drink thou thine own blood,

There is no better wine than that;

Strike thy teeth into thine own heart,

There is no better meat than that.

Thus lived these knights of the spirit, living plainly and thinking high. This utter desirelessness precedes all spiritual awakening.

Enter into the abode of desirelessness, and see Allah !

The road of the spirit is clear as day,

Only desires have hidden it. - Latif.

"This release from hope" they called light (*nur*). As Latif says, "They think of freedom from hope as light, while the presence of it is darkness." Sachal speaks of the treacher of the path as a great fighter, who has to face opposition from men. His great Sufi hero is Mansur Halai, who held to what he regarded as truth, defied all oppressors, and was flayed alive, but shrank not. Mansur said "I am God," *Anal Hak*. The priests and the people were wrath with him : they said to him, "Give up your heresy." He stood firm and yielded not and was put to death. Sachal, the poet, idolised mansure.

If thou art a man, speak as mansur,

Otherwise call not thyself Mansur.

On the path of Mansur, are many blows and many burdens.

Oh lover, never do a thing for which men may praise thee; take up some load of calumny,

Let the whole world reproach thee - Sachal.

Truly does the jewel of mysticism echo :

Desire power ardently, but that power

Oh disciple, which will make you appear as nothing in the eyes of man ! - *Light on the Path*.

These immortal Sufis tried to tread the "Razor Path".

INITIATIONS

The Sufi speaks of definite destinations, *manzuls*, on the spiritual path. Shah Latif describes them poetically thus :

The Beloved bound me hand and foot

And threw me into the sea.

Now He stands on the shore and speaks :

`Never let thy skirt be wet.'

`Oh knower of the path !' I said,

`How may I unmoist in water be ?

Teach me the way Lore !'

Thus spake He :

Make righteousness thy support (Shariyat).

Understand the law (Tarikat),

Thy heart attune with truth (Hakikat),

Know the place of knowledge (Marfat),

Prove thyself : thus unmoist shalt thou ever keep.

Thus four stages are *shariyat*, or right physical conduct, *tarikah* or correct moral feeling, *hakikat*, or clear mental conception and *marfat* or spiritual realisation. The Sufi speaks of these various Initiations in details, and links them up with various corresponding planes, *asmans*, and gives their description, calling them visions, *mushahidas*. The various planes are *Nasut*, the physical world, *Malkut*, the Deva world, *Fabrut* the plane of "Power," *Lahut*, and one other which Latif calls Hahut.

The comparative study of these doctrines with, those of the Vedantins, Gnostics, and present-day Theosophists is, to say the least, very interesting and illuminating; the distinguishing feature of the Sufi being that he presents his treasures in poetical forms of great beauty. The bare outline of their soul-entrancing doctrine cannot do justice to the mystics of Sind in any story of their lives.

SECTION IV

THREE GREAT SUFI TEACHERS

INAYET, "THE NECKLESS"

In the days of the Kalhoras, Sind passed into the hands of rulers who wielded powers both temporal and spiritual. The Kalhoras belonged to the Fakir Dynasty, but they had lost the touch of asceticism, which their ancestor, the famous Ahmed Shah, possessed. When they found themselves kings of Sind, they began to enforce their ideas of orthodox religion. A great Sindhi, Sahah Inayet, who was also a mighty Sufi, flourished at this time. He was famed in various parts of India for his piety and learning. He had disciples in many places. He lived for many years in the country of the Nizam with his teacher and had disciples from the Royal family. When this great man returned to his native place, Jhok, in Sind, he naturally found many followers. His influence perturbed both the priests and the Kalhoras who were the priest rulers of the land. The Kalhora king began to be disquieted when he saw the increasing strength of the followers of Inayet. Inayet was a very independent man; he had a very large number of followers, who carried arms - surely there was no "Arms Act" in those days.

This Sufi teacher was a great zemindar to boot, as his ancestors were men of great influence belonging to the original families of the Kureshi House. The Kalhora was nervous, and thus began his campaign of persecution and calumny. The orthodox priests of whom he was the head, helped him in anathematizing and passing *fatwas* on Inayet. Very soon the Kalhora reported the matter to the Delhi King, Farakhseer, charging Shah Inayet with rank sedition against the Governments of Delhi and Sind. The degraded Mughal blindly ordered the capture of Shah Inayet. Shah Inayet resisted. He lived in a fortress which he further fortified and barricaded. These Sufis seem to have been no mild flock; but were men of strong fibre. They knew the justice of their cause, and put up a great fight. The forces of the King laid siege to the fortress for four months and found it impossible to capture it. The ruler then took to deception, and sent a letter requesting peace

in the name of Allah, and the generoushearted Sufi fell into the trap. The wily Kalhora decapitated Shah Inayet and sent his head to Delhi to King Farakhseer. The head of the Sufi is said to have been alive and active all the journey from Sind to Delhi, and to have composed a poem called "Besir Namah," (The Poem of the Neckless). And when the head reached Delhi, it is said to have prophesied the fall of the Mughal.

It is impossible to guarantee the truth of the exaggerated accounts of the believing devotee, especially when some of his statements contradict both physical and psychical laws; but one thing is true - the manuscript, "Besir Namah," in Persian, is still in existence. To give up one's neck is the fundamental doctrine of the Sufi which Inayet enunciated in his poem. Jhok continues to be the *Gadi* still carries great influence throughout Sind; and almost all the various groups of the Sufis in other centres bow with reverence before this Gadi; and the name of Shah Inayet is as sacred to them as the name of the great Sufi Mansur. Shah Inayet is the Mansur of Sind. Like Mansur he gave up his life for the Sufi cause, fighting against tyrants, priests and rulers. His sacrifice is still a source of great inspiration to the Sufis of Sind, and the later Sufis have sung his praises abundantly. Still numerous disciples go as pilgrims to Jhok, which is situated a little distance from Tando Mahommed Khan.

ABOUT the end of the fourteenth century, when Timur was carrying on his terrible campaigns, there lived in Herat, beyond Baluchistan, a great noble, very rich, by name Sayed Mirali, who gained the favour of Timur by giving him large sums of money. Timur, pleased with this voluntary help, bestowed upon him royal honours; and it is said that he appointed four of the six sons of Mirali as governors of Ajmir, Multan, Bukkur and Sehwan. The fifth son remained in Herat, while the sixth, though offered a governorship, preferred to accompany his father Mirali who was fighting in India. Soon after, this sixth son, Sayed Hyder Shah, separated from his father, and came to Sind and reached halla, a well-known place, a centre of industry and a place which afterwards produced many learned and pious men. Sind is still renowned for hospitality, and Sayed Hyder Shah enjoyed the hospitality of his host, Shah Mahomed, for a long time. Shah Mahomed was not in the good books of the Governor of the place and once found himself in a serious difficulty with the Government. Sayed Hyder Shah, his guest, extricated him from the danger, and thus the bond of affection was further strengthened between the guest and the host.

