

PERSPECTIVES ON SHEIKH FARID

Proceedings of the International Seminar on the
SUFİ SAINT BABA SHEIKH FARİD
held at Delhi on
November 16-17, 1973

Edited by
GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB



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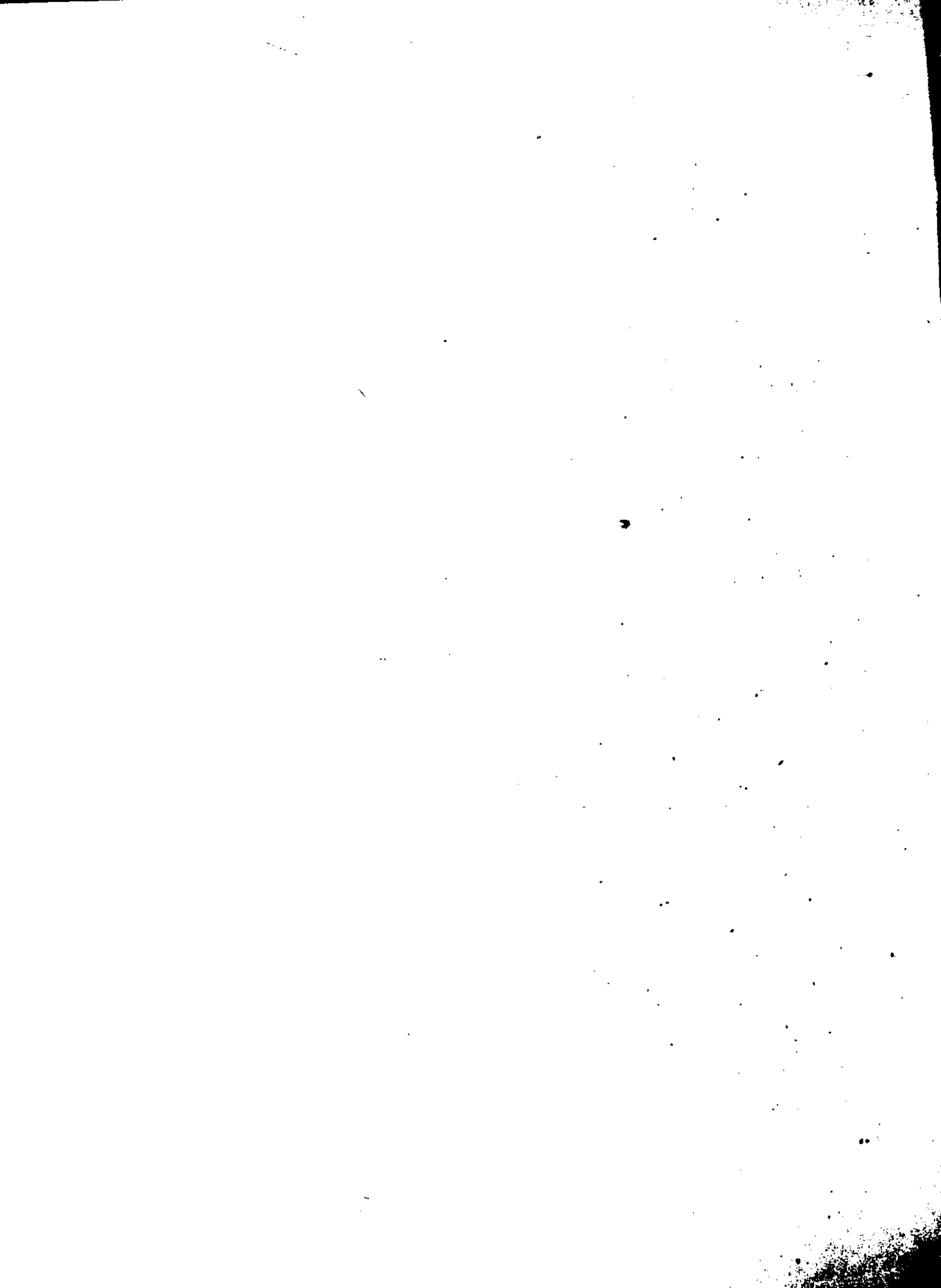
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FOREWORD

It is a matter of great pleasure to find that the learned papers presented on the occasion of the International Seminar on the great sufi Saint Baba Sheikh Farid, held at New Delhi in November, 1973 are now being published in book form after the necessary editing process. This volume, I feel confident, will be a unique event in the history of the academic study of Religion, inasmuch as it will, for the first time present Baba Sheikh Farid to the world as a saint venerated not only by Muslims to whose fraternity he belonged by birth, but also by non-Muslims who found in his spiritual experience something deeply universal and worthy to be revered. Baba Farid is now for the last five centuries an integral part of the Sikh religious tradition. A number of papers have highlighted with great ability this important fact, besides others of equal note.

The Farid Octocentenary celebrations were inaugurated under the chairmanship of our Rashtrapati, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, who at the time held the portfolio of Agriculture in the Union Government.

In the Seminar were present a galaxy of intellectuals and high public dignitaries, including our Prime Minister to whom the cause of goodwill among the different sections of our people—as a matter of fact, the whole world community—is so dear. Giani Zail Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab, whose liberal donation to the Baba Farid Memorial Society made possible the celebrations of the Farid Octocentenary on such a grand scale, was present and read out an illuminating address. The scholars came from several countries and the Indian contingent was most worthily represented by Muslims and Hindus, besides Sikhs. I express my grateful thanks to all who worked to make the occasion such a great success. My particular thanks are due to Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Sardar Bishan Singh Samundari, Vice-Chancellors and Professor Gurcharan Singh, General Secretary of the Baba Farid Memorial Society. The indefatigable workers at Delhi led by Principal Gurdial Singh Dhillon and Principal G.S. Randhawa gave shape to the holding of the Seminar. The present volume is the result of the editorial labours of Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib whose writings on Religion and Baba Farid are highly distinguished. I heartily commend the contents of this volume to the general public and the world of scholarship.

New Delhi
April 10, 1975

G.S. DHILLON
Speaker, Lok Sabha
President, Baba Farid Memorial Society

PRESENTATION

The Birth Octocentenary of Baba Sheikh Farid (1173-1265) during 1973-74 was a unique occasion in promoting the spirit of inter-religious goodwill and harmonious relations among different sections of our people, particularly the Sikhs and the Muslims. Living together for centuries in the Punjab, the followers of these two great faiths have perhaps seldom tried to understand the cherished sentiments of each other in depth. It was on the occasion of the Farid Octocentenary that an emotional upsurge was created in Sikh and Muslim hearts, and both communities realized how close they were to each other, despite the outer and misleading trappings of differences. It was the greatest Muslim sufi of the Punjab, Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj, one of the greatest medieval sufis of India whose hymns (Slokas) written in sweet Punjabi verse, now nearly eight hundred years old, worked this miracle. His Slokas breathing Divine passion punctuated with highly ethical and spiritual teaching found an appreciative response from the holy Gurus of the Sikh faith and they, therefore, made them an essential part of the Sikhs religious canon. It has remained so now for nearly five hundred years, since the inception of the Sikh faith.

The occasion of the Farid Octocentenary inspired some of the top leaders, educationists and intellectuals in the Sikh community to put in their best endeavour to make the occasion worthy of the great saint and of the Sikh people who had adopted him as one of their teachers. The Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Zail Singh, having deep involvement in the spiritual teachings of the great saints and seers took strong interest in the Octocentenary celebrations of Baba Farid. His connection with Faridkot town, founded after the name of Baba Farid, also stirred his enthusiasm with the result that his Government gave the generous grant of five lakh rupees to the Baba Farid Memorial Society. Dr Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Speaker, Lok Sabha, who is always so readily available for sponsoring any good cause, agreed to become the President of the Baba Farid Memorial Society. With the encouragement and cooperation of these two eminent public men, the Society was able to accomplish within a brief period what may without exaggeration be described as a new and creative task in generating a great fund of understanding and goodwill. Distinguished Muslims such as Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, President of India (then our Agriculture Minister), Begum Abida Fakhruddin, Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, Maulana Ishaq Sambhali, M.P., Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, Pir Zamin Nizami and Dr Masaud Hussain gave their whole-hearted support to the projected celebrations.

The highlight of the celebrations was the International Seminar on the Life,

Times and Teachings of Baba Farid, inaugurated by our Prime Minister, to whom the cause of national integration is always so dear. This Seminar, of which the detailed proceedings are set down in the pages following, was an impressive success both in point of the number of scholars participating, the countries they represented and the matter and content of the papers presented. The sessions of the Seminar were crowded with scholars who came to attend the proceedings, and the discussions were most fruitful.

The present book is the result of the labours of Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib who so ably accomplished the task of organizing the Seminar. In preparing this transcript he has provided a detailed Report on the Seminar and a study-note on the papers. The papers themselves have been divided into three sections according to the theme. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib has written two competent studies on the life and teachings of Baba Farid, and edited a fine volume of essays about this great teacher in four languages.

In commending this book to the public I am confident that from its pages very valuable material will be available in the future to research workers in the field of religion, and to the seekers and students in general.

KIRPAL SINGH NARANG

Vice-President Baba Farid Memorial Society

April 2, 1975

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON BABA FARID —Revival of a great Tradition

THE OPENING

The Baba Farid Memorial Society organized an International Seminar on the Life, Times and Teachings of Baba Sheikh Farid (A.D. 1173-1265) at New Delhi on the 16th and 17th November, 1973 to mark the beginning of the Baba Farid Octocentenary Celebrations. The inaugural function opened with a *shabad* of Baba Sheikh Farid's composition presented tastefully and with proper resources by pupils of Guru Harkishan Public School, Delhi.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India inaugurated the Seminar in the Mavalankar Auditorium, New Delhi on November 16, 1973. Wishing the Seminar all success, she highlighted the salient features of the teachings of the great Sufi Master who, she said, has come down to us as a true symbol of National Integration. His qualities of compassion and positive tolerance are dear to us, she stressed, because these have been echoed and re-echoed in the national psyche by our great seers and masters through the ages and have formed a valuable part of our rich cultural heritage. The Prime Minister recalled the high ideals of humanity preached by Baba Farid and dwelt on his having transformed these ideals into a chaste and crystalline poetic idiom of the language of the Punjabi masses of his times.

Earlier, Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, Chairman, Delhi Metropolitan Council, and Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Seminar, speaking in Urdu welcomed the Prime Minister and the distinguished gathering. He particularly commended the fact of the Baba Farid Octocentenary Celebrations being led by people other than the co-religionists of the Saint. For him the International Seminar on Baba Farid was going to be a real intellectual experiment in secularism. Being conducted on such a grand scale as it was, it had not only involved the top National figures like the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, but had also invoked International response from intellectuals from the Soviet Union, New Zealand, Iran and Bangladesh, besides a considerable number from our own country.

Dr Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Speaker, Lok Sabha and President of the Baba Farid Memorial Society paid a rich tribute to the Prime Minister's State policy of non-sectarianism, which at the same time approved veneration for all religions and pointed out that centuries before, Guru Nanak, who had incorporated Baba Farid's Bani in the sacred literature of the faith founded by himself, had preached harmony and inter-religious goodwill among our people. He thanked Giani Zail

Singh for the handsome donation made by his Government to the cause of the **Baba Farid Memorial Society**. Some brief extracts from his address are reproduced below :

“The initiative to celebrate this important occasion came from a group of scholars in the Punjab, who were happily inspired to work towards this noble end. That this initiative to celebrate the Octocentenary of the birth of a revered Muslim Saint, who is still remembered all over the length and breadth of our own and its neighbouring countries with the utmost fervour of devotion, should have come from people other than his co-religionists is one of those happy chances on which our people may truly feel a sense of pride. Such veneration of Sheikh Farid is part of a valuable tradition, which began nearly five centuries ago, in the Punjab, the region wherein he was born and whose language he has left immensely richer by his spiritual poetry. This tradition to cherish the memory of this great man began with that other great son of Punjab, Guru Nanak, who spread the message of inter-religious goodwill and healed the wounds made over the centuries by fanatical propagators of hate and rancour between religion and religion. On this theme, which is expected to be developed in detail by the scholars who are participating in this Seminar, I need not say much here. It must however, be pointed out that while a secular approach to religion is a characteristically modern outlook, and is one of the glories of our country's state policy, such an outlook has constantly been emphasized by our great religious teachers throughout the centuries, and has given to our people those qualities of humanity, compassion and tolerance on which we very legitimately take pride.

“Among the great values imparted to our people by yourself, our honoured Prime Minister and by our great leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has been thus of tolerance and inter-religious goodwill. In this respect your enlightened state policy is a reiteration in modern terms of what has been in the best traditions of our country. The spiritual vision of universal humanity is part of our race-memory in India.

“Guru Nanak, born three centuries after Sheikh Farid, sought to unite our people through adherence to great universal ideas. He made the spiritual compositions of Sheikh Farid a part of the tradition which he himself initiated. These compositions, in beautiful Multani Punjabi form part of the Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, and are venerated by all Sikhs. Sheikh Farid thus, whose name literally means ‘Unique’, has the unique distinction of being accepted as a teacher in a tradition other than his own. He is also the first recorded poet in the Punjabi language.

“The **Baba Farid Memorial Society**, of which I have been honoured to be elected the first President, has with the active cooperation of **Giani Zail Singh**, Chief Minister of Punjab, who perchance hails from Faridkot—so intimately associated with the name and mission of **Baba Farid**—drawn up an elaborate programme of literary and cultural activities, including the present International Seminar, to highlight the great message of **Baba Farid**. For this the Society has been able to avail itself of the cooperation of a large number of devoted scholars

and University and College teachers, who are doing valuable work in fulfilment of these objectives.”

Giani Zail Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab, who has been associated with the Baba Farid Memorial Society from its very inception in the year 1971, delivered his address also in Urdu as a gesture of typical Punjabi warmth, especially towards the co-religionists of Baba Farid. He said, ours are times when translating of Sheikh Farid's ideals of universal brotherhood and amicable co-existence of various communities, was most needed. He congratulated the organizers of the Seminar and expressed his fervent hope for the success of the Seminar, which he believed would strengthen the forces of national integration in Baba Farid's true spirit. In his address, he quoted from Baba Farid's slokas to illustrate the loftiness of his teaching. Giani Zail Singh recalled Baba Farid's abiding association with the town of Faridkot which was named after him, and disclosed that the Punjab Government had given due consideration to building up the importance of this small place by establishing a new Hospital there to be named after Baba Farid, and opening a Medical College named after Guru Gobind Singh, the great saint who preached goodwill in religion and fought for the liberation of the masses from oppression. This he said, was in keeping with the ideal of service to humanity common to Sufism and Sikhism.

Dr Niharranjan Ray, the celebrated scholar and General President of the Seminar lauded the idea of the International Seminar and in his presidential address presented some thought-provoking observations about the times of Baba Farid and his historic contribution to his age. A few excerpts from his address are reproduced below :

“The historical reality of a composite culture which I have been speaking of, was not the happening of a day or a decade or even of a century or two, but was the result of a historical process, which was working itself out through a countless number of men of vision and an equally countless number of human situations spread over a couple of millennia of recorded history. This reality consisted in periodic influx into this ancient land of ours of large communities of people, in wave after wave, of varied ethnic types, and belonging to equally varied forms and levels of culture and civilisation from all over the known world of those days. They came in the wake of war and conquest, plunder and adventure, riches and romance, richer pastures and warmer climates. But for more than one reason, through the vicissitudes of resistance and submission, Indian society chose, for good or for evil, according to one's world view of things or personal emotional inclinations, to reject none and accommodate all into her body politic, integrate and assimilate as much as ran along her grains, and allow the rest to at least co-exist alongside her own. This explains why ours is the one country where one can trace all the hitherto identified and identifiable ethnic types of the world, where all the major cultures and civilisations of the past have left their traces and quite a few of them are still active and potent, and where one finds all the major world religions in varying degrees of active co-operation, influencing our individual and collective life in some way or other. Despite all this, Indian life and culture remains recognisably and identifiably Indian, not only in its essence but also in its general

form and spirit and character. It has also managed to have a continuity which has eluded the destiny of many other cultures of the ancient and medieval world. Also, despite cracks and fissures, conflicts and contradictions, it is still an integral whole, by and large. This is what is meant by the historical reality I have been referring to."

THE DISCUSSION SESSIONS—TRIBUTES

The Seminar, spread over two days, was attended by about one hundred and fifty delegates and scholars. Delegates from New Zealand, the Soviet Union, Iran and Bangladesh, imparted the international dimension to the Seminar, while eminent seminarians from India, drawn from various universities and colleges and belonging to different religious groups and communities projected a truly secular cultural sense of participation of the Indian humanity. Besides the scholars from abroad, the participants in the various functions came from Punjabi University, Patiala, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Guru Nanak University, Amritsar, the University of Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, Aligarh Muslim University and Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Over two dozen scholars presented papers on various aspects of the great Sufi Saint and the Father of Punjabi literature, Baba Sheikh Farid-ud-din Masaud Ganj-i-Shakar

Papers were presented, among others by Bhai Jodh Singh, Dr K. A. Nizami, Dr A. C. Banerjee, Professor W. H. McLeod, Dr I. D. Serberiaikov, Dr S. M. R. Jalali Naini and Dr Nasseruddin Shah Hosseini (both from Iran), Dr S. M. Imamuddin and Dr Mehdi Hussain (both from Bangladesh), Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, Dr Mushirul Haq, Dr B. R. Grover, Professor Sri Ram Sharma, Professor Darshan Singh Maini, Dr Attar Singh, Dr Avtar Singh, Professor Pritam Singh, Professor Alam Khundmiri and Professor K.A. Faruqi. All the scholars stressed the need for our culture for the revival of the Farid tradition and myth in all its multi-dimensional and multi-faceted greatness. The sessions were presided over *ad seriatim* by Professor Niharranjan Ray, Professor K.A. Nizami, Dr S.M.R. Jalali Naini, Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Khushwant Singh.

As emerging from history and from the papers presented, Sheikh Farid has stood as a distinct symbol of national integration and universal brotherhood of man through the centuries. The ideals of noble humanity, kindness to fellow beings, realisation of God, awakening and disciplining of the inner self, sweetness of personality and humility of the heart preached by him have not only been cherished in the bygone past, but are also lofty ideals for the present-day world which is fast heading for a catastrophic disintegration, as a logical sequence of its own materialistic growth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEMINAR—ABOUNDING GOODWILL

All the scholars expressed a deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to the holy Sikh Gurus, but for whose vision of a keen sense of the continuity of India's cultural history and spiritual heritage, Sheikh Farid's message would

have lapsed into oblivion. This fact becomes all the more pertinent when it is realized that the biographers and writers of biographical accounts on the life of Sheikh Farid and his descendants have not cared to take a serious note of his writings in his native Multani Punjabi. There is no denying the fact that the legend and myth that Baba Farid is, would not have been complete without his *Bani*, which is included in the holy Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Hence the collection of Farid *Bani*, from Pak-Pattan, by Guru Nanak and its incorporation into the Sikh Scripture by Guru Arjan Dev, found special reverent mention. This fact highlighted the fusion of the cultures in India through amity and understanding in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The International Seminar on Baba Farid is destined to resurrect the myth and legend of Baba Farid, which had, with the passage of time, been shrouded in the mystery of formal religious belief and ancestral reverence of ritual piety. The myth seems to have crash-opened its speculchre from within and taken a rebirth to join the life of the country. The Farid myth has been resurrected to sweeten the strife-torn international community and to provide an everlasting rope-way of free give and take among various cross-sections of the Indian Society.

This historic Seminar has successfully ventured to draw the Muslim community into the socio-cultural mainstream of national life by eulogizing and recreating the image of one of their most dear and revered religious figures, who was a benefactor of the masses of his time. The gratifying fact is that the need for reconstructing the Farid myth was inspired by the purest motives of reviving a noble tradition and a sacred memory. It was further motivated by the aim of strengthening the cause of national integration in addition to infusing a sense of cultural awakening and regeneration among various sections of the Indian society in particular and the International community in general. Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and followers of other faiths engaged in the noble task of breaking down national and cultural barriers, paying homage to a man whose life was full of devotion and service. Feelings of gratitude to the holy Gurus of Sikhism were expressed repeatedly for making this noble son of the Punjab and India living for the people.

In this way the International Seminar on Baba Farid has been a real achievement worthy of being recorded in the cultural history of India. The historic capital of India has witnessed once again an event which has in its womb the embryo of such needed national cohesion. The genuineness of this assertion is evidenced by the fact that the celebrations has been undertaken by a forum which is not political, but is cultural, academic and social.

The great labour of the organizers and their genuine sincerity of purposes were felt as a constant presence by all the participants. As a matter of fact, each detail appeared to have been meticulously foreseen and worked out. If, at all, anything seemed to be going beyond the control of the organizers, it was not because of any failing or lack of foresight on their part, but to the unexpectedly overwhelming response from the invitees and delegates who turned up in unusually large numbers. It only goes to prove the efficiency and skill of the

organizers who could inspire the confidence of people beyond their own expectations.

The signal success of the Seminar was due to the efforts of Dr Gurdial Singh Dhillon President of the Baba Farid Memorial Society, Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang Vice-President, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, Convener of the International Seminar and Professor Gurcharan Singh, General Secretary of the Society. The venture was a child of their imagination and the remarkable success of the function a result of their unsparing labour. They created an aura of selfless devotion and inspired their colleagues to work out the details of this important and meaningful event.

The indefatigable 'local' organizers at Delhi were Principal Gurdial Singh Dhillon of the Guru Harkrishan Public School, Delhi and his staff, and Principal G. S. Randhawa of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, Delhi assisted by his own staff. Without their unsparing efforts, the great success of the Seminar could not have been achieved. All honour is due to them and to all the others who worked for this at the various levels. The silent work of the General Secretary, Professor Gurcharan Singh, the Convener, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib and the Delhi organizers over months is evidenced by the resultant success of the function.

