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PAIN AND GRACE

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A study of Two Mystical Writers
of Eighteenth-Century Muslim India

BY

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ABBREVIATIONS

In order to facilitate the printing we have avoided the diacritical marks in proper mes; they appear only in the indices in full scientific transcription. The footnotes, o, have been reduced as much as possible. Instead, the main works of Mir Dard and ah Abdul Latif are mentioned in abbreviations in the text. Books by and about Dard : quoted as follows:

ʿIlm ul-kitāb, Delhi 1310 h/1892-3.
Nāla-yi Dard
Ah-i sard } Bhopal 1310 h/1892-3.
Dard-i dil
Shamʿ-i maḥfil
Urdu Dīwān, ed. Khalil ur-Rahman Daʾudi, Lahore 1961.
Dīwān-i fārsī, Delhi 1309/1891-2.
A. *Nāla-yi ʿAndalīb*, Bhopal 1308/1890-1, 2 vols.
Nāṣir Nadhīr Firāq, *Maikhana-yi Dard*, Delhi 1344/1925.

The titles of the thirty *Surs* (chapters) in *Shāh jō Risālō*, ed. Kalyan Adwani, ›mbay, 1957, are abbreviated from the list given on pp. 154 ff.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INDIAN SCENE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the tides of history, the eighteenth century is usually considered to be the time of lowest ebb for the Islamic peoples between the Balkans and Bengal. Almost no trace of the past glory of the Islamic Empires was visible any longer; the political scene was ruled by internecine wars on the one hand, by the strong encroachment of European colonial powers upon the Islamic lands on the other hand, and in the cultural field the dusty veil of stagnation seemed to cover everything, not allowing of new enterprises for redirecting the spiritual energy of the Muslims.

Contrary to this deplorable condition of the Islamic East the historian sees the glory of Europe who had gained her stand in world history and was just passing through the Age of Reason, and through political and economical developments which were to culminate, eventually, in the French Revolution and in the independence of North America. It was a time of highest cultural activity in literature, philosophy and music, to mention only the most important fields, a time in which the borders of an outlook centering on Christian Europe opened and the East was, for the first time, considered worthy of an objective study.

The general political and social climate in Western Europe brought forth a new world-consciousness, but also an economic and political trend to expansion. It was only this latter aspect of 18th century Europe with which the Muslim countries were confronted. These countries, however, went through an age of stagnation and wars. That holds true for the Ottoman Empire with its Arabic provinces and Iran, for North Africa and Central Asia.

India herself, once the marvel of the world, was shaken by constant wars between the weak Muslim rulers and the Mahrattas and Sikhs as well as their Muslim neighbors from Iran and Afghanistan. Thus, the British East India company was able to slowly extend its rule over larger parts of the Subcontinent after the successful battle of Plassey in 1757. The Portuguese and French tried to defend their positions in Southern India where the Muslim rulers of the Deccan fought partly with them, partly against them.

It was, indeed, the 'twilight of the Mughals.' Still, 'Agra and Lahore of Great Moghul,' which, as Milton says, were shown at the beginning of creation to the wonder-stricken Adam, kept some of their old charm. But Delhi, the capital of Muslim India since 1200, was nearly destroyed under the continuous blows of fate. When Mir Dard, in his poetry and prose, often speaks of the 'rose garden of manifestation of Divine power,' one should not forget that in Persian poetical language the red rose is connected not only with the idea of happiness or joy and love, but likewise with blood and wounds.

India had been under Muslim rule since the early Middle Ages: the Arabs conquered Sind, the southern part of present day Pakistan, in 711, and this province never ceased to be a center of Islamic studies and a seat of Islamic mysticism. From the year 1000 onward, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, descending 17 times from the Afghan Hills, conquered the northwestern part of the Subcontinent; thus, Lahore was to become an important center of Persian culture. The borders of the Muslim provinces slowly extended to the South and the East, and in about 1200, Delhi—with the magnificent building of the Qutb Minar—became the capital of the Muslim rulers, who from there, soon extended their influence to East Bengal and the Deccan. The Deccan, the Muslim kingdoms of Bijapur and Gujrat were independent for a long time, which resulted in special developments of Islamic culture and literature in the South.

The Mughal rule, which began in 1526 with Babur from the family of Tamerlane, is one of the most glorious epochs in Muslim history. Its beginning coincides with the high time of the Ottoman Empire (Sulaiman the Magnificent) and with the first decades of the Safawid rule that united Iran since 1501. The mid-16th and early 17th centuries are those periods when Muslim architecture from Adrianopel and Istanbul to Delhi and Agra reached its apex.

The borders of the later Mughal Empire included most of the Subcontinent. The last decades of the 17th century, however, were largely spent in wars with the Deccan states, where the Hindu Mahrattas tried to regain their independence. After Aurangzeb's death in 1707 the internal weakness of the vast empire became visible and the different national and religious groups, long dissatisfied, found an opportunity to revolt against

the Mughal rule. For the Muslims themselves were immersed in constant struggles, the weak rulers being mere puppets in the hands of shrewd politicians without more than very personal ambitions. External powers, like Nadir Shah of Iran, took advantage of the situation; he invaded the country and eventually looted Delhi in 1739; about 30,000 people were killed. The once splendid city never fully recovered from this blow. Nadir Shah's successor, Ahmad Shah Durrani, came allegedly as a helper against the growing Mahratta threat and invaded the northwestern provinces time and again; his campaign in 1757 was a similar catastrophe, all the worse, since internal feuds and the misrule of the young minister Ghaziuddin had already impoverished the capital. Four years later, Ahmad Shah gained a decisive victory over the Mahrattas on the historic battlefield of Panipat; however, he did not use the fruits of his victory, and left Northern India to its fate. The exiled Mughal emperor Shah Alam II stayed for thirteen years in the Eastern provinces before he dared come back to Delhi in 1772, when the British and the Mahrattas had guaranteed his safe return. After sixteen years of reign in Delhi, he was cruelly blinded by Ghulam Qadir, a young leader of the Rohilla. This Afghan tribe that had settled north of Delhi and Rampur played an important role in internal politics during the mid-18th century especially since their intelligent leader, Najib ud-Daula was trusted by the Delhi orthodoxy and the Afghan invaders alike. The descriptions by both Muslim intellectuals and the British officers and administrators allow a glance at the hopeless condition of Delhi in those years. In 1803, the Mughal emperor was taken under British custody: his house continued ruling by name until 1857, the year of the so-called Mutiny.