The noble guest soon fell in love with Fatma, a daughter of his host, whose soft, dark eyes captured his heart. Hyder's other wife, at Herat, bore him two sons, but the butterfly desired ardently the Sindhi damsel. The father readily agreed and Fatma was married to him. Very soon Herat pressed its claims and Hyder returned, leaving with the young wife, a maid-servant, a dagger and some other tokens. He left instruction that, if the child that would be born was a son, he should be sent to Herat. Happily a son was born; but the father never came back to Sind, and soon after died in Herat. The son that was born was the ancestor of the greatest poet and mystic of Sind, Shah Latif. The boy grew up and went to Herat with the old maid-servant, proved his claim, and received his portion of the property from his brothers. He came back and settled in Sind at his native place. A long line of descendants followed.

SHAH KARIM

Shah Karim was the great-great-grandfather of Shah Latif. This man was person of great piety and was a well known poet; indeed Shah Latif fed himself on the poetry of his great forbear; and many verses of his poems are included in the poetry of Shah Latif. I have already quoted the long poem "All is He" of Shah Karim. It is on the model supplied by Shah Karim that Latif built his poetry. Karim said :

Even if you read all the sacred books, of what avail ?

Can a lame ant in the well measure the skies !

He who lives in a hut built on the river bank,

Why need he thirst for water ?

But the fools cry on; and understand not.

THE BIRTH OF LATIF

There is some uncertainty about the date of Latif's birth. But it can safely be fixed between 1680 and 1690. His father's name was Shah Habib. He loved his son dearly and himself followed the tradition of his great Sufi forefather, Shah Karim. The little child Latif grew up under the fostering care of his father, and in the saintly tradition and Sufi atmosphere of the house. He early showed signs of spirituality. The child was put under the tuition of a learned and good man, Nurmahomed Bhatti (The Light of Mahomed). Some say he was never sent to school, but others are of the opinion that Latif was a great scholar and had mastered Arabic and Persian, as he displays a detailed knowledge of both in his poetry. The texts from the Koran, *Masnuvi*, *Gulshan Raz* and others, are so well rendered in Sindhi, that it is difficult to decide which is better, the original or the translation. The little child, as soon he grew into boyhood, became more and more subject to mystic moods. His father, Shah Habib, had now changed his home to Kotri, not the port on the river Indus but a village near Halla. Mirza Mogulbeg was the ruler of this place.

The father of Latif was the spiritual guide of the family, being a Sayed. These Sayeds also possessed the knowledge of medicine, and they very often treated their disciples. The daughter of Mirza fell ill, and Habib sent his son Latif to the house of the ruler to give relief and bestow blessing. Young Latif came often to the house, and is said to have fallen in love with the girl. He one day took the finger of the maiden in his hand, and said to her parents that she would be completely cured if given in marriage to him. It is a custom among the disciples to marry their daughters into the family of the spiritual guide. The family of Latif drew its lineage from the royal House of Herat, so Latif was quite hopeful that his suit would be accepted. But the Mughal was an inordinately proud man and did not look with favour on young Latif who, though handsome and well placed in life, had early gained the reputation of being a mystic Fakir.

Mirzabeg is said to have grown inimical to the family of Latif.

Latif tried his best to placate his anger; but the Mirza soon found relief from anger and egress from the world, being killed by robbers called *dals*. Tradition says that the curse of Latif was the cause of his death. But Latif, the Benign, was extremely loving-hearted, and in spite of the anger of the Mirza his daughter had been attracted to him, and offered her hand to him after her father's death. Not much is known about the poet's family life. A son was born to him but died soon. He had no other issue. He now took to the ascetic life completely and thoroughly.

BHIT SHARIF (REVERED)

If you pass along the road that leaves Halla for Hyderabad, you see further away, beyond the shrubs before you, big white mounds. These form the hills that are called Bhit. Many sand hills are found near Tando Allahyar in Hyderabad District, but in this part of Sind round about Halla, the Bhit is a solitary group of sandy mounds which, in the sun, present to the eye a very bright and shining spot; the glittering sands sparkle in the burning sun. Among these sandy mounds the great poet of Sind made his little cave where he dived into himself to solve the problem of the soul. Even when he was a boy, he used to turn away from the haunts of men and disappear into the thick group of shrubs, that surround these sand-hills. He used to come and go at his will. Once the youth did not come home at night. Naturally, Habib, his father, who loved him and also revered him as a great soul, felt nervous about the absence of his son. The father with a friend went out to find him. They found him at last covered with sand, sitting in meditation. The poor father cried in verse :

The wind has blown, the sand hath flown,

Thy limbs are covered with sand.

Latif, who had wakened from his contemplation, replied:

She is still breathing and alive, Striving to see the Beloved.

The Sufi always addresses the Beloved as the husband and thinks of himself as the handmaiden. The father was happy to find his son and brought him home. This was not the only occasion on which Latif's poor father had to seek his son. The youth once found a big hollow tamarisk tree in a lonely place. He made friends with a carpenter, who felt attracted towards him and made the hollow of the tree habitable for him. In this hollow tree the poet used to enter into contemplation and, forgetting his being, become lost in beatitude. Once, for some days, the son did not come home. The poor father found the separation from his son so hard, that at last the carpenter felt compassion for the poor man and showed him the solitary haunt of Latif.

After the death of his father Latif retired permanently to the Bhit, which is now called *sharif* (the revered), holy in the memory of all Sind.

THE SUFI'S STRUGGLE

It is said : "Let a saint live in the bowels of the earth, his light will shine even in the sky." So the fame of Latif soon spread round. Many are the anecdotes related of his life, but no correct account is available. He seems to have travelled far and wide, in the restricted sense of the word; to have traversed the mountains of Kohistan and made pilgrimages to the shrines and monasteries of the ascetics in

Nani and Hinglaj. He went to Rajputana, where at Jessalmir he had some pupils. Latif was a great observer of things, a lover of nature.

The Sufi is a true poet, that is, an admirer of nature and a worshipper of beauty. Shah Latif also studied nature and worshipped at the altar of beauty, but the Sufi differs from many poets, inasmuch as he interprets everything that he observes in terms of his intense longing for the Beloved. Latif is a naturalist, a moralist, a philosopher, but fundamentally a lover to whom all things whisper of the Beloved, and the Path that leads to Him, as will be evident from some of the anecdotes of his life and the poems.

Very soon his solitary place, the Bhit, began to be visited by men from all parts of Sind, Baluchistan and Rajputana. The ruler of Sind was Kalhora Nur Mahomed, the son of Jan Mahomed, who had decapitated Shah Inayet. Nur Mahomed Kalhora feared that very soon his own followers would leave his spiritual guidance and follow Latif. The personality of Latif was very attractive, and his voice was very beautiful; and in his ecstatic moods he used to take his *tamboora* and sing so divinely that the hearts of men surrendered themselves to him, as they did to Mira, the divine singer of Chitor, in Rajputana. The Kalhora, Nur Mahomed, incited first the wrath of the *mullas* and *moulvis* against Latif who, though not despising the orthodox religious practices as Sufis ordinarily do, was still a man who brooked no hypocrisy in the priest or cruelty in the tyrant. He respected the dictates of the Koran inasmuch as he thought that for the beginner it was good to say prayers and keep fasts.

These are good;

But it is something different from these, by which the Beloved

is seen.