CONNECTED EVENT—PRESENTATION OF SOUVENIRS

Interpersed in the Seminar sessions were an Exhibition of Books on Sufism and Baba Farid and a Programme of Devotional Music. The proceedings rounded off on the evening of the 17th November with the presentation of Souvenirs on behalf of the President, Baba Farid Memorial Society to the scholar-participants from abroad. This delightful function preceding the valedictory dinner hosted by Sardar Inderjit Singh, Chairman, Punjab and Sind Bank was a warm-hearted occasion of general and affectionate goodwill, at which Dr Gurdial Singh Dhillon presented with his characteristic genius for loving humanity, five Indian shawls and India-made wrist watches to the participating scholars from abroad.

Souvenirs were presented to Dr W. H. McLeod of Newzealand, Dr I. D. Serebriakov of the U.S.S.R., Dr S. M. R. Jalali Naini and Dr Naseruddin Shah Hosseini of Iran and Dr S. M. Imamuddin and Dr Mehdi Hussain of Bangladesh. All the foreign delegates came out with grateful appreciation for the organizers in soulful and touching words. Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, veteran scholar, expressed his deep appreciation of efficient organization and conduct of the Seminar.

Dr K. A. Nizami, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University while giving his impressions said that the far-reaching results of the Seminar would be realized in the years to come. We are too close to assess and evaluate its achievement just now. It has created moments which inspire and which are destined not only to go down deep into our annals but also to reshape the cultural history of India, he said.

Sarder Khushwant Singh, noted writer and historian quipped that Sikhs who were great grabbers in the eighteenth century had grabbed Punjab from the Muslims, and now a still greater possession, Baba Farid. This warm tribute was duly responded to by the large number of Muslim scholars present. This

brilliant function rounded off the Seminar with genuine human warmth.

THE HOSTS—PREVADING SPIRIT OF FRATERNITY

A word of special mention and gratitude is also due to those distinguished personages of the capital who extended their warm hospitality to the delegates over lunch, tea and dinner on both the days. Professor S. Nurul Hasan, Union Minister for Education, Shri Inder Kumar Gujral, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Shri Radha Raman, Chief Executive Counsellor of the Delhi Administration, Khwaja Hassan Sani Nizami of Durgah Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia and Sardar Inderjit Singh, Chairman of the Punjab and Sind Bank invited the participants to various meals.

Khwaja Hassan Sani Nizami of Dargah Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya was 'at home' to the delegates at lunch on November 17, 1973. All enjoyed the proverbial Muslim hospitality at his 'Faridi Langer.' This lunch was prefaced by a session of Qawali music. The organizers, he said, had not only stolen a march over his co-religionists and direct descendents of Baba Farid, but had also awakened in them a sense of self-searching and stock-taking of their own heritage. This heritage, he emphasized, had many a live common links with the mainstream of Indian culture. Such ardent feelings have been registered with the people who have a distinct sense of belonging to the legend of Baba Farid through lineage and religious belief. The organizers naturally felt their labour of love being fairly rewarded.

The legend of Baba Farid, who did not accept the gift of a pair of scissors and asked for a needle instead, as he would not cut but only sew, had virtually turned into a live drama of fraternal embraces and warm hand-shakes. The needle of the legend worked through the hearts and spirits of the participants, who joined in a growing spirit of affectionate oneness.

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR

1. Dr S.M.R. Jalali Naini, Iran
2. Dr W.H. McLeod, New Zealand
3. Dr S.M. Imamuddin, Bangladesh
4. Dr Mehdi Hussain, Bangladesh
5. Dr Igor D. Serberiakov, U.S.S.R.
6. Dr Nasseruddin Shah Hosseini, Iran
7. Mr A.A.K. Soze
8. Professor Pritam Singh, Amritsar
9. Dr Satya Prakash, Hyderabad
10. Dr A. C. Banerji, Jadavpur University
11. Dr Mushirul Haq, Aligarh
12. Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, Ludhiana
13. Dr S. Alam Khundmiri, Hyderabad
14. Shri Siri Ram Sharma, Una, (H.P)
15. Dr Mohd. Noor Nabi,
16. Dr Attar Singh, Chandigarh
17. Dr D.S. Maini, Punjabi University, Patiala
18. Dr Avtar Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala
19. Professor S.A.H. Abidi, Delhi
20. Dr B.R. Grover, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
21. Dr K.A. Faruqi, University of Delhi, Delhi
22. Dr Jai Bhagwan Goyal, Rohtak
23. Dr Mohd. Umar, Aligarh
24. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala

CHAIRMEN OF THE SEMINAR SESSIONS

1. Dr Niharranjan Ray, General President
2. Dr S.M.R. Jalali Naini
3. Dr K.A. Nizami
4. Dr Bhai Jodh Singh
5. Sardar Khushwant Singh

OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE SEMINAR

1. Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, Chairman, Reception Committee
2. Principal Gurdial Singh Dhillon
3. S. Gurbakhsh Singh Bhasin
4. Principal G.S. Randhawa
5. Sardar Inderjit Singh
6. S. Charanjit Singh
7. Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami
8. Professor B.R. Grover
9. Shri Prem Parkash (Asia Films)
10. Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, M.P.
11. S. Buta Singh, M.P.
12. Maulana Ishaq Sambhali, M.P.
13. S. Rajinder Singh Bhatia
14. Dr Amrik Singh
15. S. Jasvinder Singh
16. S. Balwant Singh Sethi
17. Dr Gobind Singh Mansukhani
18. Sardar Gurcharan Singh

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS PRESENT AT THE SESSIONS OF THE SEMINAR

1. S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon
2. Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang
3. S. Bishan Singh Samundari
4. Professor Gurcharan Singh
5. Professor Harbans Singh
6. Dr Masaud Husain

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

1. S. Manohar Singh Marco
2. S.A.Q. Hashemi
3. Mr G.D. Sharma
4. Z. Sajidi Siddiqi
5. Mr Paul Gauhaon
6. Mr J.C. Dua
7. S. Hasan Mahmud
8. S. Navtej Singh
9. Dr S.S. Uppal
10. Mr Qmaruddin
11. Dr B.L. Goswami
12. Professor Ram Singh
13. Dr Taran Singh
14. S. Gurbux Singh
15. Shri J.S. Mathur
16. Professor Kishan Singh
17. S. Maheep Singh
18. S. Narendra Mohan
19. S. Kirpa Shamsheer Singh
20. Professor Piar Singh
21. S.G.S. Randhir
22. Dr Ajit Singh Sikka
23. Principal Balwant Singh Anand
24. Mr Shahab Jafri
25. Dr Harnam Singh Shan
26. Dr Surinder Singh Kohli
27. S. Gurmel Singh
28. Sardar Suba Singh
29. Syed Zahid Ali
30. S G.S. Rahi
31. S. Jodh Singh
32. Dr S.A.H. Abidi
33. Dr Harcharan Singh
34. Dr H.I. Sadarangahi
35. Dr H.U. Qureshi
36. Shri P. Suri
37. Miss Savitri Devi
38. Dr A.W. Azhar Dehlavi
39. Dr R.K. Sharma
40. Dr R.K. Sharma
41. Dr G.S. Mansukhani
42. Mr Nirbhai Singh

43. Mr B.S. Sajjad
44. S. Harjinder Singh
45. Principal A.H. Faruqi
46. S.P.S. Sidhu
47. Dr V.N. Tewari
48. Dr Nisar Ahmad Faruqi
49. Dr S.P. Sangar
50. S. Jasbir Singh
51. Syed Haleem Chishti
52. Mrs Pushpa Suri

53. S.F.A. Nagina
54. Mrs G. Harmohinder Singh
55. Mr Tejpal Singh
56. Mr Harmohinder Singh
57. Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami
58. Professor Gulwant Singh
59. Dr Malik Ram
60. Dr Harbhajan Singh
61. Dr Atamjit Singh
62. S. Satinder Singh Noor

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON BABA FARID

Inaugural Address

by

SMT INDIRA GANDHI
Prime Minister of India

It is a great privilege to me to be invited to come to this function and to inaugurate this Seminar. We are gathered here to honour a great son of India. In fact, the entire country has joined in paying tribute to a holy man who was a saint and mystic, a poet and a teacher. The Muslims regard Baba Farid as one of their great teachers and saints. But we know also that the Sikhs hold him in special reverence. In fact, I would say that he belongs to all India and to all of us. One of the essential features of the Indian tradition is to honour the wise of all religions equally.

Baba Sheikh Farid was the head of Chishti school of philosophy and the direct preceptor of Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia. Long after his death, he acquired another outstanding admirer—Guru Nanak Ji.

The eminence and radiance of his followers is evidence of Sheikh Farid's own moral and intellectual stature. Reading about his life, one is impressed by the manner in which he taught his disciples to overcome intellectual pride and how he adjured kings and generals to shed arrogance of temporal power. He taught that every one of the world's profound thinkers and religious men have taught the vanity and earthly power and possessions and the supremacy of sacrifice and surrender. Sheikh Farid stayed amidst the people because he knew that the purpose of religion is to cleanse the hearts and minds of men and women, to make them purer and humbler and more capable of compassion. As Sheikh Farid put it :
"God abides in the heart, seek Him not in lonely wastes."

It is perhaps understandable that legends should grow around such a personality. Giani ji* has told you about the basket of mud. The legend is that when he was working as a field labour to build the city which is now named after him—Faridkot—the basket filled with earth floated above his head. Fables need not be literally true but millions believe them to be so. What is uncontestedly real is the undying message and meaning that is contained in the Sheikh's sayings and poems, many of which have been preserved in books, especially in the Granth Sahib. In one, Sheikh Farid says :

"There are few saints
Who, though wise, are simple,

*The reference is to Giani Zail Singh's address delivered earlier (Ed.)

Though strong are weak,
And, though having not, divide
What they have."

Is that not a beautiful and lucid way to advise that one must reject the temptation of power and pierce the illusion of wisdom, that one must choose the ultimate simplicity and generosity of spirit which are the highest wisdom and strength? That stanza describes Sheikh Farid's own personality.

Scholars speak about the significance of Sufi mysticism. And mysticism has its own metaphors. But the simplest person can understand the relationship of life to death in lines such as: "Life is the bride; death the bridegroom will carry her away."

Sheikh Farid has been called the first great poet of the Punjabi language. Expressions from the common speech of the region coloured his poetry. He spoke of the song of the flying cranes of autumn, the forest-fires of summer and the lightning flashes of *Sawan*.

With its music and imagery, poetry speaks to the heart. Kabir and Tulsidas have transformed great truths into thoughts which are easily understood and words which combine truth and beauty and which have given a philosophy of life to many in our country and abroad.

When I go abroad I often hear people saying that India is a spiritual country and we know that young people and others quite often come from far off lands across the oceans to seek this spirituality and, as they say, to escape from materialism. Now we are not really more spiritual or less materialistic than any other people in the world. But what is different is that here in India we respect spirituality, we respect those who have stood for these high ideals of tolerance, of love of fellow men and we honour them. And in each part of our country we have had saints and poets who have profoundly influenced the minds and subconsciousness of our people and have become part of our very life, not just the life of the educated people, but of people, who live in the villages and even those who may be called illiterate or uneducated and who may not be aware of the names even of these great men are often found repeating their sayings in their daily lives.

This is how these people—that is, not just the kings, the generals or the people who led the nations in temporal and material affairs but those who gave spiritual guidance, this is how they have moulded our nation through the years. It is our cause today, as we strive to reach the higher material standard of living, to bring a better life to all our people, that is doing so we do not lose this guidance or the thought that has illumined our history through the centuries and I think perhaps this is the most difficult of all the tasks which our country faces.

I welcome the idea of having a Seminar because we should honour such great men not only just to honour their memory, but to make their teachings more widespread among all the sections of the people and especially among the younger generation.

May I thank you once again for the opportunity of paying my humble tribute to one who by his intellectual and moral achievement, by his deep love for his fellow human beings and for the land of his birth has illumined our history and enriched our heritage.

IMPRIMIS

Giani Zail Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab who made possible the celebrations of the Baba Sheikh Farid Octocentenary through his deep personal interest and inspiration and the handsome donation of Rupees Five Lakh to the Baba Farid Memorial Society made by his Government, delivered an eloquent and soulful address in Urdu on the occasion of the Inauguration of the International Seminar of which an account appears in the pages following. His address was received enthusiastically by the large audience presided over by the Prime Minister, and convened by Dr Gurdial Singh Dhillon, then Speaker of our Lok Sabha and President of the Baba Farid Memorial Society. The large and distinguished audience consisted of intelligentsia drawn from the various religious groups inhabiting our land and a number of delegates and guests from abroad.

In the course of his address Giani Zail Singh, an accomplished scholar of theology and himself so deeply devoted to the cause of inter-religious goodwill and communal harmony, dwelt on the humanitarian character of the message of Baba Farid, who eight hundred years ago endeared himself to Muslims and non-Muslims alike and whose teaching has since acted as a cementing force over

vast areas of our country. The love he bore in his heart for all God's creation elicited an enthusiastic response from the people. The holy Guru Nanak, himself a teacher with a universal appeal, made Baba Farid's *Bani* a part of the teaching of the Sikh faith, which it has since remained. Baba Farid's *Bani* is venerated by the Sikhs, through whose Scripture our Muslim brethren have now discovered this great spiritual treasure. This is one of the great national-building forces and our proud heritage,

As stated later in these pages, Giani Zail Singh recalled Baba Farid's association with the town of Faridkot named after him. Through Gianiji's interest in further perpetuating the association of the Saint with the town, a new railway station, a Medical College and a Women's College have been opened in Faridkot, all named after Baba Farid.

Giani Zail Singh quoted profusely from the holy Granth Sahib to illustrate the spiritual and ethical teaching of Sheikh Farid, with eloquent commentary.

Gianiji appropriately closed his address with these Slokas from Baba Farid's *Bani* :

Iku phikka na gālāe sabhna main Sachā Dhani;
Hiyao na kaihi thahi manak sabh amolven.
Sabhna mana manik thahanu mūl machangvān;
Je tau Piriya di sikk hiyao na thahe kahida.

(Speak never a rude word to any—the Lord Eternal abideth in all :
Break no heart : Know each being is a priceless jewel.
Each heart is a jewel; evil it is to break any;
Shouldst thou seek the Beloved, break no one's heart.)

—Editor

ADDRESS OF DR GURDIAL SINGH DHILLON

President, Baba Farid Memorial Society

ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE
FARID INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR BY
SMT INDIRA GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA
at Mavlankar Auditorium, New Delhi
on the 16th November, 1973

HONOURED PRIME MINISTER, PROFESSOR RAY, GIANI ZAIL SINGH, ESTEEMED SCHOLARS
AND MEMBERS OF THIS DISTINGUISHED ASSEMBLY,

On behalf of the Baba Farid Memorial Society, I deem it a great honour to extend to you all a warm and hearty welcome to this International Seminar on the great Sufi Saint, Baba Sheikh Farid. This Seminar, to which eminent scholars have been invited to contribute learned papers is being held in the present year, which marks the eight hundredth anniversary of the birth of Sheikh Farid, around the date when according to the Muslim Calender he was born. The initiative to celebrate this important occasion came from a group of scholars in the Punjab, who were happily inspired to work towards this noble end. That this initiative to celebrate the octocentenary of the birth of a revered Muslim Saint, who is still remembered all over the length and breadth of our own country and its neighbouring lands with the utmost fervour of devotion, should have come from people other than his co-religionists is one of those happy chances on which our people may truly feel a sense of pride. Such veneration of Sheikh Farid is part of a valuable tradition, which began nearly five centuries ago, in the Punjab, the region wherein he was born and whose language he has left immensely richer by his spiritual poetry. This tradition to cherish the memory of this great man began with that other great son of Punjab, Guru Nanak, who spread the message of inter-religious goodwill and healed the wounds made over the centuries by fanatical propagators of hate and rancour between religion and religion. On this theme, which is expected to be developed in detail by the scholars who are participating in this Seminar, I need not say much here. It must however, be pointed out that while a secular approach to religion is a characteristically modern outlook, and is one of the glories of our country's State policy, such an outlook has constantly been emphasized by our great religious teachers throughout the centuries, and has given to our people those qualities of humanity, compassion and tolerance on which we very legitimately take pride.

Among the great values imparted to our people by yourself, our honoured Prime Minister, and by our great leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has been this of tolerance and inter-religious goodwill. In this respect your enlightened State policy is a reiteration in modern terms of what has been in the best traditions of our country. The spiritual vision of universal humanity is part of our race memory in India.

Baba Sheikh Farid lived his life at a time when vast revolutionary changes were occurring in the history of our land and those in our immediate neighbourhood to the north-west. In that period Rajput hegemony over northern India was breaking down, and the rule of certain Turkish dynasties was being established at Delhi and further east. But in the lands where Muslim culture had a glorious flowering such as Turkestan, Kabul, Khorasan, Iran and Iraq, the newly assertive Mongol tribes from Central Asia were bringing about vast devastation. These very tribes later, during the life-time of Sheikh Farid himself, under the conqueror Chingiz Khan and his grandson Halagu overran the whole of West Asia and penetrated as far as Eastern Europe. In this period large numbers of Muslim scholars, divines and Sufis left their homes in Samarkand, Bokhara, Kabul, Herat and Ghazni and sought shelter in our country, which promised a peaceful atmosphere. In the high traditions of our country, these refugees were welcomed and they established their religious and missionary centres over Punjab and other parts of northern India. The famous Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, whose shrine at Ajmer is the principal pilgrim centre in India, came in the course of this wave of migrations during the reign of Prithviraj Chauhan, King of Delhi and Ajmer. Khwaja Muinuddin's disciple in the second generation was Baba Sheikh Farid, who in his turn had the great Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya as his disciple. Thus these holy men began in our country a tradition of piety, which was grounded in the spiritual doctrines of the Chishti Sufi order.

Sheikh Farid spent his life in voluntary poverty, guiding and serving the people. He was accessible to the humblest, whose sorrows he allayed with the sweet touch of his personality. He besides, made himself into a bridge of understanding and harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims and is known to have had spiritual commerce with Yogis and other spiritual teachers.

Guru Nanak, born three centuries after Sheikh Farid, sought to unite our people through adherence to great universal ideas. He made the spiritual compositions of Sheikh Farid apart of the tradition which he himself initiated. These compositions, in beautiful Multani Punjabi form part of Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, and are venerated by all Sikhs. Sheikh Farid thus, whose name literally means 'Unique', has the unique distinction of having been accepted as a teacher in a tradition other than his own. He is also the first recorded poet in the Punjabi language.

The Baba Farid Memorial Society, of which I have been honoured to be elected the first President, has with the active cooperation of Giani Zail Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab, drawn up an elaborate programme of literary and cultural activities, including the present International Seminar to highlight the great message of Baba Farid. For this the Society has been able to avail itself of the cooperation

of a large number of devoted scholars and university and college teachers. who are doing valuable work in fulfilment of these objectives

I shall be failing in my duty on this occasion, honoured Prime Minister, if I do not voice the fervent wish of my colleagues in the Baba Farid Memorial Society that it is befitting that our great Capital City should have a road or building associated with the name of this great Saint, Baba Farid, with whose disciple Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya this city has numerous associations. I hope that your Government which combines secularism with veneration for religious institutions, will give a generous and ready response to this appeal.

Before closing, permit me, esteemed Prime Minister, to thank you once again for your kindly associating with this Seminar by inaugurating it. Your association has imparted to it a great national, nay international significance. I thank Giani Zail Singh for the great encouraging response of his Government to further the cause sponsored by the Baba Farid Memorial Society. The Ministeries of Education and Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India have also made an encouraging and generous response to our appeal to them to associate themselves in adding further dimensions to the celebrations in connection with the Octocentenary of Baba Farid's birth. Dr Niharranjan Ray, the General President of the Seminar is one of the topmost servants of our country, who graciously consented to lend his help in making this Seminar a success. The distinguished scholars who are presenting the papers are known to be deeply learned in religion. I am thankful to all of them.

Organizationally, the success of the projects of the Baba Farid Memorial Society is due to the untiring efforts of Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala and Professor Gurcharan Singh, General Secretary of the Society. The Society has received the active cooperation of the Vice-Chancellors of Punjab University, Chandigarh and of Guru Nanak University, Amritsar, besides the learned Faculty members of several Universities. To all these scholars and to this distinguished audience I render my grateful thanks for making such a warm response to this occasion, marking the beginning of the celebrations of the Baba Farid Octocentenary.

Octocentenary of
HAZRAT BABA SHEIKH FARID

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION,
PROFESSOR NIHARRANJAN RAY

Towards the end of the first decade of this century, when we were not yet adequately conscious of the composite life and culture of our country and people, Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote a long lyric on the course and character in India's history and culture. Denuded of poetry and music of the original, in matter-of-fact prose rendering in inadequate English, two of its prefatory stanzas would read as follows :

Here on the shores of this great ocean of humanity which is Bharat, have merged into one body as it were the Aryans and the un-Aryans, the Dravidas and the Chinas, the Sakas and the Hunas, the Pathans and the Mughals. Warring their way through and singing the hymns of victory, crossing the deserts and climbing the hills and mountains they came in tumultuous crowds. Today they abide in me for all times, and none, none indeed is away from me, for in my blood ring the tunes of their varied voices.

What yesterday was a vision of the process of Indian life and culture through the ages, a vision which originated in a poet, is today the preception of historical reality of any knowledgeable but honest and sensitive student of our long history. But historical reality is not the reality of natural phenomenon, but a reality brought about by conscious thought, imagination, will and action of men in given times and spaces, directed towards the betterment of an existing situation, the nature of this betterment depending upon the nature and character, the vision and imagination of the individual or society wanting to bring about the desired change.