The history of Indian Islam is, however, not only a history of political facts, of conquests and wars, of expansion and breakdown, but is a spiritual history as well. It is the history of the century-long conflict between the Islamic concept of *tauḥid*, strict monotheism, and Hinduism in its different manifestations which constituted, in the eyes of the pious Muslims, the very essence of idolatry and polytheism which had been condemned by the Quran. Without the help of the religious specialists, the rulers would scarcely have been able to maintain their rule over the vast country with its various racial and linguistic groups. The decisive force was, in the Islamization of India, however, not the activity of theologians and specialists in Islamic law and traditions who were sometimes attached to the court, but rather that of the mystics who had settled in the Subcontinent as early as the 11th century; the first Persian treatise on Islamic mysticism, the *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, was written by Ali Hujwiri—called Data Ganj Bakhsh—(d.1071), whose tomb in Lahore is still a place of pilgrimage for the people.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, mystical orders and brotherhoods crystallized out of formerly loosely united groups of disciples, who were introduced into the spiritualization of life by their religious guide, the *shaikh* or *pīr*. The first representatives of such brotherhoods reached India in the beginning of the 13th century. Probably the most influential among them is Khwaja Muʿinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) from Eastern Iran, who settled in Ajmer in the heart of Rajasthan, that had just been conquered by the Delhi kings. His strong personality, his preaching of love of the One God and love of the Prophet, reflected in love of mankind, won over considerable numbers of Hindus to Islam. His disciples and later members of the order wandered through the whole of India, from the Panjab (Fariduddin Shakarganj of Pakpattan, d. 1265) to the Deccan (Gisudaraz of Gulbarga, d. 1422). One of the centers of the Chishtiyya was Delhi, where Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) spiritually guided the population during the reign of seven rulers.

Bahaʾuddin Zakariya (d. c. 1265), the Suhrawardi master, settled in Multan, at the border of Sind and the Panjab: one of the leading Persian mystical poets, Fakhruddin Iraqi, stayed with him for 25 years. The Suhrawardiyya, not as austere in their practices as the early Chishtiyya, sent their members throughout the country and gained disciples even in Eastern Bengal. But only in the late 14th century members of the most important order in the central Islamic countries, the Qadiriyya, reached India.

The orders, who helped in Islamizing the country, contributed also to the development of literature and, partly, music: mystical poetry in Persian, and later in the regional languages, was inspired from their centers. The disciples wrote down the *malfūẓat*, the words and sayings of their masters. They allow us some insight into the spiritual, and also the social life of the Middle Ages, and complete thus the outlook of the official chronicles, for the Muslim saints rarely completely agreed with the politics of the ruling classes or the way of life of the feudal lords,—although, in later times, the borderline between the highly influential pir and the feudal lord was sometimes blurred, for spiritual influence not rarely resulted in political power.

Thanks to these groups, a number of classical works of Islamic mysticism were introduced in India. They were frequently commented upon, partly also translated from the original Arabic into Persian, or from Persian into Urdu. The ideas and poetical imagery of Fariduddin Attar (d. 1220) and Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273), the greatest Persian writing mystic, inspired generations of Sufis and poets so that allusions to their works are found in almost every mystical work composed in India. The work of Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), the Spanish-born mystic who had built a close system of mystical theosophy in his *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* and the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, the 'Bezels of Wisdom', became known in the early 15th century, and taught the Muslims the idea of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the essential Unity of Being, according to which God and the creation can be understood as two aspects of one Reality. Thus, the central Islamic dogma of God's unity was overstressed and expanded into a Weltanschauung which has been called either 'pantheistic' or 'monistic.' Both terms, however, do not give full justice to Ibn Arabi's complicated system of thought. The terminology of the 'Great Master' has influenced, in the Islamic East, even those rejected his theories. The poets and, through them, the large masses interpreted his system in the simplified short sentence *hama ōst*, 'Everything is He.'

The idea of an all embracing unity made some Muslim mystics discover similar thoughts in the religious systems of their Hindu neighbors. The Mughal ruler Akbar (reigned 1556-1605), as most of his family attached to the Chishti order, was certainly influenced by such ideas when he undertook to promote a deeper understanding among the different religions in his empire by arranging discussions of their representatives and by having translated into Persian the main religious and literary works of Hinduism. His great-grandson, Dara Shikoh, the heir apparent of the Mughal Empire, and member of the Qadiriyya, tried to realize this unity. He even undertook the translation of the Upanishads—'a book that is hidden' (Sura 56/78)—into Persian.

The more orthodox circles did not approve of such a dangerous interpretation of Islam which seemed to blur the borders between the two religious communities. One should, however, never forget that even the most ardent defenders of *waḥdat al-wujūd* agreed that the person of the Prophet Muhammad was the locus of the manifestations of the Divine Names, the 'Perfect Man' *par excellence*, the highest model of humanity whom to imitate is the first and foremost duty of the believer. And Islam remained for all of them the last and most comprehensive Divine revelation which comprises in itself, and hence abolishes, the laws brought by every previous Prophet. The 'tolerance' of Islamic mysticism consists of its embracing all religions under the crown of that final revelation which was granted to Muhammad.

It is characteristic of the situation in 16th century India that the protest against the widespread theories of 'Everything is He' was launched again by a mystical order, namely the Naqshbandiyya. This group had been given its rules by Baha'uddin Naqshband from Central Asia (d. 1389), and had deeply influenced life at the Timurid court of Herat where most intellectuals, including the great poet Jami, attached themselves to it. Babur, the first Mughal emperor, knew the order quite well, for one of its centers was located in his home province Farghana; there two rivalling branches of the Central Asian Naqshbandiyya were to play a decisive political role in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The activity of the Naqshbandis in the Subcontinent was limited during the first century of Mughal rule. More emotional orders played a greater role. Only toward the end of Akbar's days, Khwaja Baqi billah, one of the leading masters of the order, came to India and gained a number of disciples very soon. Among them was Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), who tried to attract members of the Mughal court to the Naqshbandi path. Imprisoned for a year at Gwalior, he was soon released and eventually gained the favor of the emperor Jihangir. His aim was to go back to the pure teachings of Islam, which excludes a 'Unity of Being' but admits of the possibility of 'Unity of Vision,' *waḥdat ash-shuhūd*. I.e., in the moments of highest bliss the mystic eyewitnesses absolute Unity but knows that no essential union between creature and Creator is possible, for 'The Lord is Lord, and the servant servant,' as the formulation of this school holds. 'I am His servant'—that is the highest station man can reach, for it is the station of the Prophet during his Nightly Journey (cf. Sura 17/1). The central thesis is not *hama ōst*, 'Everything is He,' but

hama az ōst, 'Everything is from Him'—a formulation which is, indeed, much closer not only to orthodox Islam but to the theories of unity as professed by the early mystics (which had been interpreted, during the centuries following Ibn Arabi, in the light of *wujūdi*-theories).