But it was impossible for the priests to tolerate him in any way, as his intellectual beliefs were quite contrary to their own. How could the orthodox priest bear with a man who said : "Satan is the only lover, all others are prattlers"? Of course they did not exactly treat him as Shelley, the author of *Prometheus*, in England was treated; that was because, in the East, the ascetic, though hated by the religionist and the tyrant, commands a very wide following.

Nur Mahomed was angered by the growing strength of Shah Latif. Once he devised a plan for his undoing. He invited Shah Latif to his palace for dinner. "The Sufi bears no

malice to any"; as Latif says, "He helps those that are cruel to him." Latif accepted the invitation and was cordially received and royally entertained. After a short time Nur Mahomed left his guest alone in the chamber. Latif was prepared for anything. Very soon, a bevy of dancing girls, beautiful and fascinating, glided into the room; and Latif found himself in a charmed circle. Nur Mahomed had doubted the ascetic spirit of Latif, and by this means he hoped to entangle him in his web, placing witnesses behind, who would report the hypocrisy of Latif. But Latif was made of stronger material. The girls did their

best to tempt him but the Sufi remained firm as a rock, and they found their attempts hopeless. Nur Mahomed entered soon and smilingly looked at Latif. Latif replied in verse :

The tangle of illusion ensnares not the Yogis;

No possessions can ever charm them;

Even if the dancing girls lure,

The Yogis will pass on safe.

Nur Mahomed was naturally ashamed of himself and saw that the man before him was not a counterfeit but a true coin.

LATIF'S ASCETICISM

Latif was very soft-hearted, even as a boy. It is said that his companions used to go out shooting with bows and arrows; and while others killed the poor innocent birds, Latif merely shot at stones. This soft-heartedness is the chief cause of the Sufis' simple diet, etc. Latif and many other Sufis of Sind did not touch meat, though many modern Sufis lack that kind of discipline. He did not touch wine. His life was an ideal one. Like the ancient Sufis he used to keep *chaliah*, a forty days' fast, eating only a single date during the twenty-four hours with a sip of water, most of the time being passed in contemplation. All this discipline was intended to overcome the flesh, *nafs*. The Sufi is in no sense a Puritan, and Latif was not an exception. The man who said :

Men are angry at vice,

God is angry with me at virtue,

could never have been a Puritan. In fact, unconventional thinking and living bring many troubles on the Sufis, as, for instance, the attachment of the Sufi to music. He clings to it like a vice. Music is the one luxury he enjoys in his existence; and Latif was himself a musician, a master-singer.

About two centuries have passed away, and still every Friday night, man from various places go to the shrine of Latif to hear the hereditary singers of Latif's songs, the thrilling *kafis*. The kafi is a special form of the Sindhi song. A large number of people sit on a carpet or a thin mat, but often on the bare ground, round a group of singers with single wire *tambooras* in their hands, some with earthen jars before them, drawing with brisk, dft hands ringing tones from these otherwise dull vessels. The kafi many times consists of a few sentences, but a kafi of three or four lines sometimes lasts for some hours.

The kafi is an institution in itself in which many people take part. After every line, a regular dialogue in singing ensues. One man gives a *dohira*, a verse from the thousands of verses, that Latif wrote; then another responds, replies in return; so on and on it goes and supplies a feast for the intellect as well as for the heart. Many are the subtleties both of love and deep thought with which this dialogue is abundantly filled. The beauty does not lie merely in

the voice and the tune, but in the selection of the appropriate verse. And thus the flow of wine continues, hours fly past, and time exists not. Latif was music mad ! It is the custom still with dancing girls in Sind and other places to consider it a part of their religious duty to go to the shrine of all known fakirs and present their *mujra*, song gifts. The orthodox Muslim considers music generally *haram*, prohibited, but the Sufi does not listen to this mandate. What is life for him without song ? It is perfectly true that an undisciplined indulgence is the cause of lax morals and, no doubt, many time corruption eats up the purity that the old Sufis demanded; but that is what happens to every good institution.

THE WORSHIP OF BEAUTY

Latif was a worshipper of beauty in sound as well as form. Beauty-worship is one of the essentials of a Sufi's creed. In fact the Sufi is the staunch upholder of the doctrine that Diotema expounded at Plato's Banquet. Just as Diotema warned Socrates the pitfalls of beauty-worship, so did Latif warn the seeker of Beauty. The love of Beauty is of two kinds-love material, that is *Ishk Mijazi*, and Love real, *Ishk Haquiki*. The Sufi is asked first to concentrate on any beautiful person, male or female, boy or girl. A few years back there lived a Sufi (whom I have seen), a tall man with a noble form. He was bare-headed, and wore a saffron robe. His name was Bahram. Bahram was a beauty-worshipper, but a quiet one. At the time of the arrival of trains, in cold and heat, Bahram was invariably to be seen at the stations, standing in a corner, watching and watching, saying nothing, merely looking at beautiful faces; and then he would go away as quietly as he came. The Sufi is asked to worship the Beautiful One with utter reverence and from far. There are no doubt examples of Sufis who tried this method and never went wrong; but there are also instances where they do go wrong. It is however not essential to try this beauty-worship on beautiful persons; many great Sufis have asked the aspirants to worship the *Mushid*, the teacher, who is the ideal of greatness and beauty. Latif gives valuable instructions. He says that *mijaz*, the love of the form in the above-mentioned way, is a really dangerous method, and with great care is it to be taken up.

See not with these the eyes of flesh :

The eyes never realised the Beloved, by seeing;

They who closed both the eyes, they saw the Beloved.

Take care oh brother !

These fleshly eyes will entangle thee some day,

Give not therefore up the bird of reality.

The worshipper of the real Beauty longs not for any particular form, he se Beloved everywhere. In fact attachment to a single form is passion, while attachment to all forms and the discerning of Beauty in all forms is compassion.

Latif said:

The Beauty is absolute, there is neither being not non-being. The Beauty of the Beloved is beyond all seeing.

This great man was himself beautiful. It is strange to find that, while he lived in barren surroundings, utterly and severely austere, still in his mind he was very rich, as I shall presently try to show. This love of Beauty developed in him great pity and love, and contact with him changed the lives of many people, even of those that are called sinners. In his presence they felt the desire for the pure and holy in life.

GULAN, THE DANCING GIRL

Gulan was an extremely beautiful dancing girl. She came to offer her gift of song before Latif to whom many came with such gifts. She was a famous singer, and she sang before Latif with real fervour of heart. The holy man was much pleased, and asked Gulan what she desired. "Oh holy man !" said the girl with great humility: "Bless me, that I may be free from this kind of life and be the wife of a good man." The compassionate Latif blessed her, and the girl afterwards married the ruler of Sind. Ghulam Shah Kalhora who proved himself to be a good king was her son. This story illustrates the real nature of the Sufi, who shrinks not from contact with people who are called sinners. Latif was the true follower of the great Master, who said : "He that is without sin amongst you, let him cast the first stone at her." It is this complete identification of the saint with the sinner, with all that is in Nature, that lifts the Sufi into ecstasy. Latif sang :

The birds, the beasts, and the ants,

Mistake them not as another's voice,

By the Beloved, all this no se is His.

Oh Fakir ! look at these flowers,

Think not they are many,

It is one.

This great poet of Sind passed away at a ripe age, leaving the fragrance of a holy life behind, a true man dear alike to the hearts of Sindhis, Muslims and Hindus.

ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Many anecdotes are given about Latif. One day, it is said, he was meditating, rosary in hand, in a grove of trees by the village well, when at dusk two girls came to fill their water vessels. After they had filled them, they fell to gossiping; Latif had awakened by this time from his meditation. One girl said to the other : "Have you met your sweetheart ?" "A dozen times," replied the other; "how many times have you met yours ?" The former replied : "Oh sister, does one keep account of meetings with one's sweetheart ?" The two girls went away, merrily laughing, gracefully balancing the jars

on their little heads. Shah Latif had heard the latter part of their dialogue. "Ah," he soliloquised, "the simple woman with a simple villager for lover is so full of him that she keeps no accounts, while I, a lover of the most Beloved One, am here counting the beads of my rosary." He gave up the use of the rosary after this. So he sang:

Body their rosary,

Mind their beads,

Their heart is the harp,

The threads of longing sing in utter unity.

The One, the only One, is the song within,

They whose sleep is prayer

Wake even in sleep.

THE GOATS

Once the poet was standing on the bank of a canal. Some goats came running to the canal to slake their thirst. Oh, how they longed for water ! It appeared to them as if it were the sweetest thing on earth. They fully appeased their thirst, and behold what they did ! Now that their thirst was over, they began to soil the water with dirt. "AH," said Latif, "will my state be the same ? I, who seek for the Beloved, will my value for him disappear after I have met him ?"

My I seek and ever seek,

But may I never meet.

The Sufi find a subtle joy even in separation, for it keeps the memory of the Supreme ever fresh.

THE LAKE AND THE SWANS

Latif was a keen observer and his descriptions are very interesting. He loved to roam on the silent hills, to sail on the roaring waters, to be buried in the deep quiet of the forests, and to enjoy the sweet breezes of the lakes. He describes the scenes on the lakes in his own mystical way. Birds of beautiful colours and lotuses on the lake, with humming bees round them, form the objects of his study; but his observations refer invariably to some phase or the other of his great search after the Beloved. He loves the humming of the black Bhanwar that buries itself in the fragrant petals of the lotus, and Latif ponders :

The Lotus' roots in the bottom lie

The Bhanwar is a denizen of the skies,

Glory to the love that them unites.

Among the birds that gather at the lake, sometimes comes the great white one that belongs to the family of swans that are said to live on the lake Mansrover in the high Himalayas. It is a bird beloved

of the old Rishis. And the Sufi holds it in high reverence, as tradition speaks of its feeding on pearls and not on worms and fishes, as other birds of the lake do. Latif is disgusted with the birds that flutter on the surface of the lake and hunt for fish. These birds spoil the water by their evil habits. But the swan flutters not on the surface, it dives deep and catches at the pearls that lie at the bottom. Thus says Latif to himself :

Oh bird, why not dive deep for the pearl !

Oh why on the surface flutter !

Deep within the deep is the abode of the swan,

He fixes his eyes in the deep.

In the aether of the heart, which Latif calls *Akas*, must the Sufi seek for the pearl of reality, with the mind fixed in concentration.

Oh bird ! keep not company with the birds that peck at

putrid things,

The white ones love the waters white.

Ah ! If thou wert to look with love at the swans, but once,

Never wouldst thou again live with the other birds.

Says Latif therefore :

Give up the black

Long for the white

Drink of the white that ye may be established in white purity.

Thus has always sung the mystic of all ages.

Buy terms divine, selling hours of dross; within be fed. -

SHAKESPEARE

THE SEA

The call of the sea has come to the Sufi too. Shah Latif seems to have witnessed many phenomena on the sea. He speaks of tradesmen that went from Sind to Ceylon (Lanka), specially in quest of pearls, and suffered the storms and dangers of the sea. Perhaps he himself went on such stormy voyages and saw how divers plunged deep and brought up pearls. He stands enraptured before the sea :

Where there is the roaring of the sea, where the depths are
fathomless.

And again :

Worship thou the sea, where unmeasured water flows, where
pearls abound;

Get but a tiny one, oh worshipper, brimful wilt thou be.

In order that you should get in bargain pearls,

Fill not your boat "with things that rot".

Fill it, he says, "with cardamon, amber and such lasting stuff". But "if thy stuff is only salt, expect not musk in return". "Beware ! this is the way you will lose all your capital,

much less have gain." He imagines himself as a frail vessel, on the raging sea, with holes in the bottom and heavily laden with trivialities.

Captain, steer my boat aright,

This frail bark can no buffet bear,

I have stuffed it with frailties,

And they are countless too,

Bear it safe from whirling pools,

Ah ! may my vessel suffer no harm,

May no dashing waves strike my bark.

Latif says, those that "fill their boats with humility, they receive in return pearls of knowledge," and the master boatman, the *noble aristocrat*, leads them safe across the sea.

Lofty sails and masts anew, with oars of ivory.

A NEEDLE

Latif has remarked even the little things that escape the attention of many. He rhapsodises on the greatness of the needle.

A needle to me is more than kingdoms worth,

It clothes all the naked of the world,

Itself alone it naked keeps.

The need of service and sacrifice is also beautifully brought out; and this marvel of mystics proclaims in essence :

They soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its ripe golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows. - The Voice of the Silence.

THE MOON

Latif compares the moon with the beauty of the Beloved, and in the comparison the poor moon often suffers grievously at the hands of the poet. It is only at times that the poet speaks a word in its favour, and that when he sends it on an errand to the Beloved; but, otherwise, the moon only reminds him of the splendour of the sun.

Moon ! even with thy blandishments of the full fourteenth, thou may'st try in amny ways,
not a moment wilt thou compare well with my Beloved.

Thou art bright by night,

But the Beloved is ever bright,

Moon ! It is the truth I speak,

Be pleased or displeased as thou may'st,

Two eyes thou hast, and third the nose,

But thou hast not the Beloved's brow.

THE MOTH AND THE LIGHT

Callest thou self a moth !

Then turn not back at the sight of fire,

Enter into the light of the Supreme,

And be thou the illuminated.

Ask of the mont ! what it is to burn,

They hurl themselves in fire

The flames of love have pierced their lives

Callest thou self a moth !

Come, put out this fire,

Fire has burnt many,

Burn thou this fire,

In the above poem, Latif speaks of the high stage when the seeker is not caught up by the
ecstasy, but absorbs it into his own being; in fact it is nowhere outside him but is in him.

EYES RUBY-RED

What have these eyes seen ?

Gone utterly mad in the heart !
The touch of His beauty has turned them ruby-red.
Ah ! Latif says,
Now will they never sleep in rest.

POOR EYES

Now they burn as in a furnace,
And how can I control them ?
They saw the Beloved during sleep,
They did not wait to consult me,
And created troubles for themselves,
They are now fixed in utter annihilation
And the poor heart now breaks with pain !

BUT REJOICE

Rejoice ! Rejoice !
Ecstasy is with the eyes,
There is no ecstasy without eyes,
They have purchased joy
And carry it with themselves,
This state is beyond words,
Even if these eyes at a villain look,
They see him as the Beloved !