The historical reality of a composite culture which I have been speaking of, was not the happening of a day or a decade or even of a century or two, but was the result of a historical process, which was working itself out through a countless number of men of vision and an equally countless number of human situations spread over a couple of millenia of recorded history. This reality consisted in periodic influx into this ancient land of ours of large communities of people, in wave after wave, of varied ethnic types, and belonging to equally varied forms and levels of culture and civilisation from all over the known world of those days. They came in the wake of war and conquest, plunder and adventure, riches and romance, richer pastures and warmer climates. But for more than one reason, through the

vicissitudes of resistance and submission, Indian society chose, for good or for evil, according to one's world view of things or personal emotional inclinations, to reject none and accommodate all into her body-politic, integrate and assimilate as much as ran along her grains and allow the rest to at least co-exist along side her own. This explains why ours is the one country where one can trace all the hitherto identified and identifiable ethnic types of the world, where all the major cultures and civilisations of the past have left their traces and quite a few of them are still active and potent, and where one finds all the major world religions in varying degrees of active co-operation, influencing our individual and collective life in some way or other. Despite all this, Indian life and culture remains recognisably and identifiably Indian, not only in its essence but also in its general form and spirit and character. It has also managed to have a continuity which has eluded the destiny of many other cultures of the ancient and medieval world. Also, despite cracks and fissures, conflicts and contradictions, it is still an integral whole, by and large. This is what is meant by the historical reality I have been referring to.

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Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid happens to be one of the sign-posts in the story of the evolution of this historical reality, or else, I believe, we would not have cared to remember him and observe the octocentenary of his birth. He was a confirmed Muslim and Muslim proselyter at that, as so many of them who happened to find themselves in India in those turbulent centuries, were, but India never cared to remember them. Baba Farid too, was responsible for converting a considerable number of Hindus to Islam, which he seems to have indeed regarded as one of his missions in India. But this was *not* the central fact of his life. What was central and significant is that he was a Muslim divine of a very humane sort with a universal spirit—a Sufi mystic in the highest tradition of mysticism, humble, compassionate, embracing poverty as an article of faith and as dedicated as a man of God could be. He thus came to attain a personality, transparently pure and honest, which drew countless men and women to his ennobling fold. It was not the official Islam of the *muliahs* and *maulvis* that drew them unto Islam; it was the magic of a God-intoxicated mystic who lived the common life of the common people, which itself was uncommon.

Times were out of joint. Islam as a political power and as a religious force, was fast making itself felt, vigorously and not unoften, violently. In the midst of occasional upheavals in politics and consequent confusion in the contemporary social order, Baba Farid seems to have provided, in one distant corner of the Panjab at Ajodhan, close to the Sutlej, a cool and secure retreat where afflicted souls could find some security and succour.

A disciple of the great Moinuddin Chisti, Baba Farid left a disciple no less great, in Nizamuddin Auliya whose tomb at Delhi still draws crowds of Muslims as many as of Hindus. These three great names, Moinuddin Chisti, Baba Farid and Nazamuddin Auliya, are the three great pillars of the Chistiya order of Sufi mysticism in India—a great gift to the composite culture of this land, to the Hindu

Bhakti movement, to Kabir and Guru Nanak and the like and to the characteristic humanistic ideology that India reared up as a protest against the traditional priestly and scholastic Hinduism and Islam of the long medieval centuries.

As an initiator and leader of this protestant humanistic trend, as an inspirer of Guru Nanak, of the other Sikh Gurus and the Sikh society in general, and as the first poet and lyricist writing in recognisable Panjabi, but above all, as a humane and compassionate man of God who lived and died for the betterment of the essential quality of human life, Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid has already found a place in the history and culture of our land. We are here today to renew this recognition, for our own benefit.

VOTE OF THANKS

by

SARDAR KIRPAL SINGH NARANG

Vice-President, Baba Farid Memorial Society

MADAM PRIME MINISTER, DR GURDIAL SINGH DHILLON, GIANI ZAIL SINGH, DR NIHARRANJAN RAY, MIR MUSHTAQ AHMED, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES FROM INDIA AND ABROAD, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

In conclusion of these inaugural ceremonies, I render to the Prime Minister our gratitude for her presence here this morning. It was most gracious of her to have accepted our invitation and spared the time, especially when Parliament is in session. We have had from her a very inspiring and thoughtful address. Essentially, this is a theme on which she could by her emotional and intellectual culture speak most authentically. Harmony, integration and solidarity are the values she symbolizes and to which she has given the full weight of her personality and of her Government. These are the values which have come down to us from our seers, saints and sufis and which, despite occasional setbacks, have been the bedrock of Indian thought and culture. Spiritual and ethical values to which you, Madame Prime Minister, have referred in your address, would be taken up by Society, our youth and the masses. It is a most auspicious circumstance that the proceedings of this Seminar have been inaugurated by our esteemed Prime Minister and we could never be too grateful to her for her kindness.

I must also express my gratitude to the President of the Seminar, Professor Niharranjan Ray. Professor Ray is one of our most gifted scholars, with a spirit of dedication and commitment. Equally impressive is his versatility. Only three weeks ago he was presiding over a Seminar on "Jawaharlal Nehru and Social Change" at the Punjabi University at Patiala. His address today is as fresh, as original and well-informed as was his address at Patiala on a theme in another area altogether. The Farid Memorial Society is indebted to him for accepting its invitation at a rather short notice.

The President of the Society, Sardar Gurdial Singh Dhillon has guided its affairs with characteristic poise, dignity and energy. He gave personal attention to planning the form at and to all other details of this Seminar and I take this opportunity of offering him our grateful thanks. We also owe thanks to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Zail Singh, for his patronage and for giving a generous grant to the Society and enabling the Punjabi University to establish the Farid Chair in the Sufism. I assure him that the Publications Committee of the Society would

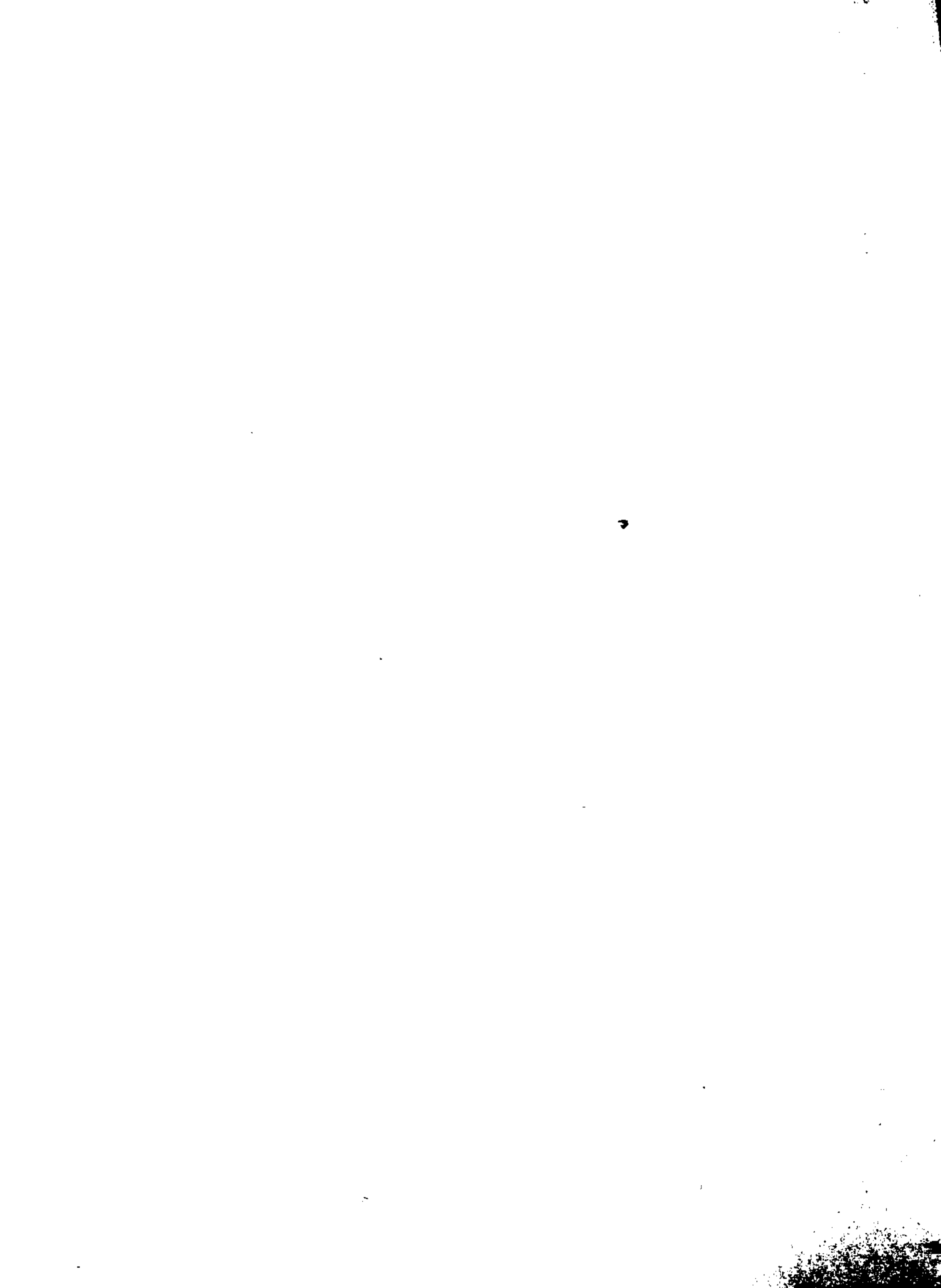
render the teachings of Sheikh Farid in all the regional languages and will send its publications to the college libraries of different states. I also thank Mir Mushtaq Ahmad and Shri Radha Raman for taking interest in our programmes.

Thanks are also due to the distinguished scholars from our own country and from abroad who have so kindly responded to our invitation and written papers for presentation and are here to participate as discussants. I am grateful to my brother-Vice-Chancellors—Shri Suraj Bhan of the Panjab University, Sardar Bishan Singh Samundari of the Guru Nanak University, Dr Masud Husain Khan, Sheikh-ul-Jamia, Dr Sarup Singh of Delhi University and Dr K. A. Nizami of the Aligarh Muslim University—for their cooperation in organizing this Seminar. Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib and Professor Gurcharan Singh, General Secretary of the Farid Memorial Society, Principal Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Principal G.S. Randhawa and other members of the Delhi Committee who have worked hard for this Seminar deserve our thanks. In the end, I offer my sincerest thanks to you all, ladies and gentlemen, who have graced this function, and especially the Prime Minister for her graciousness in associating with this Seminar.

JAI HIND

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PART-II THE PAPERS



EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON BABA SHEIKH FARID

The papers read at the Seminar have been divided into three sections, viz., 1) Historical Background and Biography 2) Studies in Seikh Farid's Teaching and Spiritual Experience and 3) Appreciation of His Poetic Creation. Since about 25 papers had to be presented in 4 sessions of an average length of two and half hours each, there was not much time for detailed discussion. As a matter of fact, discussion in the form of controverting any statements made in the course of the papers was not considered very necessary, as the writers had for the most part used sources and expressed opinions that have found general acceptance in the world of scholarship and belief. The forms that the comments made in the course of the session took were either to elicit further information on the points made in the papers, or to add dimension and depth to their substance and content. One point which could have led to discussion at great length, namely the question of the authenticity of the authorship of the Farid *Bani* in *Adi Granth* by Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar was raised after the paper by Principal Siri Ram Sharma, who had brought up this issue rather prominently. Bhai Jodh Singh in a forceful rejoinder asserted his conviction of the genuineness of the authorship of the Baba Sheikh Farid. Dr. K. A. Nizami, author of a well-known book on Baba Sheikh Farid and the chronicler of the Chishti Sufi saints to whose silsilah Baba Farid belonged, concurred with Bhai Jodh Singh's opinion. The general consensus was to accept Baba Farid's authorship of the *Bani* as genuine. The papers therefore, took up the study of the spiritual experience, ethical thought and characteristics of the poetry of the saint rather than raising any controversies or seeking to unsettle belief.

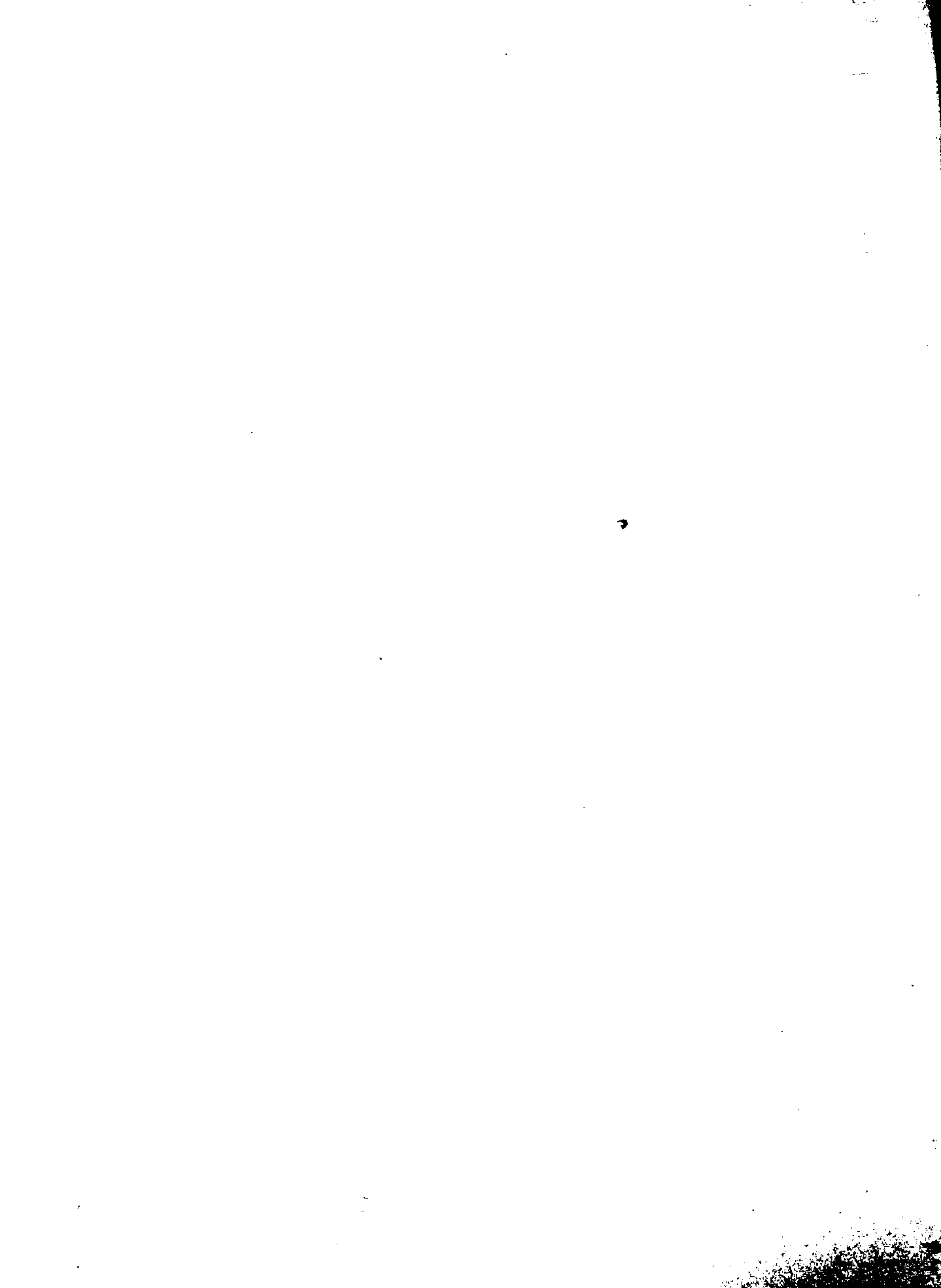
As will be noticed by the readers, the papers presented were of a high order indeed, both in point of the substance presented and style and language. Professor Nasseruddin Shah Hosseini, an Iranian scholar read out his paper from his original Persian draft. An English translation thereof appears in the pages following. While several papers represented studies, whether from the historical or critical point of view along what may be called the line of a one-dimensional enquiry, some others attempted to view the life, work and the poetic creation of Sheikh Farid from a multiplicity of angles and presented a synthesized view-point. As a matter of fact, such studies spanning more than one discipline and viewing religious thought and literature in the context of history, the social milieu and psychology

are highly valuable, and enlarge greatly the horizon of our understanding. In this category may be mentioned the studies of Dr W.H. McLeod, Dr Igor D. Serberiakov, Dr S. Alam Khundmiri, Dr Attar Singh, Dr D. S. Maini, Dr B.R. Grover, Professor A.A.K. Soze and Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, each of whom explored in depth certain facts of history, thought or religious experience in relation to Sheikh Farid. The paper of Bhai Jodh Singh whose scholarship in the field of Sikh Studies, is so distinguished, not only presented a detailed study of Sheikh Farid's teaching vis-a-vis Gurbani, but despite his advanced age, attended all the sessions of the Seminar and the functions ancillary to it. Dr S.M.R. Jalali Naini of Iran, a mature scholar of Indian religious thought, put forth the view-point of a non-Indian Muslim. Dr K. A. Nizami's participation brought in the dimension of religious history inasmuch as he is the author of the monumental history of the Chishty Sufism in Urdu, which has been published. Among the writers, Dr Satya Prakash, Professor Pritam Singh, Dr Avtar Singh, Dr Mohammed Umar and Dr Siri Ram Sharma is each an earnest student of religious thought and their papers will be found to contain valuable material.

While among those who prepared papers for the Seminar were scholars drawn from several religious persuasions, in the majority of the papers presented, the fact of Sheikh Farid's veneration by the Sikh people and the resultant inter-religious goodwill generated thereby was touched upon. As a matter of fact, in these papers will be found the study of Sheikh Farid as he is known to the non-Muslims of India, at an extremely high and scholarly level. Perhaps in no other publication is there such valuable material for a detailed study of the life and work of Sheikh Farid in the context of his Punjabi birth and his acceptance by non-Muslims. It is hoped that both the scholar and the general reader will find the matter in these papers a highly valuable contribution to a neglected aspect of our religio-cultural history. It will be a high reward indeed if the matter collected herein strengthens goodwill among religions, and the Farid Octocentenary celebrations and the International Seminar connected therewith leave behind a tradition of understanding and reverence for nobility of thought and personality wherever met with.

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB
Convener
International Seminar
on Baba Sheikh Farid

Section I
SHEIKH FARID
IN THE
BACKGROUND OF HISTORY



SHAIKH FARID-UD-DIN GANJ-I-SHAKAR

PROF. K. A. NIZAMI
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Commenting on the role of mystics in the growth of civilization, Professor Toynbee remarks : "It is through the inward development of personality that individual human beings are able to perform those creative acts, in the outward field of action, that cause the growth of human societies". One is constantly reminded of this remark while assessing the impact of Shaikh Farid on our society and culture. His life is one long story of quiet but persistent human endeavour to bring various culture groups and religious communities closer and nearer to each other and to inculcate in them a feeling that all human humanism, and restless concern for the weak and the downtrodden in society—irrespective of caste, colour or creed, gave to his mystic activity a depth and a dimension which touched the deepest chords of India's soul. Though seven long centuries have passed since he breathed his last—and during this period empires have been set up and pulled down and the country has moved from one phase of life to another, medieval institutions have yielded place to socialistic pattern of life, his message still goes on echoing down the corridors of time and his memory is treasured with love and respect by Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus alike. His mystic thought and behaviour has become the tradition of the Chishti order in India, and whenever the silsilah finds its moral and spiritual fibre weakened, there is a hark back to his traditions. When the Chishti mystic traditions were uprooted in northern India by the politico-religious policies of Mohd. Bin Tughluq, and the Chishti saints were driven pell mell into different directions, his teachings supplied the vitality to resurrect it and men like Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib relied on his personality in organizing the order in a new social and cultural milieu. In the Punjab his impact was the deepest. When Guru Nanak appeared on the scene, Baba Farid's sayings which contained the quintessence of the highest moral and spiritual values, were current all over. Some of these sayings found a place in the Guru Granth, while his numerous remarks, incantational phrases, litanies, wove themselves into the complex but attractive pattern of Indian legends. It is not without significance that the initiative for celebrating his 800th anniversary came from the Sikhs who deserve felicitations of all those who hold dear the values of universal love and tolerance in our society.

What gives such lasting fame and permanence to the life and teachings of Shaikh Farid ? In one of his very fascinating letters Maulana Azad observes that the value of an individual's life lies in the ideals that it sets before it, and

in the sincerity of purpose with which it is pursued. Shaikh Farid's ideal of life flowed from his concept of religion which was revolutionary in its content and dynamic in its potentialities. His God was neither a theological myth nor a logical abstract of Unity, but an all-embracing personality present in his ethical, intellectual and aesthetic experience and furnishing the inspiration for creating an ideal realm of values in a distressed and struggling world. He strove to understand Him in His dynamic relation to this finite world. It made him a citizen of that Universal society in which God is the supreme Intelligence and all human beings His manifestations. He sought to reach the Creator through His creation and identified religion with service of humanity. Again and again he emphasized the fact that faith in God means 'love of His creatures'. This revolutionary concept of religion has been thus explained by his disciple, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliyah : Devotion of God is of two kinds; *Lazmi* (intransitive) and *Muta'addi* (transitive). In the *Lazmi* devotion, the benefit which accrues is confined to the devotee alone. This type of devotion includes prayers, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, recitation of religious formulae, turning over the beads of the rosary etc. The *Muta'addi* devotion, on the contrary, brings advantage and comfort to others; it is performed by spending money on others, showing affection to people and by other means through which a man strives to help his fellow human beings. The reward of *Muta'addi* devotion is endless and limitless". This concept of 'salvation through service', brought the sufis into close touch with the masses whom they strove to help, to educate and to reform. Shaikh Farid used to say that a mystic became dangerously ego-centric if the overflow of divine love in him did not enrich the sources of his humanism.

Shaikh Farid articulated this concept of religion in the country's spiritual life, and with this ideal inspiring his life, he devoted all his energies to (a) reducing human misery by inculcating a sense of moral values and by eliminating 'fear' from the human heart which lies at the root of all human miseries. A careful psychological analysis of the people who brought their problems to him and the way he tackled them, will bear out this conclusion. Those who attribute asceticism or inertia to him do grave injustice to his thought and misunderstand the core of his activity. His was a life of faith, confidence, suffering and struggle. His advice to his disciples was :

"You will get honour in proportion to the pains that you undertake in your work".

In the words of Browning, one can thus sum up his approach :

Then welcome each rebuff

That turns earth's smoothness rough—

Each sting that bids thee nor sit nor stand but go.