Ahmad Sirhindi has been called, by the great philosopher Abdul Hakim Sialkoti, the *mujaddid-i alf-i thānī*, the 'Renovator of the 2. Millenium,' since he appeared at the beginning of the second millenium of the Islamic era in order to restore orthodox Islam; and he has been praised by his admirers even in Turkey as the *imām-i rabbānī*, the Divinely bestowed leader of the community. However, the claims of saintship and charismatic leadership which Ahmad Sirhindi uttered, are expressions of such a fantastic self-consciousness that he, with his theories of the restoration of the first *m* of Muhammad's name, and his claim to be the *qayyūm* by far surpasses the limits of what we would normally call 'orthodox Islam.' He saw himself and three of his descendants as divinely invested beings, higher even than the *quṭb*, the 'Pole' of the traditional mystical hierarchy, and destined to guide the Muslim people as *qayyūm*. This remarkable self-consciousness of the Naqshbandi leaders, together with their skill in politics made them more and more influential in India. Ahmad Sirhindi's successors and followers successfully worked to penetrate into the court circles. Shah Jahan's second son, Aurangzeb Alamgir, lent his ear to their advice, and fought against the ideals which led his elder brother Dara Shikoh to his attempts of mystical reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism. During Aurangzeb's reign, which lasted nearly half a century (1658-1707), music and fine arts were restricted. More than three decades after his death, members of the Sirhindi family still continued working behind the political scene, until the fourth *qayyūm*, Pir Muhammad Zubair, died a few months after the destruction of Delhi by Nadir Shah—his death coincides, so to speak, with the end of the third period of Mughal rule which was followed, during one more century, by constant decline.

The Naqshbandiyya also spread in other parts of India, for instance in the Lower Indus Valley.

The other orders continued their activities; some of them had split up, forming numerous sub-groups. Almost every poet and writer was connected in some way with a mystical order. Thus, the whole mystical vocabulary, as developed during centuries, was practically common stock for all members of the society, down to the lowest strata. Poetry and prose written during this period can be understood and enjoyed only with a certain knowledge of its mystical background; for whether the population of the unhappy country would accept tribulations patiently in the feeling that 'Everything is from Him,' or would believe in the all embracing Unity of Being which showed its strange manifestations in suffering and pain—the mystical way was, for most of them, the one source of strength which enabled them to survive during the afflictions which were showered upon Northern India in the 18th century.

All tribulations notwithstanding, literature, and especially poetry, remained alive in India. It flourished at the courts, but in its vernacular form it was the delight of the illiterate villagers. The Muslims produced a vast literature in the classical Islamic languages, Arabic and Persian, but also in Turkish, and the longer and more regional languages like Sindhi, Panjabi, and Pashto developed fascinating poetical forms, while Urdu inherited the Persian refined tradition.

There was no dearth of Arabic writing scholars during the Mughal time. Even Akbar's court poet Faizi produced an Arabic commentary on the Quran, composed completely of undotted letters, an amazing, though not very useful, achievement. During the 17th century the whole corpus of theological studies was in Arabic, thus the works on traditions and history by the leading traditionist of Delhi, Abdul Haqq Dihlawi (d. 1642), or those on logic and philosophy from the pen of Abdul Hakim Sialkoti (d. 1656). Here belongs also the important collection of legal decisions according to Hanafi law compiled during the rule of Aurangzeb Alamgir, *fātāwā-yi ʿAlamgīrī*, a comprehensive work in whose preparation a great number of excellent scholars were involved. Shah Waliullah of Delhi, the mystic, traditionist and politician of the 18th century, continued writing prose and even poetry in the classical language of theology.

One of the greatest contributions to Arabic lexicography, the dictionary *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, is the work of an Indian scholar, and pupil of Shah Waliullah, Sayyid Murtaza (d. 1787), who, like many of his compatriots, had migrated to Zabid in Yemen.

Arabic was likewise used for poetry. In the kingdom of Golconda, a school of rather traditional Arabic poetry blossomed during the early 17th century. In the 18th century the learned Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami (1704-1786) was tenderly called *'Hassān al-Hind'* because he composed many Arabic *qaṣīdas* in honor of the Prophet Muhammad, and thus became comparable to Hassan ibn Thabit, the Prophet's panegyrist. Azad's uncle, Abdul Jalil (d. 1715) had likewise excelled in Arabic poetry. Both scholars were prolific writers in Persian, too.

Azad Bilgrami was also well versed in Turkish, a language which was often used in the higher circles in Mughal India after the first Mughal Emperor Babur wrote his autobiography and several other works in his mother tongue, Chaghatay Turkish. Many of the Mughal generals and nobles who came from Central Asia continued in the use of their mother tongue—thus Bayram Khan (d. 1559), the faithful friend of the first three Mughal rulers, and his son Khankhanan Abdur Rahim, who both wrote poetry in Turkish. Already Amir Khosrau in the 13th century had boasted of his Turkish origin: Turk became synonymous with 'Muslim' and was also usually used in poetry as designation for the beautiful white, cruel beloved ruler as contrasted to the black Hindu slaves. Not few of the nobles around Delhi, even in the 19th century, claimed Turkish descendency.

The most important language for literary works, however, was still Persian, the official language of the Muslim rulers. They had settled in the northern part of the Subcontinent shortly after 1000. Lahore was, in the 11th century, a center of Persian culture, with poets and mystics writing in this language. Then the center of gravity shifted to Delhi, and although Persian was spoken and written even in Bengal and in the South, Persian literature proper was connected mainly with the northern plains of India.

It is impossible to enumerate the large number of historians who wrote their works, since in the 13th century, in the official court language, or the immense literature of Sufism which was composed from approximately the same period onwards.

The great master during the Delhi Sultanate was Amir Khosrau (d. 1325). He was a musician, poet, rhetorician, and his highly sophisticated style provides the reader with most intelligently put puns and precious images. His epical poems contain some interesting details about India. His younger contemporary Hasan Dihlawi (d. 1328), is sweeter and more tender, less artificial than he, but a more genuine mystic. In the Deccan the Chishti saint Gisudaraz (d. 1422) wrote his exuberant mystical Persian poems, but is also the author of one of the first works in Dakhni Urdu. Numberless minor poets surrounded the rulers and the saints everywhere.

In the time of Akbar a great number of poets flocked from Iran to the art-loving Mughal court and influenced the style of the indigenous poets. Probably the greatest among them is Urfi of Shiraz (died at the age of 35 in 1591), whose *qaṣidas* in their glowing darkness and their majestic wording are reminiscent of heavily brocaded garments of purple velvet. His contemporary Faizi (d. 1595), more cerebral than he, is a master of every artistic form. Then follows the long line of the poets who have contributed to the development of the so-called Indian style: Naziri (d. 1612), and Talib-i Amuli (d. 1626), Kalim (d. 1651) and Ghani Kashmiri (d. 1661), Qudsi (d. 1646) and Fani (d. 1671) and innumerable others who praised in highly sophisticated words the world-encompassing strength and mildness of their rulers. Mughal miniatures of these decades often correspond to subjects described in their lyrics and panegyrics. They had to invent new figures of speech; for the outward forms of the Persian poem, the *qaṣīda* and the *ghazal* with their monorhyme and their strict metrical rules as well as the *mathnawī*, used for didactic and narrative poetry, remained untouched. However, the images were partly broken and put together in surprising patterns like the glass pieces in a kaleidoscope. Instead of the images of classical poetry which had in themselves a certain logic, pseudo-philosophical concepts, and artificial images became common. The spheres of hearing and seeing are strangely blended, and some new images taken from the material culture of the 17th century are used in this poetry which conveys the feeling that the poets were, at heart, nostalgic in the dazzling outward beauty of the 'Indian summer.' Were they homesick for Iran, or did they anticipate the gathering of those dark clouds whose lightning was to destroy the harvest of this whole super-refined culture? Or was it simply a convention that now words like 'shroud,' 'breaking,' 'blistered feet,' 'firestricken nest,' etc., were used much more frequently than in previous times; or that the poets compared themselves often to the trembling and melting dewdrop, or spoke of the firework of their burning hearts? The last master of this style is Bedil (d. 1721), the difficulty of whose poetry and prose is notorious. Still, his verses, contrary to those of many of his contemporaries, are often so filled with sentiment, and reach such a power of expression that one is tempted to translate them into very modern poetical language. Bedil and Nasir Ali Sirhindi (d. 1697), who later in life joined the Naqshbandi order, mark the limit which the Indian style could reach; 'his poems are more twisted than the curls of the lovely girls,' says one of Nasir Ali's admirers; but Persian-born poets, like Ali Hazin who reached India in the 1730's found the works of these two masters ridiculous and nonsensical.