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

AT TIMES

At times He closes the latch,
At times the Beloved's doors open wide,
At times I come, no admittance find,
At times He calls, and leads me in,
At times I for a whisper long,
At times He wears me in His heart,
Such is my Beloved.

ECHO AND THE VOICE

Echo is the same voice
Only if thou knowest the twist of the sound,
Before even they were one;
In hearing only they seem as two.

THE PALACE

The palace is one, windows myriad,
Look where I may, the Lord is before me.
Myriad are thy bodies, myriads on myriads,
Life is one in every being, forms look many, apart.
Oh love, how can I speak of thy ways !

SPRING

Spring has come; pearl flowers their buttons disclose,
Sweet amber scents all around, bees hum.
I have met the Beloved, pains are over, all is happiness.
Spring has come, palms wear garlands round their necks,

Oh sister ! Rise and dress, happy spring has come.

Happy spring has come, hills exhale intoxicating airs,

Oh sister ! Rise and dress, happy spring has come.

THY HEART

Let thy heart be as a big, big tree;

Shake it, strike it , it will only scatter

Sheaves, bestow blossoms and fruits, and leaves.

Let fall the axe on it, it doth not cry nor make complaint;

It is no enemy of him who cuts it,

It harbours no ill-feeling, but provides with cool shade,

"Sissters !" says Latif, "Such hearts reach the Holy

Presence."

SACHAL

In the Native State of Khairpur, some distance from the Station Ranipur, is a village called Daraz. On the outskirts of the village is the mausoleum of Sachal. It is seen from a great distance, raising its head to the heavens. Near by is a jungle of low bushes that stretches for many miles. Excepting the distant railroad, there is not a vestige of civilisation as such. The mausoleum is a monument of art built by an old king of Khairpur who died long ago; it is the only solid construction, the relic of an old civilisation. Outside its compound is a very old, shabby and dilapidated house, in which resides the present guardian of the holy shrine; he is an old man of over ninety, with a classic face, short statured, keen-eyed, and has a benignant smile on his lips. The old man has never been out of his village. He was a young man when the English conquered Sind but did not take Khairpur, leaving it to the Muslim Talpur. Long afterwards, the jungle silence was disturbed by the screaming of the engine whistle on the railroad, about a couple of miles distant from Daraz. But still this hoary man, though he hears at times the screeching of the engine, has up to this time not seen its face. His life is a very interesting one, and he is the living witness of the olden times before British rule. There is no sign of British rule in Daraz except the dresses of the foolwers of the fakir, who are numerous and count among them some of the highest Indian Officials, Musilm and Hindu, who come during holidays. But all these visitors, of whatever position, come and live in small thatched cottages - many of them but a simple construction of low mud walls with a covering of dry grass and a roof mat. No luxury, no modern comforts, bare floors- at best

a faded carpet or a half-torn mat and the earthen vessel for water form the only furniture of the rectangular halls that accommodate any number of people on busy days. In spite of the poverty and utter lack of show the ancient man is one of the most generous-hearted men, and surprising tales of his liberality are on the lips of his devotees. Though possessed of extensive land given to his house by the rulers of Khairpur, this occupant of the Gadi who is called *Sakhi*, or "the generous," has been so free of hand, that he has had to pawn more than once the old carpet which adorns his "Court," and which he sends often to his guests ! The place where the fakir receives people is called the "Court," *katcheri*. In this court is sometimes a cot which forms the throne of the fakir, and on the floor sit, like so many courtiers, the attachees of the chief. Among them is the Khalif who is the manager of the affairs of the fakir. The court always provides excellent feasts of ancient Sufi music by singers with charming voices. The gift is hereditary, many of the singers being grandsons or near relatives of those that lived with Sachal, "the Intoxicated," when he himself sang these soulthrilling kafis for the first time.

It is, to say the least, a very interesting place; and one enjoys to the full the charming, simple life, free from all modern encumbrances. The old well in the centre of the space, ringed with cottages, never fails to give cool refreshing drinks and baths, and also supplies the sweetest of music when the age-old Indian wheel turns as it draws up water for men and for the beautiful little orchard that is in front of the house in which the Fakir lives. Thousands of men come from all over Sind to see the old *Sakhi*, who is supposed to be the master of miracles - which cannot be vouchsafed for. All that can be said is that the ancient man is very loving and his embrace is heart-pleasing - a pleasure he imparts to all, young and old, poor and rich.

It is a sight to see the worshippers in the shrine inside the mausoleum built over the grave of Sachal. The raised neck of Sachal's grave looks as if it were the head of a living man. The humble devotees stand, completely wrapt in the awe-inspiring influence, murmuring silent prayers before the shrine.

SACHAL'S BIRTH

In this old and holy place was born Sachal who is called "the Intoxicated," *Sarmust*, whose future fame Shah Latif is said to have prophesied. It is said that when Sachal was a child, the great poet passed through Daraz. The attractive boy was playing with other children. "Whose child is this little one," asked the sage. "Of the House of Daraz," was the reply. "Ah !" said Latif, "The vessel I have put on the fire : its lid will be removed by him."

Latif meant to say he would spread the doctrine far and wide. And that Sachal did. Latif is classical and deep, Sachal is more extensive. Latif dived into the deep ocean of wisdom for pearls. Sachal, like a bird, flew high in the heavens and caught the divine drops as they fell. The date of Sachal's birth is not exactly known. It is fixed between 1739 and 1757. If it is a fact that Latif saw him when young, then he must have been born before 1747, the year of Latif's death. Anyhow, this fixing of the date of birth is not of great

importance to the Sufi; neither would it have disturbed Sachal who had delivered this judgment about himself :

"I am born of none, I am brought up by none."

"How did you then come to be here ?"

"I left the Heavens and came to earth"

"But why ?"

"Ah, I could not be contained in Heaven's chair."

This little one was something so vast, that he outgrew even the space of Heaven and thus he came to be. "I have no father; no mother have I." "I have come of my own free will."

This mystic was a mystic from his childhood. His forefather,

Shahabuddin, came in the early days of the Arab invasion with Kassim, when he conquered Sind. Shahabuddin was the grandson of the Khalif Umar who was called Faruki, the one who delivering justice knew the difference between right and wrong, false and true. Kasim appointed Shahabuddin as Governor of Sehwan, then known as Shivasthan. Sachal was his descendant. Among his predecessors were two holy men, Abu Sayed and Badruddin. They were true ascetics; they gave up their princely wealth and rank and took to the jungle, where they lived on a jungle grain, called *duth*. When the great Sufi, Bhawaladin, came to Sind with Lal Shahbaz, he came on a visit to these royal ascetics and gave them the title of *Dothis*.

Asceticism was in the blood of Sachal. His original name was Abdul Wahab. His grandfather was Sahib Dino whose learning had earned for him the title of *Hafiz* - one who knows the Koran to the letter. The grandfather had two sons, Salahaldin the elder, and the younger Abdul Hak, the slave of truth. Mian Sahib Dino was one of his great and saintly ancestors, and his house enjoyed vast influence. He appointed his younger son, Abdul Hak, to the Gadi, and compensated his eldest son by making a prophecy that he would have, instead, a son who would be a great teacher. Sachal was the son of Sahib Dino.