He believed that a heart overflowing with emotion was instrumental in the progress of the soul. May God give you "*dard*"—with these words he blessed his favourite disciples. Secondly, Baba Farid strove ceaselessly to build up healthy and morally autonomous personalities in his disciples by removing their inner conflicts and tensions and by developing 'emotional integration', wherein lay the solution of the problems of a multireligious, multi-lingual and multi-racial

society. When a visitor presented a pair of scissors to him, he said : "I need a needle, not a pair of scissors. I sew and join; I do not cut and separate". The remark was symbolic of his efforts in all directions. He brought human hearts nearer and closer, believing that,

"Having one heart is better than speaking one language". He was the first Muslim saint of the Punjab who prescribed for his disciples religious litanies and formulae in the Punjabi language. He believed that what obstructed emotional integration was hypocrisy which drew a screen over one's personality and hindered its development on sound lines. Contradiction in one's feeling, thought and action was the root cause of all evils. He attempted through his own methods a harmony between these three. His own life was an example and an inspiration to his followers. After his death, his closest disciple and son-in-law, Shaikh Badr-Uddin Ishq was asked about the qualities of the Shaikh. He did not refer to his miracles or vigils. He said : "There was complete identity in his thought and action, in his exterior and his interior". This was the highest achievement of a morally integrated personality.

Shaikh Farid reacted sharply if he found in any of his disciples any trace of arrogance or pride, intellectual or otherwise. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya reached Ajodhan after having won his laurels in the highest academic circles of Delhi. One day, when Baba Farid was giving lessons in *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* to his disciples, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya interrupted him. Shaikh Farid discerned in this a trace of intellectual arrogance and punished him by withdrawing his favours for a few days. The admonition had its effect and Shaikh Nizamuddin remembered the incident all through his life. One of his sayings recorded in the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* is : "If you want to make the entire world your enemy, develop pride". But at the same time he used to say : "Consider haughtiness necessary in dealing with the proud".

Shaikh Farid advised his disciples to develop large-heartedness and honesty in all human relationships. His advice to Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was twofold : (a) try to placate your enemies and (b) fulfil your obligations. He believed in non-violence as the only method to solve differences in social life. Through his own behaviour he demonstrated that pacifism and non-violence in the cult of the strong and not the defence of the weak. The Guru Granth contains his saying :

'Farid, return thou good for evil,
bear no revenge in thy heart :
Thus will thy body be free of maladies,
And thy life blest.'

At a time when qalandars and jawaliqs made attempts on his life and the ulama criticised him mercilessly, he forgave them with a magnanimity which put even the offenders to shame. It was in his Jamaat Khana that Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, who was known in his earlier days for his superb debating talent and was called mehfil-shikan, learnt how to discuss conflicting points of view without creating bitterness.

Shaikh Farid selected Ajodhan as his abode, inspired by a spirit of social

service, as it was the most backward area in that region considered from the standards of those days. Once a place of great importance as the meeting place of the great western roads from Dera Ghazi Khan to Dera Ismail Khan, it was now an area with a deserted look. Its people were hard-hearted and stingy, and lacked in education and culture. Except *pelu* and *delah* no fruit was found in the surrounding jungles. It was an ideal place for a sufi anxious to work out the principles of his silsilah and try their efficacy in a hostile and barren locality. It may be pointed out in this context that it was Shaikh Farid who consolidated and crystalized the teachings of the Chishti silsilah in India. Shaikh Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer had to spend most of his time in clearing the ground and sowing the seeds, Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki had a very short span of life. Shaikh Farid, who unique as it was in the history of the Chishti silsilah, was blessed by both the saints simultaneously, gave a form and a content to the Chishti ideology and articulated it as a powerful factor in the life of the people. His eminence in the history of Indo-Muslim mysticism rests primarily on his ceaseless activity as a teacher of higher morality. He gave a pan-Indian status to his order and sent his disciples to distant parts of the country to propagate his ideal of salvation through service of mankind.

Baba Farid's *Jamaat Khanah* was a small building of unbaked bricks where all inmates slept and prayed on the ground. No discrimination of any type was permitted to operate in this building. All had to live under the same conditions. The inmates had different duties assigned to them. Some fetched water, others collected firewood, some went to the jungles to pluck *pelu* and *delah*. It was through the efforts of all inmates that a saltless dish could be prepared. "It was an Eid day for us if we had a square meal in the *Jamaat Khanah* of Shaikh Farid", Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya used to say. And what type of people had collected together in the *Jamaat Khanah* of the saint—government servants, ulama, businessmen—all disgusted with their professions and longing for a life of spiritual solace and satisfaction. They rejected the hectic life of a world torn by dissensions and disputes and devoted their time and energy to building up their personalities in consonance with the highest traditions of the Chisti silsilah. Let us not forget that it was at a time when hideous distinctions were being perpetrated between man and man. The Turkish aristocracy rolled in purple and enjoyed all the fruits of an expanding imperialism, while the common people toiled and struggled ceaselessly for their bread. The Turkish Sultans mercilessly dismissed the low-born people from public office. What a contrast to the ideals of Shaikh Farid! He declared as a corrective to this corroding atmosphere: "If you want greatness associate with the downtrodden." To him all human beings were equal, 'made of the self-same clay', whatever their race, creed, colour or status. Though within the political confines of the Sultanate of Delhi, his *Jamaat Khanah* was not a part of the Delhi Empire. It was at that time the only place under the Indian sun where the Emperor of Hindustan and a peniless pauper were received in the same way. The contamination of court life had not touched its spiritual serenity and classless atmosphere. Functioning as a community centre, it became the nursery for training mystics in medieval India. It remained open till about mid-

might, and a stream of visitors constantly poured into it. The Shaikh attended to the problems of all and gave them courage and confidence to face the trials and tribulations of life. Since all sorts of people—jogis and qalandars, Hindus and Muslims, villagers and the townfolk—came to him, this *Jamaat Khanah* grew into a veritable centre for cultural intercourse between different social groups. Some of the earliest sentences of Hindavi (the earliest form of Urdu) were spoken in this *Jamaat Khanah*.

Shaikh Farid eschewed all contact with the government of the day which appeared to him an instrument of exploitation. The author of *Siyar-ul-Auliya* says that he constantly warned his disciples: "If you desire elevation in your ranks, do not mix with princes". The same attitude is reflected in *Guru Granth* :

"Farid, those proud of worldly greatness, wealth and looks
Will of the Beloved remain deprived, as sand-hills of rain."

Stories about his marriage with a daughter of Balban, fondly circulated by the author of *Jawahir-i-Faridi* during the time of Jahangir, are a fiction and the story attributing a prediction about the accession of Balban is an interpolation of a later date. His real attitude towards Balban is reflected in a brief Arabic letter reluctantly addressed to the Sultan when a person who was in great distress insisted upon it again and again. Without any regal titles, he addressed the Sultan thus : "I referred his matter first to God and then to you. If you will grant anything to him, the real giver is God, but you will get the credit for it. If you do not give anything, the real preventer is God and you are helpless in the matter." Every word of this brief letter is dignified and shows the extent to which the Shaikh maintained his self-respect and dignity before the rulers of the day.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya has referred to his master one hundred times in *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*. A careful analysis of these references would reveal that the teachings of the Shaikh had become part of his self and he was a living embodiment of the ideals cherished by Shaikh Farid. The *Durar-i-Nizamiyah* of Ali Jandar, the *Ahsan-ul-Aqwal* of Kashani and the *Khair-ul-Majalis* of Hamid Qalandar refer to his teachings again and again. The author of *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, whose grandfather had lived in the *Jamaat Khanah* of the Shaikh for a number of years and had intimate contact with his family, records some of his sayings which are not dry aphorisms, but epitomize the essence of morality and wisdom. At a time when the mad race for political power was going on between the Turkan-i-Chehlgani, Baba Farid advised the people : "Do not lower yourself in an attempt to secure a high position". When Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar accepted to live in a building constructed by a Turkish amir, he expressed his strong disapproval of his action, and when on the dismissal of the amir from government service, Shaikh Ghaznavi also came under a cloud, Shaikh Farid reminded him of the principles of the *silsilah* and advised him to eschew all contact with nobles.

The *Guru Granth* contains 112 Shlokas of Shaikh Farid. The burden of these Shlokas is divine love, need for purification of inner life, value of penitence in spiritual progress, ephemeral character of human existence and other similar subjects. Striking metaphors and similes, mostly borrowed from the

atmosphere around, add to the effects of these *Shlokas*. They seem to be the gushes of a heart overflowing with divine love and constitute a valuable treasure of the Indian historical heritage.

An idea of Shaikh Farid's popularity may be had from the following incident recorded in *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, on the authority of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. In 1252 Sultan Naziruddin Mahmud marched towards Uchh and Multan. In the way his soldiers decided to pay their respects to the Shaikh. When the soldiers flocked to the city, all the streets and bazars of Ajodhan were blocked. How to meet and see the Shaikh? A sleeve of Baba Farid was hung up on a thoroughfare. Thousands of soldiers and others assembled there. The sleeve was torn to pieces due to the over crowding. The Shaikh himself was so painfully mobbed that his *murids* had to encircle him in order to save his person from the eager public trying to elbow its way to him. But an old *farrash* (a menial servant who spread the carpet) who was not satisfied with merely offering *salam* from a distance, broke through into the circle and fell on the Shaikh's feet, pulled them towards himself, kissed them and exclaimed: "Shaikh Farid! you feel annoyed and do not thank God for his blessings". The *farrash's* words brought tears into the Shaikh's eyes and he apologized to him.

I can do no better than conclude this brief assessment of Shaikh Farid's life and teachings with the words I concluded my monograph on the Shaikh some 20 years back.

With his traditions of poverty, penitence, selfless devotion to the cause of humanity and eagerness for the moral and spiritual uplift of man, Shaikh Farid remains alike an example and an inspiration to all men for all time. In the words of Shelley:

His fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light into eternity.

THE GREAT SUFI SAINT BABA SHAIKH FARID—A STUDY IN THE LIFE, TEACHINGS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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Born in 1188 A.D. near Multan, in the Pargana town of Khotwal, Shaikh Farid was the son of Jamulludin Suleman¹, a descendant of Farrukh Shah, ruler of Kabul. It was in the reign of Shihabuddin Ghorî that Shaikh's father had migrated from Kabul to Khotwal. It was here that his father got married, had a son Shaikh Farid by name, and, ultimately, got settled down.

The Shaikh's spiritual guide was Khwaja Qutubuddin Mohammad Bhaktiar-Ushi-yi-Kak², who before taking him under his guidance, desired that he should go through the ordinary course of studies so as to be able to benefit from him. Khwaja Qutubuddin had his seat at Delhi then. Shaikh Farid, in obedience to the wishes of his spiritual guide, set himself to the garnering of knowledge so as to be fully equipped with the requirements of a disciple of Khwaja Qutubuddin.

So, for his education Shaikh Farid had to leave his birth-place and to go to Qandahar and Seistan. There he lived for five years for the said purpose. After having completed his studies at Qandahar and Seistan for five years, Shaikh Farid went to Delhi and presented himself before Khwaja Qutubuddin, who accepted him as his disciple and enjoined upon him a certain code of discipline, so that he could serve humanity at large. But before going to Delhi, the Shaikh became one of the disciples of Bahadudin Zakaria, a famous saint of Multan³. Shaikh Farid remained at Delhi till such time as was taken by him to be gifted with divine powers and become popular himself. With the fruitful blessings of his teacher, The Shaikh's fame spread far and wide so well that people thronged to him in such a large number every hour that it was impossible for him to sit alone at any time. The Shaikh, therefore, decided to leave Delhi and go somewhere else for finding a quiet life. Considering Hansi to be a quieter place, he left for Hansi; but there too he could know no rest and peace of mind. But during this period, he passed through

1. Known as Kamaluddin Suleiman also, vide Badaoni's *Muntakhabut-tawarikh*, Vol. III by T. Wolseley Haig-page 19;

2. Son of Kamaluddin Moosa, he came from Ush of Farghanah. He profitted by the instruction of many saints of Baghdad and other places. He arrived in Delhi in the reign of Shamsuddin Iltumish. He was a great service to the people in general. He died on the 27th November 1235 A.D. His tomb is in Delhi (*Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. III by Jarrett page-363).

3. Badaon's *Muntakhabut-tawarikh*, Vol. I. page 132;

spiritual conflicts and could not decide what to do. With the blessings of the great saint, Khwaja Qutubuddin, he eventually triumphed over these.

When Khwaja Qutubuddin breathed his last, the news of his death reached Hansi, where Shaikh Farid at the time was residing. This greatly perturbed him and he went to Delhi to pay his last homage to his revered teacher. In the meantime the report of Qazi Hamuddin Nagori⁴, Shaikh Badruddin Ghaznavi⁵ and several other holy men⁶ who are at the bedside of the departed Khwaja, to the effect that Shaikh Farid should succeed him, was conveyed to Shaikh and since all the holy men were of the opinion that the mantle and personal belongings of Khwaja Qutubuddin should be made over to Shaikh Farid, Shaikh Farid left for Delhi and, taking possession of the trust, succeeded his teacher. But as was usual, Shaikh Farid found his life at Delhi, once again, without any peace. The people of Hansi had on the other hand, felt sorely the Shaikh's absence from there and requested him to return. In response to the repeated requests made by his people at Hansi, Shaikh Farid went back to Hansi, once again, in quest of peace. But at Hansi also his people did not allow him any rest. He then, thought of appointing someone as his deputy at Hansi, so that he could devote himself to the quest of truth. Fortunately, he could find in Shaikh Jamaluddin of Hansi⁷, a fit person to deputize for him. He, therefore, appointed Shaikh Jamaluddin as his deputy and set out in search of some quiet spot, where he could sit, meditate and serve the Almighty after having devoted himself to the quest of truth. His choice then fell upon Ajodhan. He decided to live there henceforth. Ajodhan is 80 miles south-west of Sahiwal in the Punjab and it has been known popularly as Pattan of Shaikh Farid, owing to its having been made by Shaikh Farid as his second home after Khotwal, his birth-place. It has been known as Pak Pattan also.

At Ajodhan Shaikh Farid married. He, thereafter, maintained a family of his own there. His life at this place was comparatively quiet. The local Qazi had grown jealous of Shaikh Farid but the Shaikh, gifted as he was with miraculous

4. Son of Ataudin of Bokhara he held the office of Qazi at Nagore for three years. He took premature retirement, abandoned the world, journeyed to Baghdad and became the disciple of Shaikh Sbihabuddin Suharawardi. There, he entered into intimate friendship with Khwaja Qutubuddin and after travelling to Hija went to Delhi.
— *Ain-i-Akbari* tr. by Jarrett, Vol. III p. 367

5. He had received in a dream the discipleship of Khwaja Qutubuddin. Abandoning all, he thereafter, undertook the toil of journey in quest of the holy man. In Delhi his desires were fulfilled and he received the office of the viceregent. Shaikh Farid had received the blessings of the saint's instructions along with others.
— *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. III by Jarrett p. 368

6. Among them were Syed Mubarak Ghaznavi, Maulana Majduddin Jurjani and Shaikh Ziauddin Dehlavi.

7. He was the descendant of Abu Hanifah of Kufah. His profession, originally, was to deliver discourses and pronounce judicial decisions, but renouncing, this office, he had become the disciple of Shaikh Farid. He had reached a high degree of virtue and so Shaikh Farid considered him fit for deputising him. It is said "To whom-so-ever the Shaikh (Farid) gave a certificate of Viceregency he would send him to Jamaluddin on whose approval the certificate took effect. If he did not approve, the Shaikh would say that what Jamal tore up, Farid could not repair."
— *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. III tr. by Jarrett p. 370

and supernatural powers, was able to overcome all the so-called temporary troubles and succeeded in winning name and fame owing to his simple and unassuming nature and also to his great spiritual powers.

The main basis of his popularity was his effort to seek oneness with the people he met and his sermons which he preached in the language of the masses. He did not preach any high philosophy, but simple truths affecting the life and conduct of the common people of the locality. He described his spiritual experiences in Punjabi, which was his own spoken language. His teachings, based as these were on his own experiences as an average householder, had a great significance for both Muslims and non-Muslims and served as a fountain of knowledge not only for the general public, but also for scholars hankering after the higher truths. Shaikh Farid believed that the mind is intelligence *per se* and it embodies right reason while it is free from selfishness. Again, according to him, intuitive knowledge is the key to understand the nature of the world; it is not limited to men, but, in a wider sense, it extends to all animate beings. The spirit pervades the Universe. Man imprisoned in his physical body, is sometimes separated from it. His intuitive knowledge, nevertheless, is the controlling power of man's life. The extension of intuitive knowledge is the meaning by which men can unite with Heaven, Earth and all things. The extension of intuitive knowledge is the extension of it, which comes with action. It is only by acting in obedience to the commands of intuitive knowledge that knowledge can be completed. Knowledge and action, according to the Shaikh, are an indivisible whole. Knowledge is the beginning of action and action is the completion of knowledge. As regards the question of life and death, the Shaikh said that if we can understand day and night, that shows that we have come to know the secret of life and death.

The Shaikh declared that Truth is like a torch, shining everywhere and the highest and the noblest function of every religion in the world is to show that knowledge, which goes for the establishment and realisation of truth. Self-discipline, self-knowledge, and self-control are the pre-requisites for the realization of truth. Religion, whatsoever it may be, is really a binding unit, however it may vary between man and man. But in the midst of even diversity, unity emerges and it is that unity, which helps to bring knowledge and peace and understanding among the warring elements in human society; so that humanity at large may believe that all religions are one and that like rivers, starting from different places careering through different courses, on reaching the ocean ultimately, they lead the faithful to the knowledge of that one and the supreme lord of the Universe, by whatever name he may be called.

The Shaikh, with such teachings as the above, appeared to the people who met him, a big ocean, at whose shores infants can play and in whose depths giant souls can swim. In other words, the Shaikh with his spiritual knowledge, was a mirror reflecting clearly untarnished ideas from every point of view. The universality of the Shaikh's appeal was well-known. The materialist found in it a code of daily life and conduct; to the men of affairs, the path of action was laid here; while to the devotionally inclined was clear the path of adoration, till he merged himself into the Supreme. The Shaikh, on the basis of his experience, had a clear

insight into the functions of the human mind, which is so just and so profound and so true to human experience.

All creatures in this world hold life and happiness dear and dislike death and misery. Since all like to live and love life dearly, 'live and let live' should be the basic ideal of everyone's life. This ideal can be achieved only if all human beings do good to others, irrespective of their having belonged to any caste or creed, for the heavenly bodies like the Sun and the Moon benefit the whole world and do not differentiate between the pious and the sinners in this world. There is a magic in 'forgiveness'. Its home is the heart. Existence must cease ere its power departs. Since forgiveness calms one's passions and sorrows, the Shaikh wanted his audience to remember the note "Forgive and forget" and act upon it, so that the world may see its tensions eased.

The other main teachings of the Shaikh, to sum up, centred round the following doctrines which were ten in number: Isolation of unification, the understanding of audition, noble fellowship, the preference of preferring, the yielding up of personal choice, swiftness of ecstasy, the revelation of thoughts, abundant journeying, the yielding up of earning and the refusal to hoard. By isolation of unification is meant the non-corruption of the purity of the belief in one God by any thought of polytheism or atheism. The understanding of audition enjoined on one listening in, the light of mystical experience and not merely in the light of learning. By noble fellowship is meant the society of the highly enlightened souls so that communion with the Almighty may be possible.

The preference of preferring means that one should prefer what another should prefer, so that one may have the merit of preferring. The yielding of personal choice is the surrendering of one's ego and thus, leaving oneself to the will of God. Swiftness of ecstasy is realized when the consciousness is free from anything that disturbs one's ecstasy.

The revelation of thoughts means that one should examine every thought that comes into his conscience and follow that which is of God but leave that alone, which is not of God.

In order to cut the bonds of materialism and to train the soul, abundant journeying must be undertaken for the purpose of beholding the warnings that are to be found in heaven and earth.

The yielding up of earning is with a view to demanding of the soul that it should put its trust in God.

The refusal to hoard is only meant to apply to the condition of mystical experience and not to the prescriptions of theology.⁸

The Shaikh was popular not only for his teachings, but also for his miracles, which made people see in him the divine light. On the basis of quite a few incidents he was popularly known as Ganj-i-Shakar—an epithet which means 'treasure-house'

8. When one of the people of the Saint's bench died, leaving behind him a coin of gold, the Shaikh, like the Prophet said concerning him, 'A brand for the burning'. According to the Shaikh, the giving up of all possessions is not prescription of religion, for even the most pious have left for their children adequate provision; it is intended as a measure of self-discipline, and understood as such.

of sweets'. Ferishta⁹ gives various versions of the derivation of this epithet. These versions are as follows :

Being weak from fasting, the Shaikh, once, going to his spiritual guide, saw his foot slipped. He, then, fell into the mud, since those were the days of the rains. Some of the mud, consequently, entered his mouth. But, to his utter surprise, it was converted into sugar. His guide, on his arrival had preternatural intuition of the event. He told him that the Almighty had, it appeared to him, designed him to be a store-house of sweet things and would preserve him in that condition. On return to his home, in that condition, he found that the epithet 'Ganj-i-Shakar' got known among the people so well that he was designated with it by all those who came into contact with him.

Another incident substantiating this epithet is associated with the Shaikh's meeting with some female gypsies (Banjarns), who, at that time, were on their way to Delhi with some bags of salt. They requested the saint to bless their bags so that they might sell the salt-bags with profit. The saint touched the bags one by one and, on their arrival at Delhi, the sacks were reported to have been found to be full of sugar

The third story also is connected with the Shaikh's childhood. While as a child, the Shaikh's mother, in order to initiate him into the regular habit of offering prayers every morning, told him that the Almighty gave sweets to those who offered their morning prayer regularly. She, as a reward, put surreptitiously some sugar, wrapped in paper, under his pillow. The child, thus, formed the habit of offering regularly his morning prayer. When he was twelve years of age, she thought it time to discontinue the practice, but even then the Shaikh found the sugar supplied to him continuously by the Almighty.