However, the influence of Bedil and Nasir Ali (which proved dangerous for minor poets who were not endowed with a similar poetical vision) continued. In the 19th century Ghalib, the greatest Urdu and Persian writing poet of his time, remained, for a while, strongly under their spell. Even a modern writer of completely different mental stature, Muhammad Iqbal, admits his indebtedness to Bedil's poetry for the formation of his thought.

Still, Persian poetry had reached a kind of impasse; Persian prose remained, perhaps, alive longer. Ahmaḍ Sirhindi's letters are an example for such prose, and so are the mystical writings of Prince Dara Shikoh, including his translation of the Upanishads. In the period of Aurangzeb not as many great works in Persian were produced as in the previous decades, for poetry had retired into the lofty corners of nearly incomprehensible stylistic difficulties. Miniature painting, too, slowly lost its glamour and music was forbidden.

One of the surprises in Indian cultural history around 1700 is, that members of the 'anti-artistic' Naqshbandiyya order were instrumental in the development of a new literary medium which was, after Aurangzeb's death, to supercede Persian and to become the typical language of Indian Muslims: that is Urdu.

A literature in the southern form of Urdu, Dakhni, had existed already since the Middle Ages. Here, too, the mystics had played a decisive role in developing the language, since they needed a medium for conveying their message to the large masses who were neither able to follow the theological Arabic nor the administrative and literary Persian. Among the Dakhni writing poets, the Qutbshah Kings of Golconda (1530-1687) and the Adilshahis of Bijapur (1535-1686) occupy a prominent place. In the late 17th century, Wali Deccani elaborated his mother tongue in poems, in which he uses all devices of classical Persian poetry. Shortly after 1700, this poet was attracted to Delhi by the fame of a Naqshbandi mystic and poetical preceptor, Shah Gulshan, thanks to whom his poetry became famous in the capital of the Mughal Empire. Apparently, the Muslims of Northern India, after the breakdown at Aurangzeb's death in 1707, needed a new medium of expression which even the man in the bazaar would understand. Thus, all of a sudden, a remarkable literature in Urdu emerged in the first half of the 18th century in Delhi.

The situation in the literary field does, by no means, reflect the deplorable state of the Indian Muslims. On the contrary, this 18th century is amazingly fertile in poetical expressions in all the languages of Muslim India.

It is typical that even the great warrior, the 'liberator' of Northwest India, Ahmad Shah Durrani, was a fine poet in his mother tongue, Pashto. This language which had been used for centuries in the border areas of India and Afghanistan had become a perfect instrument of poetical expression in the previous century when the tribal chief Khushhal Khan Khattak (d. 1689) composed numberless lyrical, epical and didactic poems which reflect not only his large horizon and his vast range of interests but also his stunning command over a language which was, until then, only rarely used for higher literature (though the folk-poetry of the Pathans is partly of touching beauty and, in the genre of the three-lined *landay*, of almost *haiku*-like precise tenderness). Ahmad Shah Durrani does not reach the breadth of variations found in the work of 'the father of Pashto poetry,' but his poems, too, show an artistic feeling and his interest in the mystical strands of Islam, and are counted among the finest products of the Pashto language.

The countries which were conquered first by Nadir Shah and then by Ahmad Shah Durrani, Sind and the Panjab, could likewise boast of a rich literary heritage. In the Panjab, popular mystical poetry may have emerged as early as in the days of Fariduddin Shakarganj, the Chishti saint of Pakpattan (d. 1265). Numerous folk songs and ballads existed but were never committed to writing. But the vast collection of Sikh sacred poetry as preserved in the *Adi Granth* shows many of the features that recur in Muslim Panjabi and Sindhi mystical songs. The golden age of Muslim Panjabi poetry is the late 17th and the 18th century, e.g., the time when the province was invaded one time after the other by Mahrattas, Sikhs, and, in between, by the liberating Muslim armies. After the short ecstatic poems of Sultan Bahu (d. 1691) the most famous of which are composed in the traditional form of *sīharfī*, 'Golden Alphabet,' Bullhe Shah's personality (d. 1752) looms large in the Panjabi poetry of the 18th century, so much so that he has even been called the 'Rumi of Panjab.' His poems are traditional in their forms, using *sīḥarfī*, 'Golden Alphabet,' *bārāmāh* (poems which describe the lovers' feelings during the twelve months) and others, and he has made use of the whole mystical vocabulary and imagery which had been inherited from classical times. He adds, however, to their beauty by combining them with the rural imagery of his homeland so that they could be understood by every villager and ploughman and sung by the large masses who would flock to the shrines of the saints, hoping for material and spiritual help in this time of deepest depression. Bullhe Shah is, like all the folk poets, a defender of the unity of Being. The same is true for Ali Haydar who died in 1785 near Multan. Shortly after his death the classical work of Panjabi literature was composed: Warith Shah's version of *Hīr Ranjhā* (around 1794). The story of the unhappy lovers was known since the days of Akbar, and had been turned into a popular tale in which the hero and the heroine undergo all kinds of tribulation and eventually are exiled, or die. Warith Shah has used this story as a vehicle for mystical thought, and interspersed it with mystical explanations; it is not told in logical sequence, for one expected everybody to know the contents, and the author could concentrate upon crucial scenes and dialogues, songs and prayers (just as it is the case in the Sindhi mystical versions of folk tales). Numerous variants of *Hīr Ranjhā* exist not only in Panjabi but also in Sindhi, Persian, and Balochi, but Warith Shah's version has never lost its attraction, and even today a Panjabi will be deeply touched when this moving story is sung.