Unlike other saints, Sachal is said to have been a scholar. And that he surely was, for his poetry shows that he was a past master in philosophy. His book *Diwan Ashkara*, in Persian, was brought out by Mir Ali Murad of Khairpur, who counted himself among the disciples of Sachal. That book is still preserved in the State Treasury, and at times a copy is available for anyone who is influential enough to get it. Sachal is said to have written very much more poetry than is to be found in the two present volumes. He sang in four different languages : Persian, Urdu-Punjabi, Siraiki (Baluchi akin to Pujabi) and pure Sindi. He knew Arabic well, as numerous quotations from Arabic literature are found in his poems. He, like Latif, interprets Islam in the Sufi way. Like Latif he too came under

the influence of the Hindu Sannyasis of the Advaita School of Shankara. There are some who go so far as to speak of Guru Gobindsingh, the great Sikh Guru, as his teacher. Sachal's songs do contain such Sikh references but that is because of his great tolerance for all spiritual teachers, and he minded not in the least to which religion they belonged. Some of his poems manifestly are on Sri Krishna and Hindu Yogis. One thing, however, is certain, that Sachal's contact with the Sikh Gurus was not insignificant, as Usuf, one of the disciples of Sachal, was called - possible by Sachal - Nanak Usuf. Nanak Usuf is known as a great saint and poet, and is said to have gone to Amritsar, the chief place of the Sikhs. All these are signs that speak eloquently of that remarkable movement of Unity. in which the great teachers, Nanak and Kabir, and these wonderful Sufis took a noble part, a part that entitled them to undying fame, and to the deathless gratitude of those that are engaged in the task of rebuilding this union.

Sachal as a youth drank deeply from the founts of Eastern wisdom both Aryan and Semitic, that is of the Arabian. The man who specifically initiated him into the path of mystery was, as told by himself, his own uncle, Abdul Haque, the holder of his forefather's Gadi. Abdul Haque seems to have been quite an extraordinary teacher, as Sachal says : "He showed me the path of heresy, (*kufir*), the road of denial that must precede the knowledge of truth." Indeed it would be a fascinating subject to analyse this phase of the training of the old Sufis. It is imagined nowadays that radicalism dates from the days of modern materialism; but the Sufi trod the bitter road of doubt and heresy hundreds of years ago, like his brother student of the Upanishads. Indeed, it does good to one's heart to see the sturdy intellectual fights that these simple men put up. Their method was more radical even than that of modern materialism; for not only did they not hesitate to tear out the prejudices of thought, but were equally drastic in their treatment of the feelings, the latter being the distinguishing feature which made it possible for them to develop intuition or direct knowledge. Intuition is not to be achieved by mere intellectual effort alone; though no doubt the honest intellectualist is a thousand times superior to the believer who understands nothing, but takes everything for granted.

Sachal, like his teachers, trod the same path of "hearesy". It seems, the rulers in the time of Sachal were not such bigots as the Kalhoras of Nur Mahomed's type, otherwise no doubt Sachal would have paid for his heresy with his head, as did Inayet of Sind and as did Mansur, the idolised hero of Sachal. Latif was also a radical but Sachal seems to have trodden more severely on the toes of the priests ! One cannot gather many details of his life, except that he was a very handsome man with long hair, given to the ascetic life from his boyhood; and that he did not wish to marry, but that his uncle and teacher, Khwaja Abdul Haque, pressed him to marry his daughter. Sachal had no child.

THE STORY OF THE MIRACLE

A strange story is told about him. It is said that an Amil gentleman of Hyderabad, Sind, a Hindu official in the Khairpur State, somehow found himself in trouble with the Government. The Amils of Hyderabad as well as other Amils of Sind have always been lovers of the Sufis; and the Sufis also seem to have had regard for their devotion and intellectual acumen. The relatives of this man were favourites of the teacher, Abdul

Haque, who had great influence with the Government. The parents approached Abdul Haque for the release of the son. Abdul Haque entrusted the mission to young Sachal; gave him the cap of authority and told him: "The dogs have captured the little falcon, release him from their teeth." Sachal marched out to fulfil his mission. He came to the Court of the Ruler, the father of Ali Murad Khan. He was received well and he gave his message. The officials in charge of the business did not seem inclined to release the Amil, still they were very respectful to

Sachal and conducted him to see the various departments of the treasury, and specially the armoury. Sachal knew that this was a polite way of refusing the release. When they were describing the various weapons to Sachal, he asked them about the use of a special weapon that he was handling. "It is a weapon to hunt the lion with," they replied. It is said that, as they looked into the face of Sachal while giving this reply, they saw something which terrified them out of their wits. Suddenly the face of the Sufi was transformed into the face of a lion, and they desired to flee. But after a moment the same Sachal stood before them, saying with a meaning smile, "You hunt lions with this weapon !" The officials after this found it impossible to refuse the release of the Amil, and so the "little falcon was freed from the grasp of the dogs".

One cannot be dogmatic about the truth of the phenomenon; but it appears that, out of the many extravagant and exaggerated miracles described by the believers, this one does not appear to be impossible of belief. If hypnotism is possible to a superficial concentrator, why not to a master mystic, who no doubt possessed marvellous power ? Only it is necessary to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, as after all a so-called miracle is but the manipulation of forces of nature not known ordinarily. For instance, to say that when Shams Tabrez was being tortured the sun came down in Multan is absurd. It may be possible for a manipulator of psychic forces to concentrate the diffused rays of the sun to a point and thus produce more heat, but it is not given to a miracle-worker to displace the sun or rock the moon. Fortunately, great Sufi teachers have not attached any value to miracles, as Sachal says, "Give not thine eye to miracles." No doubt they possess these powers and make occasional use of them whenever necessary, but they do not consider them to be of spiritual value.

An incident is described as taking place at Daraz, where the present Khalif provides lots of imaginable and unimaginable tales which must always be taken with a grain of salt. The story goes that to one of these Sufi teachers, possibly Sachal himself, came one day a man who began to describe a miracle that was being performed by another fakir in the neighbourhood. He was described as sitting high above the canal in mid-air, without any support below. The speaker thought that the Sufi would be surprised. But Sachal calmly said, "These are the blandishments of a street-girl". The Sufis consider such phenomena to be merely "psychic tricks," useful in a way, but containing nothing of spirituality. Gravitation is as much a miracle as levitation. There are numerous tales given of certain miracles, said to have been performed by these Sufis; the multiplying of the loaves and the never emptying bottle are instances always in point .

Sachal lived to the good old age of ninety; his life was as austere as that of Latif. He took no meat, touched no wine, except the wine of music about which he was mad. It is said that all the

instruments of music would be kept ready and, when the Fakir gave sign, the accompanists would strike the notes and Sachal begin to sing. He often would be thrown into such wild ecstasies, that his long hair would stand erect. He was a great lover and a great singer. He also travelled into the north of Sind, where his poetry is as popular as Latif's in the south. It is said he took often only black pepper with curds and nothing else. Simple barley was his diet for a long time. Thus lived this other great man of Sind, who kept to the rule of being fed within, and "without be rich no more". They let the body pine in order to increase the store of the soul. With all their ascetic habits, they did not however torture their bodies; only in the beginning was the body to be disciplined, but otherwise Sachal said : "This body is the palace of the Beloved in which are sweet gardens, abounding with fragrant flowers".