Subsequently, the Shaikh, as he grew old, had in him the miraculous power of turning into sugar whatever he put into his mouth. Even earth and stones, put by him into his mouth, were turned into sugar, it is reported. Owing to this miracle also which he produced, he was known as Gunj-i-Shakar or Shakarganj.

Shaikh Farid left this transitory world on the 5th of Moharram A.H. 668¹⁰, corresponding to Monday¹¹, the 5th September, 1269 A.D. at Pak Pattan in the Punjab. This place, at that time, was known as Ajodhan. It was at Ajodhan that the famous Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya¹², had gone to be the disciple of the Shaikh, when he was only 20 years of age and had, ultimately, succeeded in

9. Ferishta, Bombay, Text Vol. II (giving an account of his life); Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* (translation by Jarrett, Vol. III, notes on pages 363 and 364]

10. *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. III by Jarrett p. 364.

11. The text of *Ain-i-Akbari* gives Saturday as the day of the week but as per note of Jarrett in the book *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. III, page 364, this is not in accord with Prinsep's tables. According to Ferishta it was Thursday, 5th of Moharram of H. 760, but this is an error by a century, as he gives the year of his birth as A.H. 584 and his age at death 95 years would fix the date of his death in 679 A.D. Beale, However gives A.H. 664.

12. His name was Muhammad and he was the son of Ahmad Danyal of Ghajnin but was born at Badaon.

obtaining 'the key of the treasury of inward illumination.'¹³ The Shaikh found in Nizamuddin Auliya a fit disciple. He was, therefore, sent to Delhi by the Shaikh to instruct the people and many, under his direction, attained to heights of sanctity. Among those who benefitted from Nizamuddin Auliya were Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib, Shaikh Muntakhab and Khwaja Hasan in the Deccan, Shaikh Husain in Gujarat, Maulana Mughis in Ujjain, Shaikh Akhi Siraj in Bengal and several others in different parts of India.

The Shaikh had, in his own brother Shaikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil, a disciple. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya used to say that when he left Badaun for Delhi with the desire of paying his respects to Shaikh Farid, he met Najibuddin and was much benefitted by his company. Shaikh Sharafuddin Muneri, who was the son of Yahya-i-Israil, the head of the Chishtis, was also instructed under Shaikh Farid.

Not only this, Shaikh Badruddin Ishaq, a Sufi Saint, had himself admitted the intuitive mastery of Shaikh Farid, whom he used to meet at Ajodhan to have his doubts removed through philosophical discourse with him. He used to set himself to mortify his senses after becoming his disciple. The Shaikh gave his daughter in marriage to him.

After his death, Shaikh Badruddin Ishaq was also buried at Ajodhan. It is said that the Sultan Mohammad built a mausoleum over Farid's remains.

One of the illustrious descendants of Shaikh Farid in the 16th century was Shaikh Salim Chishti¹⁴ of Fatehpur Sikri, who was highly venerated by Akbar. It is said that when the emperor desired a son, he had recourse to Shaikh Salim, who assured him that his prayers would be heard and answered. Akbar promised to place the son, when he should be born, under the tutorship of Shaikh Salim and the Shaikh enjoined on him that he should be named after him. Akbar sent the Rajput princess when she was pregnant, to Shaikh Salim's house where she was delivered of a son, who was called Salim and who succeeded Akbar as the Emperor Jehangir. Though Shaikh Farid died at Ajodhan and his famous tomb is mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari* as existing at Ajodhan, which place was visited also by Timur¹⁵ and which is even now a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Shaikh's devotees. There are in different parts of India also a number of cenotaph shrines of Shaikh Farid. These shrines point to the popularity of Shaikh Farid in medieval times.

To the Shrine of Shaikh Farid at Ajodhan or Pak Pattan, devotees, not only from different parts of India but also from Afghanistan and Central Asia, came for the Shaikh's blessings. During the Moharrum festival as many as 60,000 pilgrims are reported to come there. During the afternoon and the night of the last day, the crowds vie with one another in attempting to get access to a narrow opening in a wall near the shrine, commonly known as the Gate of Paradise. It has been

13. *Ain-i-Akbari* tr. by Jarrett-Vol. III, pp. 365. After having gone through the ordinary cause, of studies Nizamuddin had received the epithet of Nizam at Bahhath and the Mahfit Shikan. He flourished from 1234 to 1325 A.D.

14. Badaonis' *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. III by T. Wolsley Haig page-18.

15. Badaoni's *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I by Ranking, page 355. According to Farishta, Timur with his army had marched to Shah-nawaz, where they took all the grama they required and burnt the remainder. From there he had gone to Ajodhan and Bhatner.

a common belief that anyone who could force his way through that opening during the prescribed hours, is assured of an entrance into Paradise.

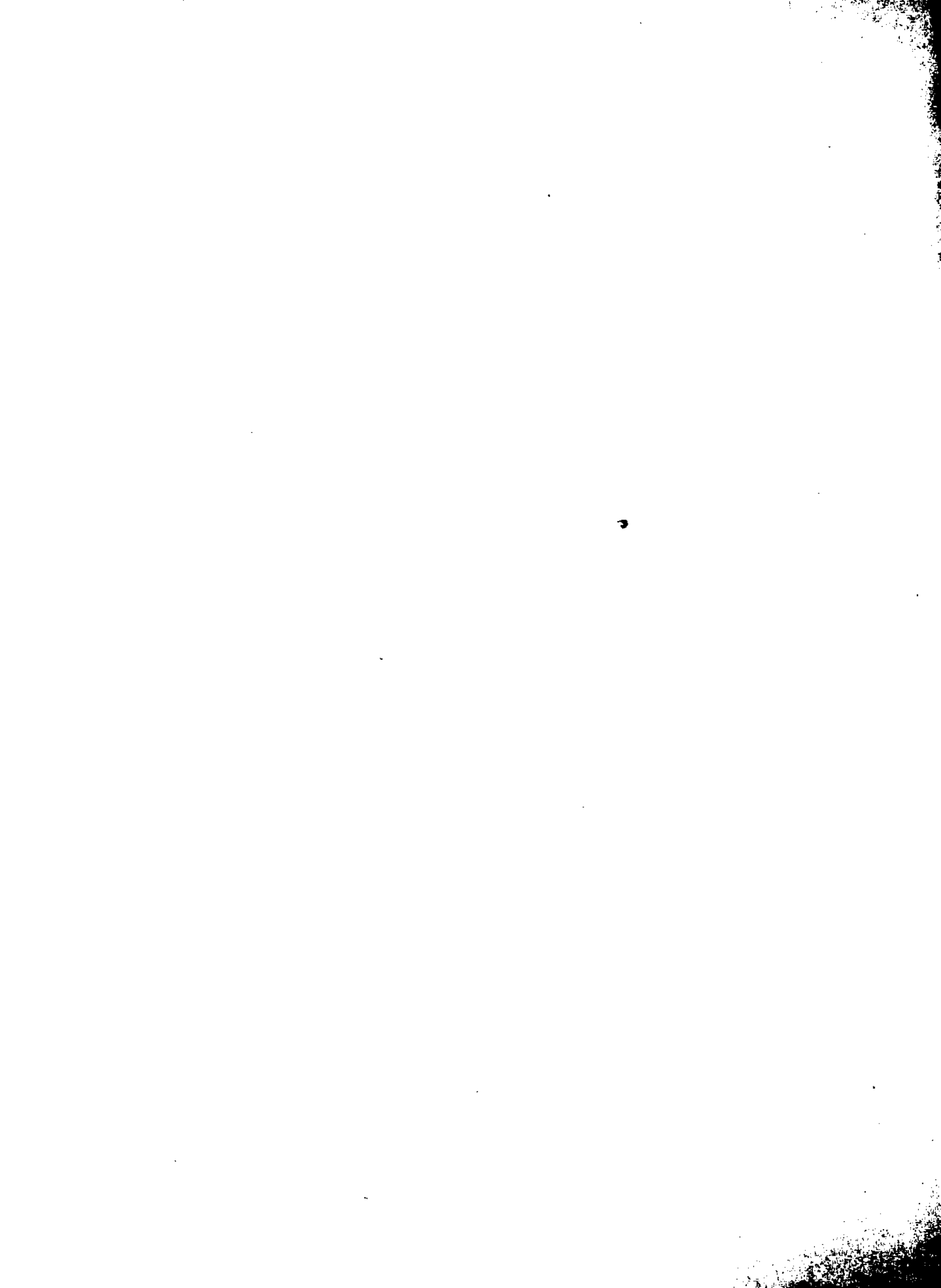
Just as the Shaikh, in his life-time, was venerated by non-Muslims because of his teachings having been in the Punjabi (spoken) language, the Sufi saint, several hundreds years after his death, could see attracted towards his tomb, not only Muslims but also Hindus and Sikhs.

It is said that Rai Singh of Bikaner, with his father Rai Kalyan Mal, ruler of Bikaner had gone to the Emperor Akbar, and while he was on a hunting expedition with the Emperor, Rai Singh in the company of the Moghul Emperor had visited the tomb of Shaikh Farid, whom he called the 'Pole Star of Shaikhs' and 'mine of salt, treasure of sugar and the unique one of his age.' There Mirza Aziz Kokah, surnamed Azam Khan, the jagirdar of that place, is reported to have entertained the Emperor and the Prince of Bikaner lavishly at a great feast and also offered him suitable gifts and presents.

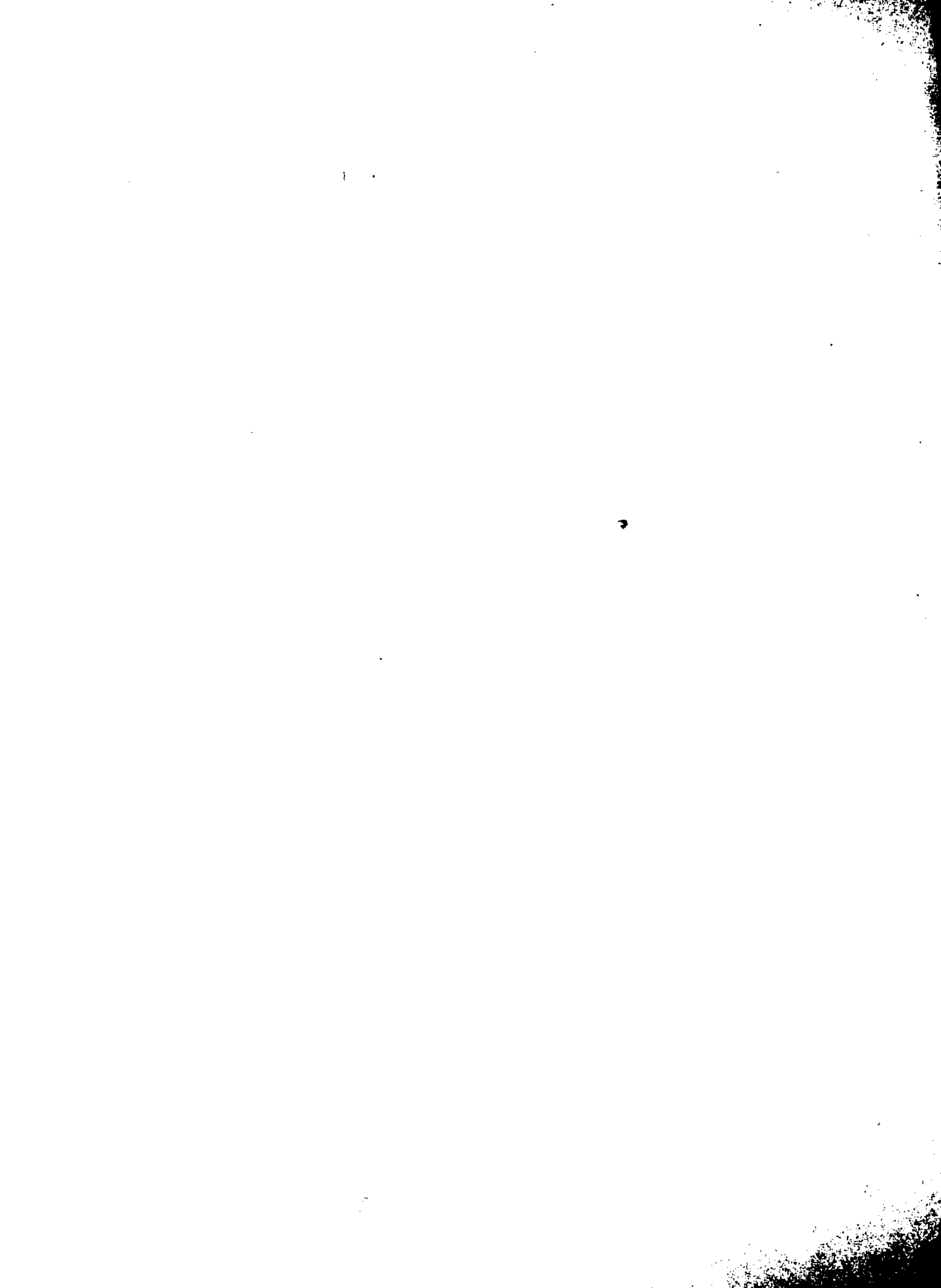
It is reported also that the Emperor, after having visited the tomb, went for a qamugah hunt in the neighbourhood of Nandanah and, in the course of four days, numberless game was enclosed and when it had almost come about that the two sides of the qumurgah had come together, suddenly, all at once, a strange state and strong frenzy came over the Emperor and an extraordinary change was manifested in his manner to such an extent as had not been experienced before. The Emperor had to order that the hunting be abandoned.¹⁶ All this was ascribed by the Emperor and his men to the sacred influence, which Shaikh Farid exercised over on the Emperor. The atmosphere was surcharged with mercy to all living beings.

Shaikh Farid, his disciples and descendants, even after hundreds of years after his death, preached the gospel of truth and helped humanity at large with his teaching. This is in the language of the masses, and has been preserved in the holy book of the Sikh faith, the Granth Sahib.

1. *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, Vol. II by Lowe pp. 260-61



SHEIKH FARID AND HIS TIMES



SHEIKH FARID AND HIS TIMES

SRI RAM SHARMA

Sheikh Farid-Ud-Din (1175-1266) lived during a very important period in the development of Islam in India. Himself a disciple of a great and very well-known scholar and saint, Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki, he counted Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia not only among his disciples, but a successor in office. Rahn-ud-Din of Multan and his son and successors in *Suhrawardi Silsila* Salah-ud-Din, Hamid-ud-Din Nagauri, Nasir-ud-Din Chairagh Delhi, Qazi Aziz Kotwal and Qazi Jamal Multani were among his distinguished contemporaries. He was not content with conferring his deputyship (Khilafat) principally on Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din of Delhi, but also acknowledged Sheikh Ala-ud-Din of Kaliar, Sheikh Jamal-ud-Din of Hansi and Sayyed Mahmud Kirmani among his disciples and successors. It is interesting that two of the internationally known places in India which receive honour from Muslims and even from some Hindus—are the tombs of his disciples, Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Aulia and Shaikh Alauddin-ud-Din Kaliar. Of the no less well known contemporaries who it is claimed, worked miracles during their life-time or on whose tombs miraculous happenings are still believed to be taking place to bring good fortune to the believers, there is no end. Genuine Tazkiras of Sufi saints and some not so genuine, give us a very long list of such great men of the times. Badayun, Hansi, Pakpattan, Delhi, Kaliar and Multan even today display monuments, though some in ruins, which go back in their history to his days or are connected with him or with some of his contemporaries, friends, disciples and even some avowed opponents who did not see the light in time. Chishti saints did not write any works. Farid declared that he had not done so either. But there is a faint but lingering tradition that he wrote a commentary on *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* of the great Suhrawardi saint, Shihab-ud-Din. This work had become almost a text-book in most Sufi schools, not for its exposition of Sufism as a 'mystery' or 'mystique', but as a treatise on 'ethics and practical mysticism', and we find Sheikh Farid expounding it to his students.

As the leader of the Chishti Silsila, Farid kept himself aloof from contemporary politics. But as his great disciple Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia was to find after him, that gave no security from designing rivals and proud and ambitious kings. But Farid's life at Pattan, a small town, if not a village at that time, in the heart of a vast jungle protected him against 'royal demands'. When Balban desired to confer land on him along with a considerable amount of money, Farid accepted the money and distributed it among the poor. But he would have nothing to do

with the Jagir. '.....he was not willing to bring himself down to the status of one whose main concern might thereafter become the care of the property so bestowed on him.' His attitude to 'property' was very clear. He would not seek it, he would not allow it to be hoarded on his behalf either. Whatever was received was immediately distributed.

He seems to have been troubled by the royal grandeur only once when Nasir-ud-Din on his way to Multan with his army made a stop at Pattan. Every soldier in the army desired to have the honour of paying his respects to Sheikh Farid. The entire army came to his residence. Farid was almost stunned at the appearance of such a large number of persons seeking him. He sought protection among his disciples who encircled him on all sides. But a dare-devil of a camp-follower made a bee-line for him, broke the circle and fell down and kissed his feet. Farid felt displeased. But the young man was more than a match for him and told Farid that he should not hide the greatness that God had bestowed on him. 'You should thank Him that he is so exalted you'. Farid was dumbfounded but accepted the advice. He took his stand at a place where these desirous of paying respect to him could easily reach him. On they now came, one after another till it was time for the evening prayer.

When a supplicant for his favour came, if he was in a mood to grant it or get it granted, he would ask him to bring a thanks-offering '(shukrana)'. This was usually some amount in cash, never very large. The supplicant would hasten to bring whatever he could. As soon as it was brought before him, he would distribute it among those present. His community hall was kept open all the times till midnight. High and low, poor and rich were all welcome and were served whatever was available at the time of different meals. But towards the last days of his life Farid had to face many difficulties. Very often he and his household had to go without a meal. Ajodhan was a small village. Even though Shaikh Farid had become justly famous in the countryside, the 'offerings' made to him do not always seem to have been very large. What he usually took was what could be easily procured from the jungle: wild karelas (bitter in taste), delas, pilu, all wild-growing vegetables or small fruit. Sometimes even not enough salt was available to take away the bitter taste of *karelas* or *delas*. Pilu of course were small berries which if ripe could be taken straight. When Farid died there was not enough money in the house to buy bricks for his tomb. Some bricks from a part of the wall of the house were removed to serve the purpose. Of course, he would not have allowed 'charity'...even offerings from his disciples.....to supply this need in his life and knowing this, nobody dared suggest that the difficulty be met in that way.

Sheikh Farid had arisen to his high position the hard way. He was named Masaud at birth. His mother put him to school at Khatwal, a small village near Multan. He was then sent to Multan which seems to have arisen as a centre of Muslim studies by then. His cousin Bahaud-Din was there and possibly they studied together for some time. As was then customary, the local mosque functioned as a school and in its rooms offered lodgings to such of the students as needed them. Sheikh Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar happened to visit Multan and young Masaud attracted his attention. He accompanied his cousin Baha-ud-Din on his travels abroad and

it was then that Farid-ud-Din Attar's name was adopted, by which he came to be known to the posterity, Farid-ud-Din, usually shortened to Sheikh Farid or Baba Farid. During his travels he met Shihab-ud-Din Suhrawardi, the great saint and author of *Maarif*. Farid now seems to have come in closer contact with his elderly cousin Baha-ud-Din Zakaria in whose Khanqah he spent some time.

He was accepted as a disciple by Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki and set about learning the mysteries of the mystic life under his instructions. Though by the time the Sufi Centre came to be established in India, Sufism had developed a creed, given almost the final form to its mysteries and settled its relation with the way of Muslim life then prevalent, Indian tradition of *tapa* (penance) seemed to attract some of its votaries. The 'chilla' of the Sufis, whatever its origin, came very near to being an adoption of some of the 'penances' the Yogis were then known to undergo. Young Farid in his ambition to do better than others sought his preceptor's permission to perform 'chilla-i-Makus' (performing his 'obligations' while hanging upside down). Though Qutb-ud-Din would not permit such a variation from what he considered the straight path, Farid was not deterred greatly to his sorrow in later life and spent sometime hanging down a well. In the evening as soon as there was no likelihood of the well being used, he would persuade someone to tie his feet and then hang him down the well by some support at its mouth. It is not certain where he underwent this penance, but when a distinguished visitor made a round of his students, Qutb-ud-Din had to take him to the well where Farid was performing his ansterities. His preceptor had probably by now reconciled himself to the waywardness of his brilliant and energetic disciple.

In 584 A.H. Qutb-ud-Din recognised Farid as his successor. Farid had just gone back to his village Khatwal and then taken his residence at Hansi. To receive some of the insignia of his successorship to Qutb-ud-Din he came to Delhi. But here his being acknowledged Qutb-ud-Din's successor increased Farid's standing and reputation among the people at large. Delhi was even then a big city, capital of the Muslim power which had established itself in larger parts of northern India. To escape the crowd Farid went back to Hansi. But his reputation followed him here. Now, or earlier on his way back to India from abroad, he visited Lahore and passed some time there at what later on came to be called Tibba Baba Farid, at the back of the Police offices there. It must have been a wild spot then in the heart of almost a jungle, which came to be cleared only towards the end of the nineteenth century, if not later.

In search for a place far away from human habitation, he at last settled at what was then known only as a 'pattan', a ferry across the Satluj. There may have been some straggling huts there going under the name of Ajodhan. It was in the heart of a jungle which was not completely cleared till long after when the Bari Doab Canal opened up this area to regular cultivation. Many stories have been told of visitors to Sheikh Farid or of those returning from his presence being waylaid by robbers or suffering great hardship on their journey.

He had been sent for by his teacher to Delhi when he had to be acknowledged as his successor at Pattan. But his actual investiture could come only after Sheikh

Qutb-ud-Din's death. Unfortunately Sheikh Farid was not at Delhi when his preceptor died. He does not seem to have ailed for long, but with journeying being difficult and hazardous, Sheikh Farid could not have been sent for to receive the insignia of office from the hands of his preceptor. Qutb-ud-Din consigned it to the care of another disciple who was commanded to deliver them to Sheikh Farid when he came to Delhi. Farid's arrival at Delhi and his investiture as the successor of Sheikh Qutb-ud-Din raised his status very much among the people there. Balban is said to have invited him to his palace, so that his womenfolk could also earn the merit of paying their respects to such an eminent Sufi.