In spite of the overall activity of writers, theologians, and mystics throughout Muslim India, two areas can be singled out as particularly interesting in the history of mystical poetry in the Subcontinent. They are, as is to be expected, the capital Delhi with its long history, and the Lower Indus Valley. Although both areas had to suffer under the breakdown of the Mughal Empire, and the invasions from their Western neighbors, they produced an amazing amount of mystical writings and poetry. Delhi, once the center of Persian literature in the Subcontinent, now became the place where Urdu poetry developed to its most beautiful expression. Shah Gulshan and his disciple Muhammad Nasir Andalib, Mir Dard's father, were prominent members of the group who encouraged the development of Urdu poetry. In poetical meetings the forms and figures of Urdu poetry were discussed, new words adopted, awkward expressions discarded, so that the language became polished and refined in a comparatively short time, and was able to express the different moods of the population of Delhi, and, later, of Lucknow, and eventually, of the whole of Muslim India. Most divergent types of poets are found in Delhi at almost the same time: besides the so-called *īhāmists*, who transplanted the ambiguous style of some of the Persian writing artists into Urdu, there lived in the first generation after Shah Gulshan and Khan-i Arzu (d. 1756), the 'four pillars of Urdu': Mir Taqi Mir (1724-1810), the love-poet, whose sighs still touch every heart, and who belonged to the close friends of Mir Dard, the mystic, who has in his turn written the most perfect Urdu mystical verses. Besides them we find the overpowering personality of Sauda (1713-1780), mainly praised as satirist, criticizing the social and political misery of 18th century India, but also an important religious poet of the Shiʿa persuasion. The 'fourth pillar' is Mazhar Janjanan (c. 1700-1781). He was also a member and successful leader of the *Naqshbandi mujaddidi* school. Yet, more important for the history of Urdu literature than Mazhar is Mir Hasan (d. 1786) who, in his early youth, attended the poetical sessions of Mir Dard. He has gained fame by his *mathnawī Siḥr ul-bayān* which, though not absolutely original in form or contents, is one of the loveliest products of Urdu narrative poetry, and whose atmosphere is somehow reflected in some of the miniatures from the later 18th century with their strangely bewitching style. Small wonder that the members of the Mughal court, long famous for its literary ambitions, became interested in Urdu poetry; the luckless Shah Alam II (1761-1806) wrote poetry under the penname *Āftāb*, 'Sun,' and attended the musical meetings of Mir Dard.

Delhi was also the place where three leading mystics lived and

worked simultaneously, each of them claiming highest spiritual experiences, and trying in his own environment to ameliorate the situation of the afflicted Muslims of Northwest India. All of them were related in some way to the Naqshbandi order which, as we saw, was most influential among the poets, too. It is regrettable that we have barely any information about the relations among these three great masters, e.g., Shah Waliullah, Mazhar Janjanan, and Mir Dard. Among them Shah Waliullah has gained greatest fame as a reformer, as the translator of the Quran into Persian, and also as the politically minded leader of the community who did not hesitate to invite Ahmad Shah Durrani Abdali to fight the Mahrattas. Shortly after the third battle of Panipat, which took place in 1761, Shah Waliullah passed away in 1762, almost two decades before both Mazhar and Mir Dard. His political engagement has often overshadowed other aspects of his teachings, which are not easy to appreciate for a Western reader, since they are couched in a terminology very much his own, and which had to be explained by his grandson Ismail Shahid in a book called *ʿAbaqāt*. Waliullah's father, a Hanafi Jurist with mystical inclinations, had helped in the compilation of the *Fatāwā-yi ʿAlamgīrī*. His young son, born in 1703, spent some time in Mecca, and returned to Delhi in 1730. For three decades he worked to help the Muslims of Delhi and all India by his writings and actions, for, as numerous revelations had told him, he had become the vicegerent of the Prophet 'in blaming.' Anything but modest, he claimed to have been granted the highest possible ranks in the religious hierarchy, and been taught *ḥikma*, wisdom, which is, in his theories, the last step before Prophethood: that he was promised to enter Paradise without reckoning is almost commonplace with later Muslim mystics. Shah Waliullah was certain that God had bestowed upon him the 'robe of *mujaddidiyya*' e.g., of renewing the Islamic faith and restoring it to its pristine purity, but he even claimed to have been invested with the robe of *ḥaqqāniyya*, the state of Divine Truth,[1] which deprived him of all logical understanding, so that he experienced 'how God talked upon my tongue.' His role as a 'blaming reformer'[2] is best expressed in a long address in which he scolds the Muslims in holy anger: he attacks the scholars who have given up studying the Prophetic traditions but rather learn unnecessary things like grammar and Greek philosophy; the false Sufis; the perverted preachers; the kings who ought to fight for the extension, or at least the defense of Islam; the grandees who could not care less when wine shops, gambling dens or brothels are installed in the realm of their fiefs; soldiers who shave their beards and think only of amusements; artisans who indulge in drinking, adultery, and visits to allegedly sacred places, etc.[3] This piece, in its unusually straightforward language, shows best that Waliullah's interest lay in the purification of the Muslim community for a better life here, and even more in the Otherworld.

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[1] At-tahfhīmat al-ilāhiyya II 53, 145.
[2] Id. II 19.

It is perhaps more than sheer accident that his main work in Arabic, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-bāligha*, was finished in 1740-41, shortly after Nadir Shah's invasion, that means, at the same time when Dard's father Andalib was composing his *Nāla-yi ʿAndalīb* in mourning Pir Muhammad Zubair, the last *qayyūm*. Shah Waliullah's attempts to bridge the gap between the different *madhhabs* in Islam, as well as the tension between the adherents of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat ash-shuhūd* can be understood from the situation in the country; in this respect he was a true mystical leader who relied upon the old Sufi maxim which is often quoted in his works:

> Our signs are different, but Thy beauty is one, and everything points to that Beauty.

Maulana Rumi's parable of the blind and the elephant was transformed by him into a story of blind men touching a tree, for truth is a big tree from which each person can grasp only one leaf, one branch, the bark, or one fruit. It was also this practical aspect of his teachings that led him to translate the Quran into Persian in order to bring people back to the original text, and avoid the useless study of too many commentaries which cover the sacred meaning rather than explain it. To live with the Quran, as it had been done by the Sufis of yore, was his ideal. A true Sufi has to live exclusively on the Quran and the Prophetic tradition. Therefore, he heavily attacks those Sufis who talk about 'what they think is truth,' seduce people by miracle mongering,

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[3] Id. I p. 281 ff.

and are nothing but *karāmāt furūshān*, 'sellers of miracles.' He sees in them the 'highwaymen and robbers of religion,' while his colleague Mir Dard uses the expression 'shopkeeper saints' for these characters, whom he even calls 'pig-natured.' The reformatory zeal of Waliullah leads him to even regard the Sufi books, 'which may have a wonderful effect on the elect, to be deadly poison for the ordinary people,' and would have liked to declare as infidels those who perform pilgrimages to sacred places: 'That is a sin, greater than murder and adultery.'[4] Utterances like this may be one of the reasons why the followers of his school were later often branded as 'Indian Wahhabis,' since the Wahhabis in the Arabian peninsula mercilessly destroyed all places of saint-worship.—Shah Waliullah tried to explain the secrets of religion in a way that is sometimes almost foreshadowing the 'naturism' of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan more than a century later. That is particularly true for his prophetology, where he now and then even explains miracles like the splitting of the moon (Sura 54/1) as a natural phenomenon. Prophecy, according to his view, shows itself in different ways by polishing the innate qualities of a people as beautifully as possible. The innate character of the nation is the raw material on which the Prophet works, be it a candle or a clot of earth. This kind of socio-geographical explanation of the various activities of the Prophets is for him also the reason why the mystical orders differ in their approach: the Turks, living in a cold climate, hence stronger in their 'bestial' powers, needed and indeed produced a *ṭarīqa* like the Naqshbandiyya, which is best for crushing the lower instincts.[5]

Shah Waliullah appears to us as a strange figure in the history of Islamic mysticism, combining great pride in his visions and his role as the true reformer of a rotten society with an extremely complicated web of thoughts, expressed in various linguistic means. He wrote poetry in Persian and Arabic, and a few verses in Urdu, his Arabic following the traditional models of devotional verse, and his Urdu certainly not 'great poetry.' His many faceted character still awaits his biographers.