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE PRIESTS

The ruler of Khairpur being under the influence of Sachal's House Sachal was not troubled by him; on the contrary he had disciples from the royal family. Mir Ali Murad Khan, the heir to the throne, was his avowed disciple. He was very young when Sachal lived but, even so, he accepted him as his spiritual teacher. One day the king with his son Ali Murad came to offer their respects to Sachal. They saw Sachal bathing at the well, his body wet and covered with *mit* (earth). The father stood off, but the son so loved the saint that he cared not about his royal clothes, but ran and fell at his feet, and the great man blessed him. Sachal was, however, greatly hated by the Makhdums of Halla, who were the hereditary religious guides of a large number of followers; some of their forefathers had been famous ascetics, but later followers lost touch with realities, took to the good things of the world and, being also large landholders, considered themselves as masters of the land. The Makhdums exist even now and are very rich and influential. In the days of Sachal, and even later, they favoured and laboured for the conversion of Hindus and Muslims. The ideals of the House of Sachal were quite opposed to this policy; and, when the asceticism of Sachal began to draw people like moths to the candle, the then Makhdums naturally disliked the Fakir of Daraz.

However, Sachal did not care but said :

This puritanical and professional spirituality is all a fraud. This company of tyrants knows nothing of love.

The poetry of Sachal contains many invectives and bitter attacks on the priests. Sachal is less restrained than Latif and cuts many jokes at their expense. He did not discard the rules of the orthodox discipline in the matter of prayers and fasts, but he attached no unnecessary importance to them and was openly inimical to outside religion.

I believe not in the outer religion,

I live ever in love.

Say Amen ! when love comes to you

Love is neither with the infidels nor with the faithful.

Look at the wonder of love.

It obliterates all religions. From Alif came Adam, after a great deal of noise; he became Hindu and he became Muslim. Mistake not ! Proclaim this ! Be thou a rose, and let them kill you as they killed Mansur. Thy first duty is to give up faith, unfaith, Islam and all religions. The lover ought never to entangle himself in religions. As long as these towers, temples and musjids be not turned into deserts so long the path of the Master can never be attained.

Again and again he emphasises this, "neither a Muslim nor a Hindu". The priests could not tolerate this, but Sachal poured ridicule upon them and caricatured them. "Look at these priests ! How sanctimoniously they read lengthy prayers merely to fill their stomachs. See how these gentlemen, with big staffs in hand, gather at the feasts; how they sit fixedly intent on dishes and fill themselves full. Still they say, 'Lo ! we eat not,' while they swallow tons." Sachal says truly, clearly, that "these unclean ones wander wide." "For a trifle of bread they cry their prayers, with uncomely faces, with ugly beards, these raw ones read blessings ! To the world they boast they keep fasts, in reality they are great eaters." Sachal says this is not the path of love : different are its tales.

MANSUR

Mansur gave up his life because he refused to conceal truth; therefore Mansur is the ideal of the Sufi.

Sachal says :

Brave men speak truth

Let others like or not;

For the talk of false friendship we care not.

God Himself created truth

Mansur proclaimed truth and was sent to the gallows;

Let others bear such loads of love or not.

And again :

The tale of the Lord is true,
His lovers will die, but make it never untrue
My soul is full of joy !
May my God hear my whispers,
Let others hear or not

Such great men, standard-bearers of truth, have always met the cross; knowing the dangers of the road, still they go on. Why ? Sachal says : "Mansur could not help it. He was full of love, inebriated. Had he not given up his life, it would have only proved his love was imperfect."

BULBUL

One day I walked into a street. A strange sight met my eyes. A poor bulbul was in children's hands, its feathers tied fast with thread. It struggled hard, Moaned and wailed. I came near and accosted him : "Oh bulbul, speak ! Why didst thou leave wondrous gardens full of roses, for such a place as this ?"

The bulbul laughed and again he laughed, and thus he made reply, " Thou knowest it not !"

He that proclaimed the truth of love has ever met the cross.

This body and this life is for the Beloved,

Sachal says, and my very being !

Sachal's poetry is full of such songs in which he presents the ideal of the cross in forceful language. Truly has the heart of the bulbul, mystic, ever been crushed by unknowing men who are as ignorant children. In the first stages the mystic moans, "My father, my father, why hast thou left me," as moaned the bulbul in the children's hands. But still the mystic prefers the cross, for he knows in his heart that it is the only path to love. "Whom I best love, I cross." (Shakespeare).

THE ROAD OF DISGRACE

Oh lover ! never do a thing that gains thee praise

.....

Let the world hurl reproaches,

Earn disgrace for love's sake,
Other undertakings are useless.
Oh friend ! this is the only way to learn the secrets of the path;
Follow not the road of another, however virtuous he may be.
Rend the veil over thee,
Searcher expose thy being - Sachal.
Sachal was divinely mad.

HERESY OF THE TAVERN

Kazi burn thy books.
The Master has instructe me : "Know thyself," He said.
He taught me the path of heresy.
Some go to Kaaba, others go to Kibla,
All these things are mere pretexts.
Why should I run to Kaaba,
When my master in tavern dwells ?
Be thou divinely mad,
Drink deep the wine of madness.

ALL IS HE

The wine immortal made Sachal see the face of the Beloved
everywhere; and he too was a true worshipper of beauty. It is said something that if, when
ill, he saw a pretty face and heard a sweet voice, he would get up from his bed and be in
raptures. "The Beloved is come, the Beautiful One is come." Heaven knows the nature of
the ecstasy in which these men lose their being and sing : "When the reality is manifest
this claimant disappears." The claimant is the individuality, which disappears when the
vision of the Universal is seen. He says :

When the rider on the horse vanishes, what is the state of the horse ? The horse will run and run mad, so, oh aspirants ! after "individuality," the rider, disappears, ecstasy comes.

Sachal further describes this ecstasy as "the coming in of the sea into the pitcher". During this ecstasy, says Sachal, man is transformed and says, "I am God," as Mansur did. "Oh friends, I enter into this ecstasy only at times, then I do not speak but the Beloved speaks."

Oh Sachal ! if you understand the mystery rightly, this body and this soul, all is the Beloved. In the city, in the market and in the shop His being is manifest, I swear by Allah, He Himself has revealed Himself. He can never be hid, the whole world is He. Oh Thou that art everywhere. Thou putttest on myriad appearances ! Somewhere Thou namest Thyself Hanuman, somewhere the ten-headed Ravana; at some places Thou art a decrepit old man, at other places Thou babblest as a child. Ah me ! this is all the beauty of the Beloved. To see *another* is the only crime. The body is also He. Adam is also He. Adam is His name, why name Him as Allah ! These my eyes have seen a wonder. In the cloud they have seen the light of the sun !

OPEN THINE EYES

Lover ! wert thou to open thine eyes and see,

The Beloved is all.

Treacher of the path, thou wouldst know this garden of beauty,

Why bow to others ? Thou art the chief.

Make thyself a bulbul first; in each heart a garden see.

Beloved is all from head to foot;

Be thou only sick of "thee".

THE QUESTIONING

Sachal is a great questioner, one who questions himself, communes with himself, and he often puts the results of his examination and cross-examination in strange similes.