He spent the rest of his life at Ajodhan in constant austerities, continuous prayers, but with an open house for all who cared to visit him. All were welcome at his community hall and shared whatever was available at his house. At night all laid themselves down on the ground for sleep. Sheikh Farid spent most of his time in the community hall and left only at midnight for his own small room. He had a bed no doubt, but it was almost bare of all furnishing. For a covering at night he had a patched rug which did not cover his entire body. For his pillow he used the staff that Sheikh Qutb-ud-Din had bestowed on him.

As a famous saint and Sufi, many types of persons came to visit him. Some came to seek his intervention in getting the wrongs, inflicted on them by other fellow-beings or state officials, righted. Others came to seek his blessing. There seems to have been a constant stream of visitors knocking at his door and beseeching him to alleviate their sufferings often by working miracles on their behalf. Now and again some perverse souls would call on him for abusing him for his alleged departure from what they considered to be the straight path or just for the fun of having the pleasure—or was it the honour—of having brought shame or disgrace on his head, surprisingly enough by their own conduct. There were those who brought offerings; but if any sought to buy off his favour, they were seldom obliged.

There was a constant stream of seekers after truth and of students. He continued expounding some of the standard works on Sufi life, organisation and conduct. But apart from that there were other seekers after truth, who sought enlightenment. There are current some collections of his discourses claiming to have been collected at that time. But Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's critical examination of their format and contents has convinced him and after him other scholars, that no contemporary collection of Sheikh Farid's discourses was ever prepared for circulation. Sheikh Farid is made to say in the genuine collection of discourses of Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din that he himself had a collection of his discourses made, but as it was against the Chishti tradition to 'publish' works, that collection probably remained with him and has now been lost. But some of the existing *Tazkiras* and *Reminiscences* of Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din not only recount what Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din remembered about his Pir Shaikh Farid-ud-Din, they indirectly tell us the sort of discussions, discourses and talks that probably were held at his Pir's place as well. There is apparent an affinity of thought, sentiments and conduct between Sheikh Farid and his great disciple Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din that we can easily infer that what used to pass at Nizam-ud-Din's court is very

nearly a replica of what must have passed at his Pir's court as well.

Taking the anecdotes told about Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din's 'house' and the stories he recounts about what happened at Farid's, certain things emerge immediately. Even though popular Muslim tradition credits both these saints with converting a large number of Hindus to Islam, there is no evidence in the genuine *memoirs* about either of them having made any such efforts. Rather to the contrary. In one of the musical services at Nizam-ud-Din's house we find him going into ecstasy on hearing it sung that every 'religion' has its own truths to pursue. We learn of a cordial discussion with a Yogi as to how the Yogis conducted themselves in their austerities. The story of their having made a large number of converts to Islam seems to have originated in an age when it came to be believed that no one, ruler, saint or scholar, could be proclaimed a great Muslim unless a large number of such conversions could be laid to his credit.

Then there is the very controversial question of music. Almost every night we have both Sheikh Farid and Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din holding these musical assemblies which usually, if not always, ended with some of those present going into a state of ecstasy which sometimes lasted for hours. Music was not a matter of entertainment for them; they did not use it either to drown their sorrows or heighten their pleasure. It were the contents of the verses and what they implied, the truth they shouted aloud, that sent them into a state almost of religious frenzy. Both Farid and Nizam-ud-Din would not have their attention turned from the inner matter of the music to the outer trappings by permitting the use of instruments in such assemblies. The noise of such instruments carried no message to them; on the contrary it might deaden the effect which the substance of the verses might be producing on their hearers. But as it was, there were enough 'law-givers' who proclaimed that listening to music and dancing, to which it sometimes led some of the listeners, were both forbidden in Islam. We find Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din at least citing precedents of the earliest Muslim history to maintain his point of view. The result was that the 'law-givers' were never allowed to have their way so far as the musical assemblies of these Sufi saints were concerned.

The genuine *memoirs* again carry many stories of the miracles wrought by Sheikh Farid. But when it came to theory, the Sufis assigned a very low place to miracle 'performances'. Though various schools give a varying number of steps from fifteen to one hundred—which a Sufi must ascend before he merges himself with his Beloved, to acquire the ability to work miracles—bringing about physical results for which no logical explanation can be offered—occupies the seventeenth in one hundred, tenth in fifty and fifth in fifteen steps in spiritual progress and bars one's way to further progress. Once again it must be remembered that the masses recognised the power to work miracles as a sure sign of spiritual greatness in that age and the writers of contemporary memoirs have naturally obliged their readers with a choice collection of them. To separate the miraculous from the factual is a very difficult task and few are well equipped to perform it successfully. Professor Muhammad Habib in his lectures on Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din made a very laudable attempt in that direction and has thus given us a credible account of Nizam-ud-Din's life and achievements.

Another contemporary trait which one cannot miss in these memoirs is the belief in magic. We do not find Sheikh Farid practising it, it is true. But we are solemnly assured that it was practised against him, resulting in his very serious illness. His disciples had countered it and rendered it ineffective. Here no great feat of imagination is needed to believe that the belief in the efficacy of magic could well have produced an antipathy to getting well. When the measure to counteract it were believed to have been taken, the antipathy could easily disappear, leading to restoring the patient to health.

But Sheikh Farid did favour the use of talismans (amulets) and issued them. So great was the demand for this token of his favour that a disciple had been specially appointed to write them. This was a great honour, and young Nizam-ud-Din yearned to acquire it. He found his opportunity when the usual writer fell ill and Sheikh Farid assigned this task to him. The very first day the demand for such charms was so great that Nizam-ud-Din felt exhausted when his labour for the day came to an end. Usually one or more verses of the Quran, and sometimes only a part of a verse, were given away as charms. But when a hair of Sheikh Farid's face parted company with the rest, it was at once reverently gathered up, mounted and kept to be used as a charm. We may concede that those who asked for these charms and received them believed in their efficacy, but it is open to question whether intellectual giants like Sheikh Farid and Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din shared the belief. There was a demand for the article and they supplied it. Its issue did not in any way go against their faith.

Later in the Mughal period a sharp conflict is said to have arisen between the ways of Sufis and the ways of the faithful. Some Sufis were suspected of advocating that the way of 'the law' need not be always followed. It is possible that the Sufis, like the contemporary Hindu Sanyasis, may well have held that they themselves need not always follow the law, particularly after they had passed beyond the earlier stages in their efforts at God-realization. But it is doubtful if they ever preached that the masses should not obey the law. The *memoirs* are full of the strong belief which Sheikh Farid and Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din held about the necessity of their followers—not others beyond the pale—discharging all the obligations of a pious Muslim. They advocated saying prayers, not alone, but in company with other Muslims gathered for the purpose. They emphasized that the duty of keeping the fast during the Ramazan should not be neglected for any cause whatever—not even for a disciple's acquiring blessings by accepting what the Pir offered to him during the hours of the fast. They suggested to their followers frequent study of the Quran and selected special verses for their benefit which they were asked to read on stated occasions or for securing certain benefits, both temporal and spiritual. They explained texts from the *Quran* and expounded doubtful and even not so doubtful points of 'the law.' More than half of his time in the discourses is used by Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din for this purpose and the same seems to have been the case with Sheikh Farid. Amir Khurd's *Memoir* of Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din's discourses devotes considerable space—about 30 per cent of the total—to the explanation by Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din of Quranic and Biblical cosmology, the story of the creation of the world, the waywardness of Adam, the machinations of Satan and the life-history of the prophets of the Old Testament. It is difficult even for the most orthodox Muslim to pick a hole in the

exposition of these matters in the *Memoirs*.

But the Sufis held some other beliefs and followed certain ways of their own which were grouped together as *Tariqat*. The severe penances, constant fasting, meditations, musical assemblies were but the outward signs of the way. They were told neither to beg for alms nor so to publicize the virtues and hardships of their life that these should attract attention and attract donations. The Chishtis could neither accept service of the state nor even state grants. Though Sheikh Farid is said to have married a daughter of Balban, the couple ran away from Delhi when they discovered the constant care which Balban took to lift them out of their poverty, in which Sheikh Farid would land himself and his household. But this 'demand' was not extended to their disciples. We find public servants of various ranks among the disciples both of Sheikh Farid and Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din. They demanded an honest life and straight-forward and righteous discharge of their duties from public servants, and no more. Though their discourses are full of praises of renunciation, they did not advocate that the men—and even all their followers—should renounce the world and lead a life of poverty and hardship such as Sheikh Farid himself led. Among those who are picked out for mention as the great and successful practitioners of the Sufi ways, there are persons following various occupations in life, some of them seemingly so engrossed in 'the world' that nobody knew about them.

The virtues they extolled are those which almost all religions seem to hold aloft. Patience, forbearance, forgiveness, discarding back-biting, returning good for evil and emancipating slaves, are praised. Seeking publicity, assuming grand airs, swearing falsely, adultery, and deceit are condemned. Jealousy and ambition are mentioned as great obstacles to a man's spiritual progress.

So far as the Persian authorities are concerned, they do not support the assertion that the verses ascribed to Farid in the *Adi Granth* are his composition. The *Janam Sakhis* asserted that Guru Nanak met Sheikh Farid. Chronology studied with care declared that this was impossible—Farid the founder of the Pak Pattan centre lived from 1175 to 1266 A.D., whereas Guru Nanak appeared some three centuries later. The Sikh scholars now concede that Guru Nanak could have met only the head of the Pak Pattan hospice who was his contemporary. It has been suggested that he called himself Farid the Second. Persian scholars suggest that the Farid whose verses are included in the *Adi Granth* could only have been Farid the Second. The *Memoirs* and other Persian sources do not lend support to the view that early in the history of Islam in India a Muslim Sufi knew enough Punjabi to endeavour to write verses in the language, especially when these verses stand alone for another two centuries and a half as a specimen of 'Punjabi literature'. Sheikh Farid himself declares that he had written no work and there is no reason to disbelieve him. These verses could only have survived as part of a work preserved at Pak Pattan. The *Lehnda* language in which these verses are said to have been written could not have been the local language of the people inhabiting this wild and uninhabited area when Farid lived. It was not the language of Jānglis of this area even in the first quarter of the twentieth century when irrigation facilities in the area opened it up. The verses cited as Farid's do not reflect either his special way or the way of the

contemporary Sufis of high status. Who chose them for inclusion in the *Adi Granth*? The obvious answer would be Guru Arjan, who handled this material early in the seventeenth century. That some of the verses are supposed to have comments by Guru Nanak might point why they were chosen. Guru Nanak's work was there in an authentic version. Guru Arjun could well have chosen something which resembled parts of it. Instead of the verses having been commented upon by Guru Nanak, one would rather believe that they were chosen for similarity of their theme.

Sheikh Farid was a great but unassuming pious Sufi whose austere life attracted a large number of followers. His teachings can be more reliably gathered from the fragments of his discourses or reminiscence in contemporary *memoirs* as well as from the trend of thought displayed in the discourses of his famous successor at Delhi, Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia. Some Hindus might have been possibly attracted to him either by his austere life or by his teachings which at places, where it seems to travel beyond Islam, resembled the Vedanta as it was then expounded. But there is no reason to believe he converted a large number of Hindus to Islam. Those Hindus who came to pay respects to him did not come for conversion. The large numbers of Hindus who visit Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din musoleum here at Delhi today or that of Khawajah's Durgah at Ajmer do not do so seeking a change of religion.

A STUDY ON SHAYKH BABA FARID

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Miracles were usually believed of the Sufis and the uninitiated masses felt drawn to their piety and even the 'Ulama reverently attended them and felt honoured when admitted to the circle (*halqah*) of their disciples. Of such mystic orders which arose to prominence in India were the Chishtiyah and the Suhrawardiyah, introduced respectively by Khawajah Mu'inuddin at Ajmer and Baha'uddin Zakariya at Multan.

The Chishtiyah derives its name from Chisht, a village near Herat, where its founder, Khwajah Abu-Ishaq resided for some time in the 12th Century.¹ It was introduced into India by Khwajah Mu'inuddin Sijzi (d. 1236), a disciple of 'Uthman Harwani.² He arrived in India shortly before the conquests of Muhammad ibn Sam Ghauri (commencing from 1192) and settled at Ajmer in the heart of war-like Rajput territory. Two other Chishti centres were established by his disciples, one at Delhi by Khwajah Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d-1236), and another at Nagor by Hamid al-Din. There was another centre established at Ajodhan (modern Pak Pattan) by Bakhtiyar Kaki's disciple, Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar (1175-1265)³, popularly known as Baba Farid.

The principal phase of the centralized activity of the Chishtiyah order ended about 1325 when its dispersal into provinces began. It spread to the whole of Hindustan and the Punjab and counted among its potential adherents almost every notable Muslim of the age. If Khwajah Mu'in al-Din introduced the Chishtiyah order in India and Khwajah Qutb-u-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki popularised it in Delhi and its suburbs, Baba Farid struck its roots in the soil and his disciple spread it far and wide. He is rightly addressed by Isami a "the ruler of the realm of spiritual discipline".⁴

In the development of the Muslim mystical movement of India Shaykh Baba Farid was an important personality. Away from the court he dedicated his pious life to the spiritual upliftment of man and his *Khanqah* at Hansi and Ajodhan became the meeting place of the rich and the poor and high and low alike. By

1. Sarwar, 222 quoted by Aziz Ahmad, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India 18 (Islamic Surveys 7)*.

2. Amir Khurd, *Siyarul Auliya*, pp. 39-40; K.A. Nizami, Chishti in EI, II, 49-50

3. Diya-al-Din Barani, *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Calcutta 1862, I, 343-4

4. Shah-i-mulki suluk, *Futuh-al-Salatin*, Madras edition, P. 8

inculcating human love and affection, he inspired everyone who came in contact with him, as we learn from the *Fawa'id-al-Fu'ad* of Amir Hasan 'Ala Sijazi and the *Siyar u'l-Auliya* of Amir Khurd. For long 93 or 95 years of his life from the interior of the Punjab he observed the fall of the Ghaznawids in the Punjab, rise of the Ghurids and the foundation of the Slave dynasty at Delhi at the cost of the Rajputs. While the Kings and Amirs were busy in hectic and restless political activity, Baba Farid sat coolly in his *Khanqah* preaching love and affection. Diya-u-Din Barani rightly observes, "he has taken the inhabitants of this region under his wings".¹

We hear of Hindu jogis and Muslim mystics freely mixing to discuss religious and social problems. Amir Hasan has preserved for us an account of one such discussion in which Farid al-Din took part.²

He often recited the verse :

In both the worlds Thou alone art the object that I cherish; I die for Thee and I live for Thee.

Baba Farid's grandfather Qadi Shu'aib probably due to the Ghuzz invasion (552/1157) migrated with his three sons from Kabul to Lahore and settled as qadi at Kahtwal (Dist. Multan) on the banks of the Satluj. One of his three sons was Jamaluddin Sulaiman, father of Shaykh Farid.

Jamaluddin married Qarsum Bibi, a daughter of Shaykh Wajihuddin Khojendi in Kahtwal (now a village and known as Chavali Masha'ikh). Jamaluddin had three sons, Izzuddin Mahmud, Farid-ud-din Masa'ud and Najib-ud-din Muhammad Mutawakkil. Farid-ud-din Masa'ud was born in 571/1175 or according to others two years earlier, in 569/1173. Some traced his descent from Farrukh Shah king or noble of Kabul, but others from the Caliph 'Umar.³

Baba Farid had his early education at Kahtwal and went to Multan at the age of 18 years to receive higher education from Maulanan Minhaj-ud-din Tirmidhi, who used to teach in his mosque madrasah near the Sarai-Halwa'i. Farid committed to memory the *Qur'an* and recited it once in twentyfour hours. There he met and took *Baiat* (initiation) at the hands of Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki whom he accompanied to Delhi. Under his inspired guidance he completed his mystic training, living in a cell of the *Khanqah* of Khwajah Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki at Delhi. There he met Khwajah Mu'in-uddin Chishti and was blessed by both master and master's Master—Bakhtiyar Kaki and Mu'in-uddin Chishti. It was a unique honour in the history of the Chishtiyah order (*Silsilah*). Khwajah Ajmeri bestowed upon him his robe and Shaykh Qutb-ud-din conferred his *dastar* (turban) and other articles of *Khilafat*.⁴

At the time of compiling *Siyarul Auliya*, years after the death of Baba Farid, Amir Khurd thus paid tribute to Shaykh Farid :

1. *Ta'rikh-i-Firuzshahi*, P. 112.

2. *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, BMMS or 1806, fol. 125; of. Shams Siraj Afif, *Ta'rikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Calcutta 1890. 370.

3. Allah-Diya, *Siyarul Aqtab*, P. 163, *Gulzar-i-Abrar* MS.

4. *Allah-Diya-Siyarul Aqtab*, P. 166; Cf. Dr Muhammed Baqar, *Qasr-ul-Arifin* P. 374; Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi, *Akhbarul Akhyar fi Asrarul Abrar*, 1270, P. 61.

The two saints have bestowed the two worlds on thee,
Thou hast received kingship from these kings of the age,
The realms of this and the other world certainly belongs to thee.
The entire creation has been, in fact, assigned to thee.

These verses were not recited *extempore* at the time of conferring spiritual blessings on the Shaykh as recorded in the *Siyarul Aqtab* (P. 166).

After completing his course of mystic discipline at Delhi, Baba Farid settled at Hansi in the Punjab where once came Maulana Nur Turk, an excellent speaker and an eminent mystic who introduced Baba Farid to the public by addressing him as *Sarraf-i-sukhan* (the appraiser of true speech). Shaykh Jamal-ud-din joined his discipline and lived at Hansi for 12 years. Baba Farid lived at Hansi for about 19 or 20 years. On the death of his mystic teacher Khwajah Qutubuddin (Bakhtiyar Kaki) Shaykh Fariduddin went to Delhi, where he received the mystic regalia of Khawajah Qutubuddin from Qadi Hamid uddin Nagauri. But a few months after Sultan Iltutmish also died (1236) and political intrigue began. To keep himself away from this, Baba Farid left Delhi for the lonely place of Hansi. And further to avoid the stream of visitors the Shaykh shifted to Kahtwal and then again to Ajodhan (Pak Pattan) where he lived till he died in 1265. Because of his fame he earned animosity of the local officers, jagirdars and even of the Qadi and Governor of Ajodhan. But as he cared little for worldly power and government patronage none could do him harm. For want of food and clothing his family members had to live a very hard life and suffered from starvation.¹ The Shaykh lived a life of poverty and distress. Once Shaykh Nizam-uddin Auliya purchased some salt on credit and prepared *delahs*. When the dish was served Shaykh Farid asked him to remove the dish from the *Jama'at Khanah* and admonished him thus :

Dervishes prefer dying of starvation to incurring any debt for the satisfaction of their (baser) desires.

Debt and Resignation are poles apart and cannot subsist together.²

Whatever came as *futuh* to the Shaykh's *Jama'at Khanah* at Ajodhan was distributed and nothing was kept for the morrow, because that meant lack of trust in God. Just opposite to the Chishtiyah principle of *tuwakkul* the Suhrwardiyah *Khanqah* of Shaykh Baha'uddin Zakariyah at Multan was a sumptuous palace and well-furnished.³ Shaykh Farid was not only a great mystic, but also a scholar and poet.

His grave at Ajodhan became a revered place of visit. Annual 'urs is held there in the month of Muharram when people from every walk of life come in thousands to pay homage to this great soul, reciting "*Allah Subhanahu Muhammad Char yar wa Haji Qutb Farid*" "*Baba Farid wa Haji Qutb Farid*."⁴

1. *Akhbarul-Akhyar*, P. 62

2. *Siyarul Auliya*, P. 66; Darwesh Jamali, *Siyarul' Arifin*, Delhi 1311, P. 62; Cf. *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, P. 62.

3. *Fawa'idul-Fu'ad*, P. 136.

4. Cf. Maulvi Ahmad Ali, *Qasr-ul-Arifan* ed by Dr. Muhammad Baqir in *Oriental College Magazine*, Lahore, Vol. 41 May 1965, 218-19.

The Shaykh had five sons and three daughters, namely Khwajah Nasir-uddin, Khwajah Shihabuddin, Shaykh Badruddin Sulaiman, Shaykh Nizam-ud-din, Shaykh Ya'qub, Bibi Masturah, Bibi Sharifah and Bibi Fatimah.¹

Among his Khalifahs were Shaykh Najibuddin Mutawakkil, Maulana Badruddin Is-haq, Shaykh Jamaluddin Hanswi, Shaykh Nizamuddin Auliya, Shaykh 'Arif, Shaykh 'Ali Sabir, Maulana Fakhruddin Safahani.²

The earliest and the most authentic sources are the conversations of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya compiled by Amir Hasan Sijzi under the title *Fawa'id-Fu'ad* and those of Shaykh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh-i-Delhi, compiled by Hamid Qalandar under the title *Khayr ul-Majalis*. As a devoted disciple of Baba Farid, Shaykh Nizam ul-Din Auliya refers to him again and again in his work compiled by Sijzi. Shaykh Nasir al-Din related faithfully whatever he heard from Shaykh Nizam ul-Din Auliya. Another important source is the *Siyarul Auliya* written by Saiyed Muhammad bin Mubarak Kirmani known as Amir Khurd, a disciple of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya. Amir Khurd (752-90/1351-88) recorded stories he heard from his grandfather Saiyed Muhammad Kirmani who served Baba Farid for 18 years, and from his father Saiyed Nur ul-Din Mubarak, a disciple of Shaykh Farid and also what he heard from Shaykh Nizam ul-Din.

In the 17th Century a number of *Tadhkiraht* (biographies of saints) were written. In this literature the *Akhbar al-Akhyar* is decidedly the best. It was composed by Shaykh 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi. The author being a trained muhaddith, has utilised the sources critically and has carefully applied the *Usual-i-Asnad* (critique of evidence) to his study of medieval Indian Muslim saints. There is given a vivid account of Baba Farid's devotion, *Kashf* and *Karamat*.³ Maulana 'Abd ul-Rahman (d-1094/1683), a descendant of Shaykh Ahmad Abd ul-Haqq Rudaulwi and a Chief of Chishtiyah order at Rudauli composed among other works *Mir' at-i-Masa' udi*, a detailed account of Baba Farid, his sons and disciples, but it is not a critical account. It has not been published as yet. Its Mss are preserved in the libraries of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, Bankipur, Asafiyah and British Museum. Among the modern writers Khaliq Ahmad Nizami has made a special study on Shaykh Baba Farid Shakargunj, leaving little scope for others to proceed on the line until new materials are found.