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[4] Id. II 35. The text is interesting enough to deserve quotation:
All those who go to Ajmer or to the tomb of Salar Masʿud or similar places for something they want from there: that is a sin, greater than murder or adultery. Is he not like someone who worships handmade things, or like those who called Allat and al-Uzza? But I cannot declare them clearly as infidels because there is no text from the lawgiver in this peculiar case.

[5] Id. I 28-34.

Waliullah's friend and colleague Mazhar Janjanan, who was highly respected in the Delhi community, and perhaps even better known to many of the pious in the capital, was a different character. This 'saintly, purified, dervish-like, scholarly, perfect, famous, incomparable person,' as Mir calls him, followed more closely the normal Naqshbandi line.

Born in 1699 in Agra as son of one of Aurangzeb's courtiers, Mazhar became the disciple of Nur Muhammad Bada ʾuni, a Naqshbandi saint, at the age of 18. His master was a disciple of Muhammad Maʿsum's *k̲h̲alīfa*. Then, the young man sought the instruction of Saʿdullah Gulshan who, however, had entrusted his followers to Pir Muhammad Zubair, the *qayyūm*. Muhammad Zubair, in turn, sent Mazhar to Hafiz Saʿdullah. Mazhar claimed also to be initiated, partly in *uwaisī* succession, into the other orders. According to his own words, 'he began to sweep the dervish lodges at the age of thirty,' that is shortly after Gulshan's death in 1728.

Mazhar is recognized as one of the Four pillars of Urdu literature, although his output in Urdu is comparatively small. Everyone knows Sauda's remark about his 'mongrel' style, culminating in the Urdu proverb:

> It is the washerman's dog, belonging neither to the *ghat* nor to the house!

But this satire may have been caused as much by rhetorical considerations as by religious prejudices, for Sauda, an outspoken Shia, naturally disliked the strictly anti-Shia attitude of Mazhar who followed, here, the ideals of the *Naqshbandiyya mujaddidiyya*. Mazhar went so far as to compose a defense of the Omayyad ruler Muʿawiya, whose son Yazid is cursed by all Shiites as the murderer of the Prophet's grandson Husain in Kerbela; the Delhi mystic, however, wanted this just and successful ruler to be treated like any other companion of the Prophet. His uncompromising attitude even caused his death: at the age of 82 in 1781, he was killed when ridiculing a Muharram procession. Earlier in that century, Shah Waliullah too had protested against the celebrations of the Ashura Day, and although both Naqshbandi mystics were deeply attached to the Prophet and his family, they

defended the view that the Sunnite faction is, for various reasons, the true form of Islam, whereas the Shia claims are vain (*bāṭil*).

Mazhar's letters addressed to his *k̲h̲alīfa* Thana ʾullah in Panipat often deal with domestic problems, and with instruction in the path, but are much more sober and matter-of-fact than the high-flown words of both Waliullah and Dard. More than these two, Mazhar concentrated upon the leadership of his *tarīqa*, the Shamsiyya Mazhariyya, which seems to have flourished in Delhi and environment, for not less than 49 of his *k̲h̲alīfas* are known by name. The stern Naqshbandi saint who was, in his youth, enraptured by the beauty of the young talented poet Taban, was extremely strict in keeping his ritual duties; he once remarks that one should pray not less than 60 *rakʿas* (prayer units) during 24 hours; that is more than three times the prescribed number. His striving for perfection revealed itself in the fact that he married a perfectly intolerable woman in order to be polished by living with her; his letters sometimes point to his matrimonial difficulties.

It is interesting to see than Mazhar, his orthodox views notwithstanding, did not consider the Hindus as sheer *mus̲h̲rikūn*, 'heathen,' but rather as followers of some sort of monotheism; but he, of course, maintained that Muhammad's revelation had put an end to all previous religions.[6]

Shah Waliullah and Mazhar seem to have been on friendly terms; some letters by the former reveal his admiration for his contemporary because of his faithful adherence to the Quran and the Prophetic tradition, and Mazhar used some of his colleague's writings in his instruction, as is understood from his letters. The relations were strengthened by Thana ʾullah Panipati who, besides becoming Mazhar's dearest spiritual successor, was Waliullah's disciple in *ḥadīt̲h̲* and commented upon several of the master's treatises. Both mystics, too, admired and used ash-Shad̲h̲ili's *Ḥizb al-baḥr*, to which Waliullah even wrote a Persian commentary: the famous prayer of the 13th century Egyptian Sufi belonged, for a long time, to the most cherished works of devotional literature, even in countries where the Shadhiliyya order itself had never taken deeper roots.

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[6] Cf. Y. Friedmann's article 'Medieval Muslim Views of Indian Religions', in: JAOS 95/2, 1975.

It is difficult to judge the relations of Mir Dard with his two senior compatriots. He never mentions any of them by name in his writings, nor do they mention him or his father. Once, a friendly remark about Mazhar is found in a later source—'he recognized the light of saintliness in the face of one of Mazhar's disciples' (F 142)—and as much as the claims of Muhammad Nasir Andalib and his son Dard to represent the true Muhammadan Religion may have conflicted with Shah Waliullah's own claims, their *ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya* remained important even after Dard's death, and was adopted by Shah Waliullah's grandson, Ismaʿil Shahid. Before detailed studies and comparisons of the three mystics and their theories are possible, one has to discuss them one by one. Their approach to life and religion is largely the same and can be summed up in a verse by Dard's father Muhammad Nasir:

> Strive to find the everlasting kingdom
> And that you'll find from the Muhammadan law (NA I 791).

All the three alike stressed the importance of the unmitigated Divine Law as the center of Muslim life; all the three attacked philosophy and fake Sufism, and refused to be called 'Sufis,' a term that had deteriorated during their days even more than before; all the three were poets in Persian and Urdu, and Waliullah also in Arabic—but while he has become the center of interest lately for his religious reforms and his political engagement, and Mazhar remains the model of a true Naqshbandi leader, Mir Dard, the youngest of them, is considered the most successful mystical poet in the Urdu language, and regarded himself as the elected leader of his community. It is he to whom we devote part of this study.