A MAN AND HIS COAT

A man wears a coat, does he name himself a coat ? No. He calls himself by the name he bears. The monarch sits in his palace, speaking of divine things. Is it even said, it is the palace that speaks?

Oh ! The play of the Artist is wonderful. He alone knows the full secret. I from the master learnt, "The sound and the echo are one". "Oh Sachal ! Sunshine is never apart from sun."

WHERE IS SACHAL ?

Thou callest thyself Sachal, tell me where thou art ?

Why mislead thyself knowingly ?

What is this, but head, foot and fingers?

Then why give another name ?

Thou wert never created,

Thou hast never come,

This name is not. Sachal from the beginning thou art not.

WHAT AM I ?

What am I ? Sisters ! Oh what am I ?

I am something, I know not what.

At times I think myself a marionette,

Again at times the thread that moves the kite.

Or am I a spinning ball that wheels and sounds in the hand of the friend ?

Or am I a palace in which the Emperor sits and speaks of diverse tales ?

Is it I, the horse whom the rider rides ?

Maybe, I am a wave of the sea that floods the space.

Perhaps I am the henna flower that has red inside !

Or am I the fountain filled by the clouds ?

Or am I the reflection of the sun in the pool ?

Is the reflection itself the resplendent light?

Perhaps it is I, the reflection of Reality, that which is beyond speech; it maybe even that I am not !

Sachal says he learnt it from the Master,

"There is nothing but He, He always is."

MARIONETTES

What wonders the Beloved displays through the marionette,

Ah what wondrous tales !

In His hand lies the hidden thread,

He makes it manoeuvre in many ways.

The scene-maker witnesses his own scenes.

To some marionettes he gives the ascetic's robe:

To some he gives rich coloured shawls.

He utters many notes of music sweet

And blends them all in one symphony.

They could not dance, but for the puller.

Their dance doth never cease.

To one marionette he gave the name Sachal,

Who dances rapt in song with the clapping of the hands !

ILLUSION

All is illusion. The world is a mere make-believe.

The Universe is but a moment.

Sachal ! It is the play of the Actor.

THE TWO HOUSES

What a pity! What a pity !

I am sorry indeed.

What was I there,

And what am I here ?

A king I was there indeed,

I know not, how here I became a slave;

In that country I was all wise,

Here I am named a fool.

Alas! The waves hid the sea, and raging storms did blow,

Thus I earned shocks of pain.

Ah I see ! I left one house to come to another;

But the wave in the sea rebecomes the sea.

This poor Sachal in every moment finds a new surprise.

HERE AND THERE

Who was I there,

What am I here ?

There I had another name,

Here I am called differently.

I was not to come here

But some desire carried me away.

There I was in the Beloved's State,

Here I came to be a lover.

There it was all peace, neither noise nor trouble,

Here I am immersed in anxious thought.

Ah Sachal ! why misconceive ?

All is Truth, only let go this "I".

In these two poems "The Two Houses" and "Here and There" Sachal seems to be describing the state of the soul before it comes to birth, comparing it with the present miserable stage. "There" is the land of light, where the waters of life are in a state of homogeneity and the atmosphere is full of peace, the soul is a king dressed in the resplendent robes of "Hiranyagarbha" in the Heaven world. But behold ! a sudden wave of desire seizes it again, and the waters are agitated. The wheel of desire creates storms, the light of knowledge becomes dull and darkness abounds, so the poor soul comes to a birth; but the memory of the wondrous state at times inspires him. The mystic, as he progresses on the Path, intuitively catches

these glowing visions and consoles himself, when in distress, with the certain hope that he will go back to his native state, as the wave that rises in the sea rebecomes the sea.

THOU ART NOT A SLAVE

Think not thyself a slave,

Thou art the Lord of the land

In slavery there is no safety

Thou thyself by thyself in beauty,

Thou art the all-knowing He

Why cry Allah ! Allah!

Know thou art Allah

Says Sachal, o this there is not a whit of doubt

THOU ART MATCHLESS

Misconceive not ! Thou art not man,

Thou art the bulbul that warbles in the garden hid.

The angels bowed themselves in reverence to thee,

Even thy dust was valued high

Who makes this Duldul(the horse of Hassan) move but His divine Majesty ?

Thou art Ahad - the Infinite

Why call thyself Abad-the slave ?

Sachal speaks the simple truth,

There is none like thee.

HE WAS WITH ME

He for Whom I sought the readers of the stars,

Behold ! He was with me.

He for Whom I sought the Oracles,

He was with me

He for Whome I ran on many roads

He was with me

He is not a guest, but the Dear One is always with me:

None is so near as He.

He for Whom I passed sleepless nights,

He was with me

I looked for Him here, I looked for Him there,

But looked not for Him in my own being

He for Whom I shed tears of separation,

He was with me.

I looked for Him here, I looked for hime there,

But looked not for Him in my own being.

He for Whom I shed tears of separation

He was with me

Oh Sachal ! Seek not far, know thyself

He for Whom I was gathering presents

He was with me.

THE WONDER STATE

Listen ! I speak of the secret,

It was a Wonder-State

There was no creation, nor was there a human shape

I was immersed in a Wonder, deep, lifeless and bodiless

The waves were also with me

It was all a dashing of the light, non being was not in sight;

Nor was non-being contained in breath

He Himself loved Himself

Spirit only was (The hint in the Holy Book, "I am")

Neither this, nor that,

Neither prayer nor contemplation

Neither mind nor life

Neither pleasure nor pain;

It was all Wonder, It was all Truth, It was all Peace.

Oh Sachal! This is the Holy Secret.

THE CANDLE AND THE SUN

None lighted the candle to see the sun,

All light is of the sun

They understood this and saw the sun

Many and the one are the same, as drops are of the rain

The Master thus spake through him called Sachal.

THIS AND THAT

Believe and act as I say

Be "That," thou shalt have the wine

In "This" is death

In "That" thou shalt find life eternal,

The "Thou" that will remain

Thou wilt be free from decay

Leave speech, leave body, listen with the heart

In the Assembly wilt thou merit win and be proved true

When thou givest up thy "Thee".

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Islam in Sind has long been popularised and sustained by the sufi saints or pirs who fill the province's history and whose shrines still dominate the Sindhi countryside. These religious personalities have acted as "hinges" or "mediators" between God and Man. Supreme and sublime, they have presented models of perfect behaviour to successive generations of ordinary Sindhis. The Sind region encompasses the lower Indus valley and a part of the Thar desert in southern Pakistan. This desolate country with a fearful reputation is one of the birthplaces of civilization and a center for the invention of agriculture. As we discover places of worship and shrines where one can still see the mark of the prime post-hegira mystics, we search for Sorab Fakir, the red bearded cantor. This region is where the people still worship the great Sufi poet Shah Abdul Lateef, who expressed so well the spirit of the human soul. Here, a loving woman is a symbol of the soul, restlessly sea Reformulation does not mean that Sufism will compromise its challenge to a stubbornly materialistic society. It is and will remain a critic of "worldliness" by which it is meant everything that causes us to be forgetful of the Divine reality. It is and must be a way out of the labyrinth of a secular, commercial culture.