1. *Siyarul Auliya*, P-186; *Qasr Arifan*, PP. 393-96.
2. *Siyarul Auliya*, PP. 167-85; Cf. *Qasrul-Arifan*, PP. 388-93.
3. Cf. the *Akhbarul Akhyar*, PP. 61-64.

PLACE OF SHAIKH FARID OF THE CHISHTIYA SUFI ORDER IN THE DOMAIN OF INDIAN CULTURE

Dr. MAHDI HUSAIN

Shaikh Farid or Baba Farid (571-665/1175-1265) better known as Shaikh Faridu'ddin Gunj-i-Shakar—a leading mystic of the medieval world—who inspired the Musalmans as well as the Hindus of his age holds a very high position in the domain of medieval Indian culture the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries Hijra/13th, 14th and 15th centuries A.D. Born and bred in Sufi environments and trained in the school of adversity, Shaikh Faridu'ddin became Faridul Haqq, the 'refuge of kings and sovereigns in the domain of Sufism' according to Isami,¹ the Sufi poet-historian of 8th century Hijra/14th century A.D. When Balban, says Mir Khurd,² author of the *Siyarul Auliya*, appeared before Shaikh Farid in his Khanqah at Ajodhan with the object of seeking his blessings before ascending the throne, the Shaikh wished him well, saying :

Faridun was neither an angel, nor was he made of ambergris. He obtained the throne through his bounty and generosity. If you do justice and be generous you would become a Faridun.

But the Shaikh did not accept the gold which, dished up, Balban had desired to present to him.

Amir Hasan, himself a distinguished Sufi, and a believer in the spiritual greatness of Shaikh Farid relates a story in his *Fawaidul Fu'al*, saying :

'In the month of Shawwal 661 Hijra Sultan Nasiru'ddin Mahmud of Delhi (644-665/1266) marched towards Uchch and Multan. On the way his soldiers decided to pay their respects to the great shaikh of Ajodhan, when the soldiers flocked to the place. How to meet and see the Shaikh, this was the problem.

1. Isami—*Futuhus-Salatin* (Agra, 1938), verse 145

Isami considers Shaikh Farid as founder of the Chishtiya *silsilah*. In fact the founder of the Chishtiya *silsilah* was one Khwaja Abu Ishaq of Syia (*Siyarul Auliya*, PP. 39-40 and *Nafhatul Uns*, P. 296) who lived in Chisht. After twenty years of discipleship under Khwaja Usman Haruni Chisti, Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti set out from Sistan; and travelling through Arabia, Iraq, Iran and what is now called Afghanistan, he entered India and finally came to Ajmer in 592 Hijra 1195 where he died at the age of ninety-four in 634 Hijra/ A.D. 1236. He was born in 537/1142.

2. *Siyarul Auliya* P. 79-80.

A sleeve of Baba Farid's shirt was hung up on a thoroughfare. An ocean of humanity began to surge. The sleeve was torn to pieces due to overcrowding. The Shaikh himself was tormented by the aggressive mob hanging about him; he requested his *murids* to encircle him in order to save his person from the mob. Amidst this turmoil an old valet, not satisfied with merely offering salaam from a distance, broke through the successive ranks of people with a dash and fell on the Shaikh's feet which in the attempt to kiss, he began to pull towards himself. And while kissing the feet, he exclaimed : Shaikh Farid, you feel annoyed ! Don't you thank God for His blessings ? On hearing this, the Shaikh began to weep. He thanked the valet for his admonition and begged his pardon.¹

This story may serve as an indication of Shaikh Farid's popularity which was not less in weight and volume than the popularity enjoyed by the apostles of the Bhakti movement——Chaitanya, Kabir and Guru Nanak. Everyone of these was leader of that socio-religious revolution of medieval India, of which one of the torch-bearers had been Baba Farid. He was their precursor. But while only the spirit of Baba Farid is reflected in the speeches of Chaitanya and Kabir, in the tradition of Guru Nanak the wording of Baba Farid's *Shlokas* is bodily incorporated. Guru Nanak received the genuine Farid Pothi through Shaikh Ibrahim, the 12th successor of Shaikh Farid; and the same, along with his own Shlokas, he passed on to his successors. The Pothi containing 112 Shlokas of Baba Farid became part of the Granth Sahib under Guru Arjun.

Why Guru Nanak appreciated and felt inspired by the Farid Pothi——his Shloks and hymns is a problem which few scholars have cared to study. Perhaps the Sikhs alone approach those Shlokas and hymns with deep emotion and respect. On hearing those Shlokas and hymns, at least some of them, sung in the early hours of the morning, tuned with spiritual music a devotee's mind is elevated and transported. 'Those who do not get up in the early hours of the morning may be considered as living corpses' says Baba Farid in one of the Shlokas. The other Shlokas inspire love of God in the devotees mind and make it visualize death which is a certainty and which must never be forgotten. He impresses on the believer that God is Love; and he invokes Him in sweet Panjabi as *Kant*, *Sain Sahib*, *Pir* and *Shauh*

Some of Baba Farid's teachings, translated into English read as follows.

'To escape from one's self is a means of attaining God. Do not satisfy the demands of the physical self, for the more you satisfy it, the more it demands. Do not regard the ignorant as alive. Give a wide berth to an ignorant man. Do not hanker after worldly pelf and glory. Do not eat everybody's bread but give bread to people freely. Do not forget death at any place. Do not say anything as mere guess work. Whenever an evil befalls you consider it a punishment for your sins. Do not boast of having committed a sin. Do not make your heart a plaything of the devil. Keep your internal self better than your external self. Do not try to display yourself. Do not lower yourself in

1. Amir Hasan——*Fawaidul Fu'ad*, pp. 145-46.

an attempt to secure a high position. Treat families with respect. Aspire for new attainments of knowledge everyday. Consider good health a blessing. Show gratitude but do not place the obligation of gratefulness on another. While doing good to others think that you are doing good to yourself. Give up immediately the pursuit of a thing which your heart considers as bad. Be always on the look-out for doing good. Consider levity and anger as signs of weakness. Whoever fears you fear him. At all times self-restraint is most necessary. Be generous when you have wealth. There can be no equivalent to time. Be critical of your own shortcomings. If you want greatness associate with the downtrodden. Work in a way that you may get eternal life after death. The meanest of all is he who feeds himself exclusively.¹

All these teachings emanated from a thorough grasp of mysticism. Shaikh Farid had thoroughly understood it in its truest sense. He knew the literal meaning of mysticism, i.e. spiritual apprehension of truths. He also knew that it was basically the study of the human soul; and like the soul itself mysticism or Sufism—which was the Islamic term for mysticism. . . could not be the monopoly of any particular class or group of people. He was aware that mysticism had appeared through the ages in different forms with different people—Christians, Greeks, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians.

Shaikh Farid's teachings have come down to us through the *Malfuzat* and are now a part of history which tells us that mysticism became so permeable in Islam alone that spiritual orders or *Silas* arose in all parts of the Muslim world. Every *Silas* was guided and ruled by a set of rules under the supervision of a recognized disciplinarian called PIR; and possessed one or more organized Khanqahs (residential houses of the seekers of truths), working harmoniously on humane principles for the uplift of the depressed people irrespective of political considerations.

While Sufism or Islamic mysticism is traceable to the contemplative aspect of the prophet's life and while Hazrat Ali is regarded by all the *Silas* as the first Sufi, the genesis of *Silas* is traceable to the post-Umayyad period, i.e. the second century Hijra 7th century A.D. Moved by compassion at the Umayyad atrocities, perpetrated for 90 years (41-132/661-750) on the innocent inhabitants of the sacred places, the Muslim conscience was at last awakened and the resultant situation was fully exploited by the Abbasid agents in Iraq and Iran. They subverted the

1. *Siyarul Auliya and Fawaidul Fu'ad*. To all the information found in these books must be added the fact that many of the above teachings are but a Persian version of Hazrat Ali's Arabic verses and injunctions embodied in his *Diwan*. See *Diwan-i-Ali*, copies of which are available everywhere. Since Shaikh Farid, like all the Sufi saints, regarded Hazrat Ali as the first Sufi, no wonder his *Diwan* was drawn upon. In his book entitled the *Life and Times of Shaikh Faridu'ddin Ganj-i-Shakar* (Aligarh, 1955 P. 84) Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami has given two Arabic verses attributing them to Shaikh Farid, Both of these are found in the *Diwan-i-Ali* and are with better reason supposed to be his verses :

If knowledge and learning could be acquired through mere wish not a single person would have remained ignorant on the face of the earth.

So, try hard and exert yourself strenuously to acquire knowledge. Don't be lazy. Do not remain indifferent for those who remain idle and lazy in this life shall have to repent hereafter. (See the *Diwan-i-Ali*, p. 87) (Karachi)

Umayyad throne and the sceptre passed into the hands of the Umayyads was the philosophy of Abu Zar Ghifari (d-32/652), Hasan Basari (d. 110/728), Ibrahim bin Adham (d-161/777) and other who had held the material world in contempt and had emphasized for every sinner the importance of tauba (repentance before being overtaken by death. Other feeders arose during the Abbasid Caliphate in the third century Hijra/10th century A.D. such as Zalnun Misri (d. 245 85 and Mansur Hallaj (d-309/921) who spun out mystic philosophy so elaborately that a curriculum of service or Sufi *ibadat* evolved, comprising the technique of *hal* and *maqam* (literally state and stage) and also the doctrines of *hulul* and *tanasukh* (transmigration). In this manner the foundation was laid of the different Sufi schools each with a distinct philosophy. Ghazzali who lived in the 5th century Hijra/11th century A.D. treated Tasawwuf (such being the Arabic name for mysticism) as a substantive science. He defined the abstruse terms of Sufism and pointed out the difference between *ulama* and *mashaikh*—the former being the *ulama-i-zahiri* and the latter *ulama-i-batin*. In this manner he removed the conflict that had been raging between Shari'at and Tariqat.¹

In the seventh century Hijra/13th century A.D. arose Ibn-i-Arabi (d. 646 1248), Shaikh Shihabu'ddin Suharwardi (d. 632/1234) and Jalalu'ddin Rumi (672/1273). They explained further Islamic mysticism or Tariqat and expounded the meaning of 'discipline of the soul and role of emotions'. Ibn-i-Arabi stressed the *wahdat-i-wujud* principle or the pantheistic aspect of Sufism and emphasized the manifestation of the Divine Being everywhere and in everything. Shihabu'ddin Suharwardi expounded the principle of Khanqah life and Jalalu'ddin Rumi gave a fillip to Sufi pantheism. All this was approved by Shaikh Faridu'ddin Ganji Shaker who associated himself with the above-mentioned Sufi thinkers of the Muslim world; and as a token of his regard for them used the standard work of Shaikh Shihabu'ddin Suharwardi entitled *Awariful Maarif* as a text-book in his Khanqah seminary at Ajodhan.²

Such was the yeast of *Tasawwuf* prepared in the Muslim countries of western Asia; and the same, brought into India, by the mashaikh gave rise to different *Silsilahs*. But the real cause behind the rise of *Silsilahs* was the wholesale destruction of Islamic culture at the hands of the Mongol hordes in 657/1258. Since the Mongols had also destroyed the territorial foundations of Muslim society, the Sufi fathers rebuilt the same on a different plane. They gave their social system new names and spiritual values. Taking the universe as a unit they divided it into *wilayats* and organized the *Silsilahs* in such a manner that each *Silsilah* should be able to promote the Khanqah life. It was incumbent on all the inmates of the Khanqah to develop *l'esprit de corps* and work unitedly in peace for the successful functioning of disciplinary rules. Six were the notable *Silsilahs*. i.e. Chishtiya, Suharwardiya, Qadiriya, Naqshbandiya, Firdausiya and Shattariya.^{3*}

1. For details on Shari'at and Tariqat see *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta, 1963), P. 362 f.

2. Ish. Abdul-aq—*Akharul Akhyar* and *Misbahul Hidayah* (Lucknow) quoted by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami—*Some Aspects of Religion and politics in India during the 13th century*.

*3. For a detailed account of these *Silsilahs* see the *Tughluq Dynasty* and also Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century*.

The Chishtiya Order was founded in the village of Chisht near Herat in 940/1533 by Khwaja Abu Ishaq of Syria; the Suhrawardiya was founded by Abdul Qadir Suhrawardi about 565/1169 in the town of Jibal, the ancient Media; the Qadiriya was founded by Abdul Qadir Gilani in 562/1166 near Baghdad; the Naqshbandiya was founded by Khwaja Bahau'ddin Naqshbandi of Turkestan about 792/1389 and the Firdausiya was founded by Najmu'ddin Kubra of Bokhara about 633/1235. The Shattariya came into existence in Iran in the year 890/1485 and was introduced into India by Shah died in Malwa (664/1265). His disciple Muhammad Ghaus of Gwalior made the Shattariya order better known by securing the royal patronage of Humayun and Akbar Badshah. Shaikh Farid who was the contemporary of Shah Abdullah Shattari became along with Khwaja Mu'ddin Chishti and Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtyar Kaki¹ the founding-father of the Chishtiya Order in India. His services in the cause of Indian Sufism are unique. He inspired the Indian mind and convinced all, particularly non-Muslims, that Sufism is the gospel of love and friendship. He maintained that Sufism or Tariqat unlike the Shari'at utilizes music too in such a manner as to make it a Divine instrument for awakening the slumbering souls and for breathing the fire of Divine love in human hearts and that Sufism teaches complete reliance (*tawakkul*) on God; furthermore that Sufism endeavours to make God-fearing persons realize that spiritual progress does not consist in the mechanical performance of *namaz* only, but also in disciplining the soul, in the abandoning anger, jealousy and hatred, and in building up character. Like his two predecessors—Khwaja Mu'nu'ddin Chisti and Shaikh Quatbu'ddin Bakhtyar Kaki—Shaikh Faridu'ddin impressed on his followers that a Sufi should sever all connections with the State; he should believe that Islam did not come as a force for founding of empires and building imperialism, but to ennoble man. A Sufi should be a man of versatile talent and must encourage common culture for all the people, professing different religions and speaking different languages.¹

These were the golden principles of Tariqat; and Shaikh Farid had all these ingrained in his blood. His grandfather Qazi Shulaidman who was a Sufi had come from Kabul to Multan in the train of Sultan Bahram Shah Ghaznavi (1118-1152) when the latter was driven out of Ghazni by the Ghuzz Turks. Qazi Shu'aib settled in the village of Kahtwal and had three sons. One of these was Jamalu'ddin Sulayman who married Qarsum Bibi, a daughter of the pious Wajihu'ddin Khojendi. Their son was Faridu'ddin Mas'ud Ganj-i-Shakar who was born at Kahtwal² in 571/1175.

According to the *Khairul Majalis*³ Shaikh Jalalu'ddin Tabrizi who was a Persian Sufi and had come to Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish, visited Kahtwal while Shaikh Farid was yet a boy of ten or twelve. He enquired of the villagers if there lived any Sufi in that village. He was told that there lived a mad boy (*bachcha diwanah*) who was engrossed with his *namaz and roza* in the village mosque. Shaikh Jalalu'ddin Tabrizi went to see him. He found Shaikh Farid just as had

1, 2 *Siyarul Auliya, Fawaidul Fu'ad* and almost the whole of Sufi literature is replete. Cf. Khaliq Nizami books on the Chishtis.

3. Nasiru'ddin Chiragh Delhi—*Khairul Majalis* (MSO)

been related to him. He was busy with his *namaz* and had been fasting; he was wearing torn clothes.

After finishing his studies at the village *maktab*, Farid came to Multan. Here he was introduced to his future spiritual teacher and Master, Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. Then, with or without his Master's permission he left for Qandahar and Seistan for higher studies, and returned after five years. He stopped in Delhi and began to learn spiritual discipline at the feet of the Shaikh. One day, while still under discipline, he was seen by Khwaja Mu'inu'ddin Chisti who recommended him to Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, saying :

'Baba Bakhtiyar, you have caught a noble falcon which will not build its nest except on the holy tree of Heaven. Farid is a *noor* (spiritual light) that will illuminate the Silsilah of the derweshes.¹

A teenager saint as he then was, Farid had so regulated his time that he was performing his *namaz* (prayers), *qiyam* (vigils) and *saum* (fasting) at the proper hour and without deviation. and he also performed the *salat-i-ma'kus*² which looked like the Hindu sadhus' penance. They hang their heads downwards, suspended from a high tree and chant mantras. Shaikh Farid performed a similar penance he was a true lover (*āsihq*) of God and had a burning desire for a true union (*wisal*) with Him. In this way he believed he would remove all earthly herdles that had been obviating his much-desired UNION with the Master of souls, the Almighty Creator. Another way that he adopted to precipitate the UNION was to observe the *saam-i tavy*³ a three-day-long fast during which period he abstained from all food and drink. At the close of each day he broke the fast with only a few drops of water. When at last the three-day-long fast was over, Shaikh Farid felt extremely hungry. He ate a piece of bread that was offered him by a passer-by. He felt uneasy and omitted it immediately. Later, he reported the matter to Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtiyar Kaki who reprimanded him, saying, 'Farid, you have broken your fast with the bread that was brought by a drunkard. By God's grace, that bread did not stay in your stomach. Go and observe the fast again. This time break your 3-day-long fast with whatever comes from *ghaib* (the unknown) Shaikh Farid acted accordingly. At the end of this newly stipulated fast, some pebbles came into his

1. *Siyarul Auliya*, p. 23.

2. Shaikh Farid performed the penance namely the *Salat-i-ma'kus* or the inverted *chilla*, apparently at different places. The performance that is drawn upon below took place at Uchch and is reproduced in the *Siyarul Antiya*. It is this. He found a secluded mosque called Masjid-i hajj at Uchch, which (perhaps the *isha* prayers) there was none left except an aged muezzin. With his help Farid obtained a rope, one end of which was tied to his feet and the other to a branch of the tree over the well that had been sunk near the mosque. The muessin he had been previously advised then lowered Farid into the well. This done, Farid requested the muessin to withdraw. He came back in the morning; and looking into the well he found Farid praying in that suspended position; he had continued reciting loudly the names of Allah the whole night. At last, the muezzin pulled up the rope; and when, as a result Shaikh Farid came to the surface he sat up but continued praying before as/As the word *chillah* indicated, he performed this *salat-i ma'kus* during forty successive nights. So says Mir Khurd, the most reliable hegiologist (*Siyauri Auliya*, P. 70).

3. Tavy (literally a voluntary fast) is taken to spread over three days (Steingass)

hands. He put the same into his mouth and they turned into sugar in his mouth. But considering this transformation as satanic, the Shaikh threw that sugar out of his mouth and prayed earnestly to God for the remission of his sins. In the morning he related this incident to Shaikh Bakhtyar Kaki who said, 'You did the right thing in breaking your fast with the pebbles. Whatever comes from *ghaib* is good. Go, you will be sweet like sugar. From this penance he earned the epithet of *Ganj-i shakar*.¹

Shaikh Farid performed yet another penance. It is this. In his Ajodhan² Khanqah he fasted for days together for he along with many of his followers had found nothing to eat. Unable to stand day-to-day starvation the followers were compelled to hunt wild fruits in the jungles which they, on their return, served as *iftar* before Shaikh Farid who was by this time reeling and staggering through hunger and weakness; yet he was ceaselessly reciting the name of Allah the Exalted with the following verse on his lips :

1. *Siyarul Auliya*, 68 and *Siyarul Aqtab*, 165.

Ganj-i-shakar or *Shakar ganj* (sugar-store) which became the regular epithet for Shaikh Farid was the term first used by Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtyar Kaki. Afterwards it was regularly used by all. Till to-day Shaikh is remembered as *Ganj-i shakar*.

Apart from the cause behind it which has been mentioned above, there are two stories—one given in the *Ajaibul Asfar* (p-8) and the other in prince Dara Shikoh's *Safinatul Auliya*. According to the former, Baba Farid being the title used by Shaikh Alau'ddin Ajodhani—saw a caravan of merchants once passing nearby and carrying bags full of sugar thought Baba Farid enquired what the caravan were carrying. The merchants thought that Baba Farid was an ordinary beggar and would demand only a little sugar if he came to know the contents of the bags. So they pretended that they were carrying salt in the bags. Baba Farid replied, 'Let it be salt'. The caravan then proceeded to their destination where the bags being opened, were found to contain salt instead of sugar. The merchants then came to Baba Farid and supplicated his goodwill and prayer. He prayed; and the salt was then transformed into sugar. According to the *Safinatul Auliya* (P. 163), Baba Farid had become so thin and lean by continued fasting and his body had thereby become so pure that whatever he put into his mouth to allay his hunger including.

2. Ajodhan was in those days the ferry of the Sutlej at the confluence of roads from Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan. But the chief reason behind the Shaikh's desire to choose it as the site of his *khanqah* was the fact that Ajodhan then comprised a majority of down-trodden and misguided Hindus, who needed a helping hand and guidance. Also it abounded in unexplored jungle; and dangerous reptiles and animals had been searing the innocent inhabitants. Once it is said Shaikh Farid himself was attacked by a ferocious snake and subsequently his revered mother Qarsum Bibi was devoured by a tiger. The local Hindus welcomed the saint who used to sit amidst them under the trees (*Siyarul Auliya*).