Ten years before Mazhar Janjanan, a man was born in the distant Indus Valley who was destined to become the greatest mystical poet in the Sindhi language. It is Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit (1689-1752) who died ten years before Shah Waliullah left this valley of tears.

Sind has always been praised as the country with a particularly strong inclination towards mysticism. A Sindhi author writes, and is the translator of the feelings of most of his compatriots:

> 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 India is in need,[7]

namely, of the mystical tradition. From the day that Lal Shahbaz Qalandar settled in Sehwan in the 13th century, and Baha ʾuddin Zakariya established the Suhrawardi center at the northernmost border of the country, in Multan, Sind had produced an immense number of mystics, whose shrines are scattered all through the Indus Valley, and who invented short songs in their mother tongue to express the mysteries of love and union. Perhaps the most typical story in this respect is that of Divan Gidumal, the minister of the Kalhoro princes, and his reaction to Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion, which took place during Shah Abdul Latif's life time. He offered the invading monarch two bags which, as he said,

> contain the most valuable of Sind's gifts; they contain the holy dust from the tombs of numerous saints and Pirs of Sind.[8]

Sind was, since 1595, part of the Mughal Empire, and although representatives of the Delhi court came there, the indigenous rulers enjoyed much freedom. The first obvious sign of the struggle for power in the Lower Indus Valley becomes visible in 1717, when a mystical rebel was persecuted under the pretext that he tried to overthrow the established rule. The tragic story of Shah Inayat of Jhok, whose successful mystical preaching attracted many disciples from the mystical centers of the country, but also laborers from the neighboring big farms led his adversaries to denounce him at court; for during the confused situation in Delhi between the reign of Farrukh Siyar and that of Muhammad Shah it was easy to sow mistrust. The Kalhora clan from Upper Sind, particularly active in the struggle against Inayat, soon afterwards became independent in Sind. Shah Inayat was besieged in his Khanqah Jhok, and had to surrender to the overwhelming army that came from various places in Sind and Hind. He was executed in January 1718, and his fate has inspired many Sufi poets, Hindus and Muslims alike, to write touching poetry; he becomes 'the Hallaj of Sind' due to his death at the hands of the establishment, and to his overwhelming mystical 'state.' It is possible that Shah Abdul Latif alluded to his fate in some of his verses; in any case he has quoted a Persian line usually connected with Shah Inayat.

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[7] J. Parsram, 'Sind and its Sufis', p. 78 f.

[8] Id. p. 54.

At the same time, the 'Naqshbandi reaction' had set in in the Lower Indus Valley too, mainly led by Abu'l-qasim Naqshbandi, a follower of Ahmad Sirhindi's grandson Shah Saifuddin ibn Urwat al-Wuthqa Maʿsum. By his disciples and friends, the first theological treatises in the Sindhi language are composed in the first half of the 18th century, beginning with the *Muqaddamat as-ṣalāt*, Preliminary discourse on Prayer, by Mian Abu ʾl-Hasan (d. 1711). This treatise, written in 1700, deals with 130 questions concerning the ritual practices of Islam, and is the first major didactic poem in Sindhi. Of course, the rhyme-scheme is utterly simple, using the device of *alif-i ishbāʿ*, which means the filling up of the last consonants with a long *a* so as to produce a rhyming effect. Here, Sindhi is for the first time written in the Arabic characters as they were to form, one and a half centuries later, the basis of the standard Sindhi alphabet as introduced by Sir Bartle Frere, and used up to our day in both India and Pakistan. Another prolific religious author in Sindhi was Muhammad Muʿin, a mystically minded person; although he was a disciple of Abu'l-qasim Naqshbandi he was a great friend of Shah Abdul Latif, and it is said that he composed among others both a Persian *Risāla-yi uwaisiyya*, concerning the mystical introduction into the Path without the guidance of a living master: the initiation through the spirit of a deceased saint or through the Prophetsaint Khidr was considered valid in most Sufi circles. His Naqshbandi education did not prevent him from writing poetry in Persian (pen-name *Taslīm*) and Hindi (pen-name *Bairāgī*), and he loved music and mystical dance. That is why his works were attacked by his younger compatriot Makhdum Muhammad Hashim ibn Abdul Ghafur (1692-1761), the qadi of Thatta, which was still the center of the province of Sind. The Makhdum, who is buried on the famous Makli Hill near Thatta (the last resting place of 125,000 saints, as legend has it) was a prolific writer in Sindhi, Arabic, and Persian, and with the support of the Kalhora princes relentlessly fought against the innovations that had spoiled Islam in his days. Out of his more than 300 works some deal with popular customs exactly as those written by the great Delhi Naqshbandis, thus, when he attacks the Muharram celebrations, which were celebrated on Makli Hill. When he describes in his Sindhi poetry, *Qūt al-ʿāshiqīn*, the lofty qualities of the Prophet, he is exactly in line with his contemporaries in the capital. Commentaries of part of the Quran in Sindhi and of the whole Book in Arabic opened the way for his followers to comment upon and translate the Holy Writ into their mother tongue. Makhdum Hashim's Sindhi *Tafsīr Hāshimī* was usually the first book given to children in the Quran schools, and belongs to the first Sindhi books ever printed.

> In his time appeared so to speak a renovation of Islam, and every month some Hindus found salvation from the meanness of infidelity thanks to his laudable striving.[9]

Thus says the famous writer of Sindhi history, Mir Ali Shir Qaniʿ (1725-1789), who belonged also to one of the Naqshbandi families. His ancestors had reached the Indus Valley in the 16th century, coming from Shiraz. Qaniʿs work on the famous inhabitants of Sind (*Tuḥfat al-kirām*), his biographies of poets (*Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*) and his numerous works on the affiliations of Sindhi *ṭariqas* show him as one of the most important writers in the Persian language in India during the 18th century. His *Maklīnāma* is probably the most charming account we possess about the famous Makli Hill near the capital; many of the buildings which are no longer existent, can be reconstructed from his remarks, and his notes about the festivities, the sessions of music and mystical dance, as they were held there in constant succession gives the modern reader a wonderful picture of popular mystical religion in 18th century Sind.

Another Naqshbandi mystic of Sind, and of quite a different formation, was Makhdum Abdur Rahim Girhori (1739-1778), the *k͟halīfa* of the famous saint Makhdum Muhammad Zaman who, in turn, was a disciple of Mian Abu ʾl-qasim Naqshbandi and Mian Muhammad Thattawī. Girhori, contrary to the Naqshbandis of Thatta, was little interested in legal problems; the energetic man even threw an ink stand at a scholar's head while attacking the 'dry trees of Makhdum Muhammad Hashim's school.' He completely relied upon Quran and tradition, and led a perfectly ascetic life, with long periods of fasting, which were made even more difficult since he used to take a purgative every third day.

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[9] Qāniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. H. Rashdi, p. 841 f.

Besides, he was a good writer who commented upon his master's Sindhi apophtegmata in Arabic, and composed poetical commentaries of several suras of the Quran. Most of his books were, however, destroyed during the Afghan raids in Upper Sind in 1781. Perhaps the finest expression of his mystical prophetology, which is in some way reminiscent of Dard's deep mystical love of the Prophet is his rhymed commentary on *Sūrat al-Kauthar*, the favorite theme of mystical veneration of the Prophet. A verse by him expresses also his admiration for Shah Abdul Latif, whom he may have met when still a child.

Girhori followed the truly mystical ideal of being killed on the way towards the beloved, as it was expressed in thousands of verses in Persian and Sindhi; but, for him, this longing took a particular form, e.g., he wanted to be a true martyr, shedding his blood for the defense of the true faith. Thus, he set out with 72 companions to destroy the Shiva idol in Hathungo, District Khairpur, and was killed there as he had hoped.

It would be wrong, however, to regard Girhori as a typical exponent of Sindhi Sufism. On the whole, there was 'a common basis of understanding, by Muslim and Hindu alike, of the mystical message of Islam,' as H. T. Sorley says correctly. To his analysis of the complex religious situation in 18th century Sind—which contains the 'almost incredible veneration for sayyids as such and a great accretion of superstitious practices in the belief of the multitude' we may add that the mystical understanding between the two great communities may perhaps have been facilitated by the activities of the Ismaili missionaries who came to Sind in the 14th and 15th centuries, after an Ismaili kingdom had existed in Multan around 900. Whatever the reason be that 'neither Hindus nor Muslims are orthodox in Sind'[10] and that still in the 1920's, there were 'numerous Hindus and amongst them some of the best brains of Sind, old and new, who are Sufi by religion'[11]—it remains a fact that a number of Hindus became devoted disciples of Muslim saints and did not hesitate to compose religious poetry in honor of Muslim saints and even of the Prophet of Islam. The most famous case is that of Shaikh Tahir, called by the Hindus Lal Udero, who is venerated by members of

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[10] Parsram, l.c. p. 75.

[11] Id. p. 84.

both communities, and about whose ecstatic 'states' strange legends are told.[12] Shah Abdul Latif's admiration for the true Yogis belongs to this group of phenomena, and fits very well into the religious situation in the country.

Shah Abdul Latif was born into a family of mystics who lived near Hala; his father, Shah Habib, was a descendant of one of the first noted poets in his mother tongue, Shah Abdul Karim of Bulrri; about his mother's family the traditions are not unanimous. Yet, it is said that he (like Mir Dard) was a *sayyid*, his lineage going back to the seventh *imām* Mūsa al-Kāẓim. Shah Abdul Latif spent three years with a group of yogis, wandering through the country, up to the sacred mountain Hinglaj in Balochistan.[13] Later Latif settled in Bhit, where he died without issue in 1752, leaving behind him the collection of thirty Sindhi poems that has become known as the *Risālō*. That was the technical term for collections of poetry which are arranged according to the musical modes. Mir Ali Shir Qaniᶜ claims in his two major historical works that the mystical poet was *ummī*, 'illiterate;' but that is impossible to accept when one enters into the complicated web of thoughts displayed in the poems, and decorated with Arabic quotations, or allusion to Persian mystical poetry. Shah Latif was an excellent musician, who even invented a new type of tambura (drone instrument), and whose blending of traditional Indian rāga and Sindhi folk tunes enhances the beauty of his verses which ought to be sung, not analyzed, to enjoy their full charm.

Shah Abdul Latif's *Risālō*, written in Indian meters, contains a storehouse of legends, tales, and Sufi topics; but he never tried to rationalize or to systematize his thoughts, and it is not known that he should have written any theoretical statement about his mystical experiences. He lived his Divine love, and he sang of it—nothing else.

One of the Persian chronograms composed at his death and inscribed at the northern side of the dome says:

> When he became intoxicated by union from the goblet of 'Come back' (Sura 89/17).

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[12] About the 'complex religious history' of Sind see H. T. Sorley, 'Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit', p. 166, and Yusuf Husain, 'L'Inde Mystique', p. 15.

[13] M. Jotwani has given as many biographical details as are available in his book, 'Shah Abdul Latif', New Delhi 1975.

> The hidden inspirer said: 'The year of his journey was *Ridwān-i Ḥaqq*,' (God's satisfaction) = 1165.[14]

Latif's tradition was taken up and developed by Sachal Sarmast (1739-1826), who met him when still a boy. His ecstatic poetry surpassed all limits of expression. In Shah's poetry, allusions and subtle images lead the understanding listener into the secrets of love, longing, and union; in Sachal's poems (he wrote in four languages: Sindhi, Siraiki, Urdu, and Persian) the mysteries of all embracing Unity are put openly before the listener, and his verse reminds the reader often of the enthusiastic folksongs by Turkish medieval mystics, like those of Yunus Emre (d. 1321).

Many more names of Sufis and poets could be enumerated when dealing with 18th century Sind so that Burton claims with full right in 1851:

> As regards the literature of the Sindhi tongue, it may safely be asserted that no vernacular dialect in India, at the time of our taking the country, possessed more, and few so much, original composition.[15]

The problems of this part of the Subcontinent were almost the same as those that led to Delhi's-breakdown: the collapse of the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb's death, manifested itself in the internal struggle among the governors; eventually, the native Kalhoro dynasty took over the rule in Upper and later in Lower Sind, only to become the vassals of the invading Nadir Shah, who first conquered Sind and the Panjab before he reached Delhi in 1739. Almost the same situation repeated itself when Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, although his influence on the scene in Sind is not as important as it was in the northern areas of present day Pakistan. The Kalhoro dynasty, in turn, was overthrown by the former disciples of their saintly ancestor, Adam Shah Kalhoro, who had been executed by the central government in 1651. The Talpurs, who thus came to power in 1781, ruled the country until it was conquered by the British in 1843.

Just as the new spirit of Urdu poetry developed in 18th century Delhi, while the leading mystics looked for ways to lead their followers out of the darkness of the political situation, thus in Sind, too, the 18th century can be called the most important period for the formation of mystical poetry and prose, and for the activities of many saintly persons whose works were meant to give spiritual nourishment to the suffering people. Thus, the 18th century, politically perhaps the most saddening phase of Indo-Muslim civilization, proves to be the most fertile period in terms of religious literature—very similar to the situation in the 13th century, when the larger part of the Islamic Empire was devastated by the Mongol hordes, and yet the greatest mystical poetry and theory was produced between Cairo and India: it is as though a strange balance of power produces such effects. Mir Dard would have seen here the constant interplay of the Divine manifestations of Wrath and Grace, which point, again, to The One; Shah Abdul Latif would have probably thought of the pearl which can be found in the very depths of the stormy, raving ocean, provided the oyster is patient.

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[14] Other chronogramms in Qāniʿ, l.c. p. 428 f.

[15] R. Burton, 'Sindh and The Races That inhabite the Valley of the Indus', p. 75.