On his way from Multan to Delhi Ibn Batuta passed through Ajodhan in January 1334/ Jumada I, 734 (Rehla G.O.S. 1953, PP. 20-21). He describes it as a small city belonging to the pious Shaikh Faridu'ddin, for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had bestowed upon him this city. Ibn Batuta says that he conveyed to him the greetings with which the Egyptian saint Burhanu'ddin al Araj had charged him. It should be noted that Ibn Batuta, who had left his home at Tangier for Mecca in June 1325/Rajab 725, had met the above saint at Alexandria. The saint had enquired of him whether he liked journeying through the countries. 'Yes I do' replied Ibn Battuta. Surely God willing, continued the Egyptian saint, 'You will meet my brother Faridu'ddin in Hind. When you meet him convey to him my greetings.' I conveyed to him (Shaikh Faridu'ddin) the greetings of Burhanu'ddin al-A'raj says Ibn, Battuta. But Ibn

(Contd.)

I die for Thee and live for Thee. O Allah, I want three things from Thee—happy time, tears and repose of heart.³

After completing his 'disciplinary training'—during which period in the words of Allami Abul Fazl he had many warrings with the spirit—Shaikh Farid took leave of his Master and went to Hansi.⁵ His ceremonial departure from the Master's *Khanqah* as recorded in the *Siyarul-Auliya* is reproduced below.

'Maulana Faridu'ddin ! said the Master (Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtyar Kaki) wistfully, 'I know that you will go to Hansi !' 'I will act and behave according as the Shaikh orders me to.' replied Farid'. 'GO', continued the Shaikh, 'It has been pre-ordained that you will not be present at the time of my death.'

Shaikh Qutbu'ddin had read the situation correctly. Shortly after the arrival of Shaikh Farid in the town of Hansi came the news that the Master-saint Shaikh Qutbu'ddin Bakhtyar Kaki had died in Delhi (1235/633). The two saints—Qazi Hamidu'ddin Nagauri and Qazi Badru'ddin Ghaznavi—who sat according to Allami Abul Fazl by the death-bed of the said Master, remembered Shaikh Farids and, according as they had been directed, reserved the Qutbu *Khirqah, dastar* and sandals for Shaikh Farid who was still at Hansi. He dashed from Hansi on hearing the sad news; and on arriving at Delhi received all the personal belonging of the departed Master.⁴

During his short stay at Hansi prior to the death of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Shaikh Farid had become the cynosure of all eyes among the sufis. His object in going to Hansi was defeated when one day drawing him out of his much-sought-about seclusion and solitude. Maulana Noor Toork, a renowned sermonizer of Hansi introduced him to his audience as 'the most talented shaikh and appraiser of words (*nabbazi-i sukhun*)'. Now he had also become the successor saint. He decided therefore to set up as the director-saint with a *khanqah* of his own. He went to Ajodhan and constructed a *khanqah* on a site near the Jami 'Masjid of Ajodhan.

(Contd.)

Batuta mistook Alau'ddin Maujdarya, the son, for the father Shaikh Faridu'ddin who had died 70 years before (1265/664). It was Alau'ddin Maujdarya who then lived at Ajodhan in 735 Hijra/1335 A.D. He was the chosen saint of Sultan Muhammad; and on him the Sultan had conferred the city of Ajodhan as Jagir. Ajodhan became Patan Farid after the death of Shaikh Faridu'ddin, and it became Pakpattan under the orders of the great Mughul emperor Jalalu'ddin Akbar because of its sanctity.

3. *Siyarul Auliya*, P. 40.

Hansi, as described by Ibn Battuta, was a city situated between Abubakhar and palam or Delhi. It had some sanctity about it. Kamalu'ddin *sadrjaha* the chief justice (*Qaziulquzat*) of Hindustan and his brother the famous Qutlugh Khan, Sultan Muhammed bin Tughluq's tutor, traced their origin from it. The sanctity of Hansi goes back to the pre-Muslim conquest for which reference may be made to the Imperial Gazetteer of India which shows it in the Hissar district. It was conquered in 1036/428 by Sultan Mas'ud son and successor of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni but it was lost to the Chauhans. Even after its recovery by Mu'izzuddin Muhammad of Ghor it was captured by Jatwan, a Hindu chief. It was recovered by Qutbu'ddin Aibak in 1193/589. About the age of 60, Baba Farid left Dehli for Hansi (1235/634).

4. *Ain-i-Akbari* vol. III, Jarret (Calcutta), P. 404.

His life at Ajodhan had two aspects.....one personal and another public. The *personal aspect* is the story of his family life which presents an interesting picture of a *namazi* or devotee drowned in his meditation which he would not like to be disturbed on any account. No call from his wives and children, whatever its nature, could deviate his attention from his *sijdas* (prostration service); nor could their cry of hunger and want for he always remained hungry and inculcated the same practice on his family too, having no appreciable means of income, beyond the precarious futuh.....could make him barter away his mysticism.

The *public aspect* of Shaikh Farid's life at Ajodhan is synonymous with his renowned *Khanqah* which became the rallying centre of all classes of people. The *Khanqah* was an ideal social and cultural centre there morals and ethics were taught and displayed with the noble object of making all the inmates control and subordinate their animal cravings to the dictates of reason and conscience. The *Khanqah* which is also described as *Jamaat Khanah* by the hagiologists comprised a large room where his disciples sat slept, prayed ate and studied on the ground. One of these was Maulana Badru'ddin Ishaque; a highly learned man worthy of being put in the toplist of the ulama; his duty at the *Jamaat Khana* was to receive guests and to look after the needs of the inmates. He was a God-fearing man whose tearful eyes impressed the visitors. 'When he bows' says Mirkhurd¹ 'his tears make the carpet wet'. Another disciple was Syed Mahmud Kirmani, 'once a flourishing businessman of Kirman, now a starving disciple of the Shaikh.'² Yet another disciple was Shaikh Nizamu'ddin Auliya of Dehli.³ He too lived in poverty at the *Khanqah*. Another disciple was Hamid who had been formerly an attendant of Malik Tughril⁴ of Dehli. Another was Maulana Jamal of Hansi, 'once a prosperous *Khatib*, now a starving disciple'. Another was Nasir who was a great scholar but he gave up his studies to join the *Jamaat Khana*⁵. Another was a clerk (*navisandah*) who gave up his service to join the *Jamaat Khanah*. All these disciples who also the inmates joined together amicably and in peace to manage the *Jamaat Khanah*, the doors of which remained open till midnight. And among its frequent visitors recorded in the *Siyarul Auliya* mention must also be made of Hindu Jogis, qalandars, politicians and soldiers. Shaikh Farid personally attended to all of them and listened with sympathy to the problems of each. Overwhelmed with throngs who used to walk into the *Jamaat*

1, 2. *Siyarul Auliya*, pp. 170-172.

3. Shaikh Nizamu ddin Auliya was a young man when he became an inmate at the *Khanqah* of Ajodhan. The photo on the adjoining page shows him in a different position in old age.

4. Tughril was the Governor of Lakhnauti under Balban. Barani.....*Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* pp. 90-92.

5. Jawaat Khanah was another name of the Khanaqah.

6. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.....*The Life and Times of Shaikh Faridu'ddin Gang-i-Shakar* (Aligarh) P. 47.

7. Nizamu'ddin Ahmad as the compiler of the *Rahatul Qulub* is mentioned in Dr. Rahim's book entitled *Social and Cultural History of Bengal Vol I, P. 92*. But the report about this appears apocryphal. Cf. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.....*Life and Times of Shaikh Faridu'ddin Ganj-i-Shakar* Aligarh, 1955, pp. 86. 93.

Khanah from all sides he was heard to say, 'Come to me, one by one, so that I may attend to you individually.

According to an unconfirmed report there was yet another disciple of Shaikh Farid. He compiled his *malfuzat* in a book entitled *Rahatul Qulub*. He was called Nizamu'ddin Ahmad.

From a glance at the above pages the reader will easily understand the nature of Shaikh Farid's sainthood; he may also see the angel in him. But he was more than a saint and angel. He was a seer, gifted with apostle-like disposition. Like seers and apostles, he attached great importance to the service of humanity and the enlightenment of the ignorant, misguided and downtrodden people. He shunned the pleasures and luxuries of the worldly life and deprecated State service and its pageantry. While in that age of laziness (1236-1265/735-665) wealth was being seized by all parties and men, not excluding the *mashaikh* and *ulama*,¹ Shaikh Faridu'ddin sat in his *Khanqah*, adhering religiously to a life of poverty, abstemiousness and sacrifice. He had seen with his own eyes the bloody scenes attending the Mamaluk conquest of Dehli and the neighbouring regions, the liquidation of Rajput power and the aftermath of Mongol invasions. So much was he, in consequence, swayed by the ephemeral character of this world and the uncertainty of human life that he continued seeing God in everything and everywhere. He was often heard repeating this verse :

(In both² the worlds Thou art the object that I cherish. I shall sacrifice myself at Thy altar; and for Thee I shall live as long as I live.)

He had discovered God in himself and had precisely made his heart His abode. In consequence, he had developed a genuine *dard*, the meaning of which as explained by his disciple Shaikh Nizamu'ddin Auliya is given below.

'*Dard* means an eye full of tears and a heart full of emotions'³.

It should not be taken as poetry on my part if I for one explain the *dard* of Shaikh Faridu'ddin as a spectacle of his penances and sufferings.

In fact, the *dard* of Shaikh Faridu'ddin as a spectacle of his penances and sufferings had become proverbial during his life time and eventually won him the praises of all other saints.' All the saints of India 'says the author of the *Gulzar-i Abrar*', are unanimous in declaring that no saint has excelled Ganj-i Shakar in his devotions and penances'.

If medieval Indian culture connotes mysticism and *Silsilahs* with the panorama of *Khanqah* life, pulsating with religious and divine spirit through mystic, humane philosophy of Sufi saints *cum* Hindu jogis.....members of universal society, cultivating healthy social order; if medieval Indian culture connotes spread of Islam, literacy and learning (for Muslim mysticism could not agree with illiteracy); if medieval Indian culture involves the evolution of a *lingua franca* and the development of regional languages with literature and poetry and if it includes the evolution of secular polity and relationship with the Hindus.....the epitome of all this is seen in Shaikh Faridu'ddin Ganj-i Shakar.

1. For *mashaikh* and *ulama* see the *Tughluq Dynasty*, (Calcutta, 1963) P. 358 f.

2. Mir Khurd.....*Siyarul Auliya*

3. Idem.

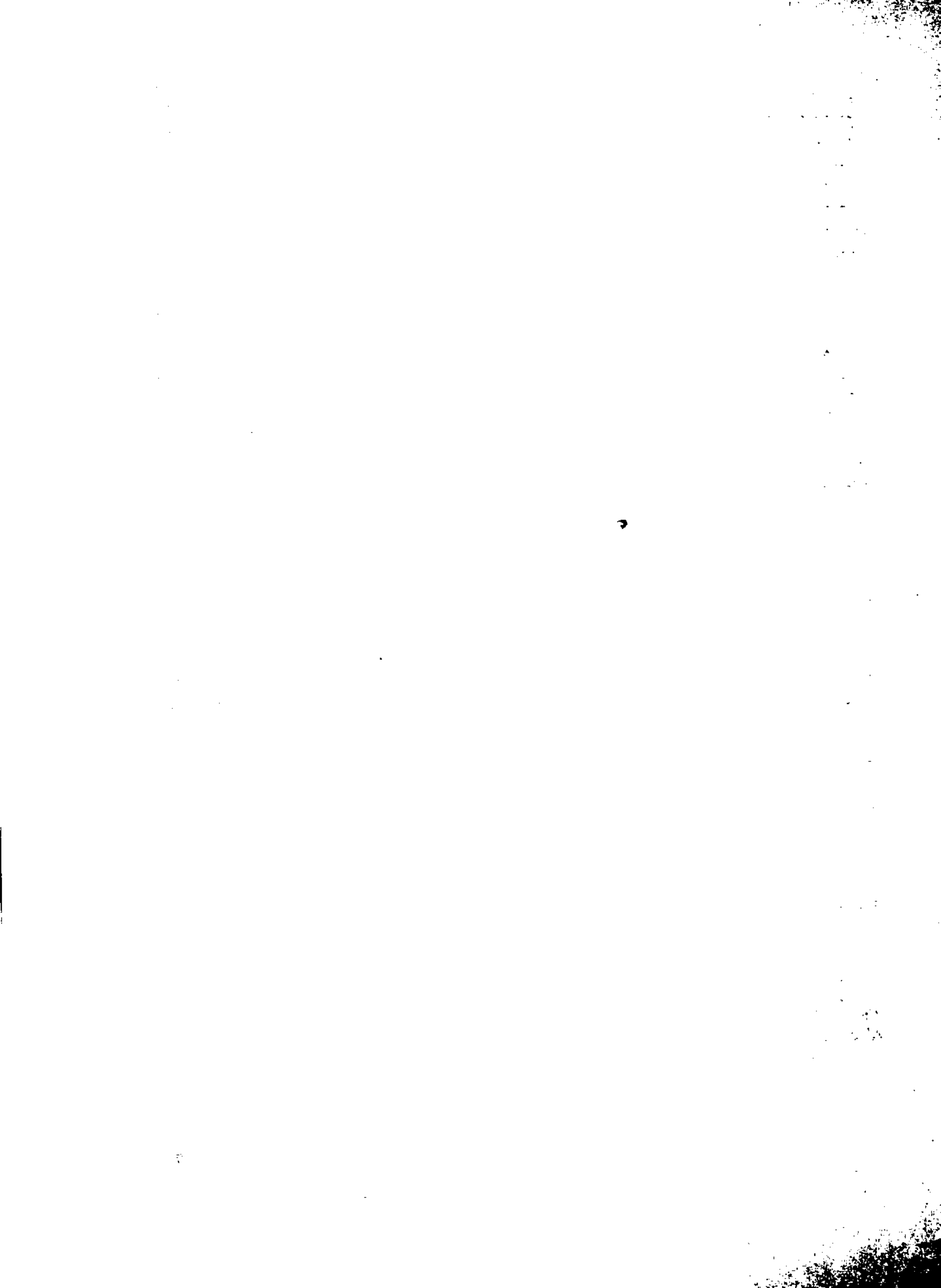
Shaikh Farid is also the epitome of all the spiritual attributes of the greatest mystics of the world. To be able to understand this point one must look into the *Nahjul Balagha* which contains about 480 sermons, delivered extempore by Hazrat Ali on different occasions after the death of Prophet Muhammad. These sermons are considered by the Shia ulama as genuine inspiration, Hazrat Ali being according to them a miracle of Prophet Muhammad like the Quran. There is not a shadow of doubt in the mind of the writer and the same is evident from the books on hagiology mentioned below, that Shaikh Farid was imbued with the spirit of Hazrat Ali who was according to the mashaikh.....the ulama of the Sunni world.....the first Sufi of Islam. It has been stated by a modern biographer of Shaikh Farid that, 'Baba Farid's namaz was not a mechanical or lifeless formality.'¹ 'History tells us that in the battle of Ohud (3rd Hijra A.D. 624) an arrow had got stuck into the toe of Hazrat Ali and could not be extracted. This was reported to the Prophet who advised that the arrow should be extracted when Ali be engaged in performing his namaz. Accordingly, as soon as Ali went into the prostration service (sijda) in the course of his namaz, the arrow was pulled out. Ali felt no pain, although the prayer-carpet was filled with blood.'² Surely Baba Farid had placed this unique absorption into Godhead before his mind's eye and had modelled his devotions accordingly. All available books written on or about Shaikh Farid by the Muslim hagiologists tend to bear testimony to this, although they make no mention of the *Nahjul Balagha*,³ nor of the model namaz of Hazrat Ali. This may be an instance of suppression. Of the list the first is the *Fawiadul Fu'ad* of Amir Hasan who was a disciple of Shaikh Nizamu'ddin Auliya. The author gives 'scattered stories and some references' to Shaikh Farid. They are all reliable.

The second book is the *Khairul Majalis* of Nasiru'ddin Chiragh-i-Dehli. It contains the conversations of Shaikh Nasiru'ddin Chiragh Dehli and reproduces some information which the compiler, Hamid a disciple of Shaikh Nasir Uddin, heard from Shaikh Nizamu'ddin Auliya about Shaikh Farid. The third book is the famous *Siyarul Auliya* of Mir Khurd, also called Muhammad bin Mubarak Kirmani. It gives very reliable information about Shaikh Farid and has been frequently drawn upon in this paper. The fourth book is the *Siyarul Arifin* of Hamid bin Fazlulah Jamali. He gives some information about Shaikh Farid and it is believed that he made enquires on his own account. Then begins a sub-list of the Tazkiras. They are about 11 in number. The most important and reliable of all is the *Matlubus-Talibin* of Muhammad Bulaq who was a relation of Shaikh Nizamu'ddin Auliya. In as much as it is a detailed biography of the latter it throws indirectly light on Shaikh Farid too.

1. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.....L,T.S.F.G. P-3

2. Abul Fida. Kamil ibn Asir.

3. For the 480 sermons delivered by Hazrat Ali-and reproduced in the *Nahjul Balagha* see the *Nahjul Balagha* with its Urdu and English translations published in Karachi and Lahore. Also see Masudi—*Munjuzzahab*.



THE MURSHID OF BABA FARID AND THE CHISHTI PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

PRITAM SINGH

Baba Farid (Shaikh Faridud-Din Mas'ud Ganj-i-Shakar) was the first Punjabi to preside over the great Mystic House of Chisht. He was also the earliest and one of the few Muslim men of God, whose verses have been consecrated in the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. Moreover, he is regarded as the father of Punjabi poetry on account of his being the earliest known poet, with Panjabi as his medium of expression. The eclat with which Baba Farid's octocentenary is being celebrated by the Sikhs in particular and the Punjabis in general, is, therefore, quite understandable.

This centenary has provided students of Baba Farid with an opportunity to study afresh many aspects of his life and letters. It was in this context that the present writer was persuaded to take up the study of khwaja Qutbud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, the *Murshid* of Baba Farid. Though not much authentic material is available on the activities of this saint, yet I found the subject exciting in that it could provide an insight into the educational philosophy and methodology of the Chishti saints, who succeeded in transforming many ordinary people into eminent spiritual personalities.

Unfortunately, the plentiful hagiographical literature in Persian, Punjabi and Urdu, about Baba Farid is so proponderantly full of details about the extremely painful physical penances undergone by him that all other aspects of the moral, intellectual emotional and spiritual training imparted to him by his mentor, have suffered recession in importance.

An attempt, by no means thorough, has been made in this paper to piece together, firstly, the available biographical facts of the Khwaja and secondly to deduce from this bio-data a few points relating to the essentials of the *murshid-murid* relationship, as it obtained in one of the best organized Indo-Muslim mystic orders to medieval India.

II

A booklet, *Fawaidus-Salikeen*, ascribed to Baba Farid, claims to be the *verbatim* record of a few meetings that he had with his *murshid* Shaikh Qutbud-Din in the year 584 A.H. or A.D. 1188. A similar record *verbatim* of the proceedings of Shaikh Qutbud-Din's own meetings with his *murshid*, Khwaja Muinud-Din

Hasan Sijzi of Ajmer, is also available under the caption *Dalilul-Arifeen*. If the authenticity of these two books could be established, our task would become easier, but Shaikh Nizamud-Din Auliya denies, in Amir Hasan Sijzi's *Fawaidul-Fuwad*, and so does Shaikh Nasirud-Din Chiragh-i-Delhi, the successor of Shaikh Nizamud-Din and the last presiding luminary of the great Chishti sect, in Maulana Hamid Qalandar's *Khairul-Majalis*, the existence of any authorised memoris, probably including those of Shaikh Uthman Harwani, prevalent under the authorship of Shaikh Qutbud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki (*Anisul Arwah*), of Shaikh Qutbud-Din (*Fawaidus-Salikeen*) and of Shaikh Faridud-Din, said to have been compiled by Shaikh Nizamud Din Auliya (*Rahatul-Quloob*).

In view of these categorical denials about the existence of any authentic memoirs, the writer of this paper had no option but to drop all of these *malfuzat* as spurious, from the list of his source-material.

The preparation of Shaikh Qutbud-Din's bio-data had, thus, to be restricted by him to three books only, namely : Amir Hasans's *Fawaidul-Fuwad*, Maulana Hamid Qalandar's *Khairul-Majalis* and Amir Khurd Kirmani's encyclopaedic compendium *Siyarul-Auliya*.

Further, it so happens that none of these referential sources is contemporary. *Fawaidul-Fuwad* was begun in 1308 A.D. and was completed in 1322 A.D. Shaikh Nizamud-Din Auliya, who is the hero of this book and refers reverentially, though occasionally to Shaikh Qutbud-Din, had never seen his grand *murshid* even once, during his life time. In fact, Shaikh Bakhtiyar was dead by the time the Auliya first came into contact with his own *murshid*, Shaikh Faridud-Din.

Khairul-Majalis was begun in 1354 and completed in 1355.

Siyarul Auliya was completed even later.

However, a compensation in the case of these three books, is the generally cautious, discriminating and honest approach of their writers to their sources of information.

Anyway, the present writer had access to no other book, earlier or more authentic, than the three referred to above.

III

A statement is given below of the salient points of Shaikh Qutbud-Din's bio-data, as they emerge from our earliest source-book, *Fawaidul-Fuwad* :

- (i) The Shaikh got legal divorce from his newly-wedded wife, only three days after marriage, when he found her charms to be so powerful as to divert him considerably from his primary pursuit of devotion and prayer (The meeting of 14th Rajab 713 A.H./Oct. 1313 A.D.)
- (ii) Twins were born to his wife (presumably, the second). One of the boys died very young and the other unfortunately did not take after the father and lived separately from him (7th Zil Qada, 710 A.H./March 1311 A.D.)
- (iii) He extended his moral support to Qabacha to save Multan from aggression by non-Muslim insurrectionists (17th Rajab, 713 A.H./Oct. 1313 A.D.)
- (iv) He himself selected the place of his burial and paid the price, in full to the owner. (17th Ramazan, 721 A.H./Sept. 1321 A.D.)

- (v) He succeeded in committing the whole of the Koran to memory, late in the evening of his life (21st Shawwal, 711 A.H./Feb. 1312)
- (vi) He repeated *darud* three thousand times before going to sleep every night (14th Rajab, 713 A.H./Oct., 1313 A.D.)
- (vii) He collapsed, as a result of extreme emotional upsurge caused by the recital of the following verse by qawwals :
(People killed by the Scimitar of Resignation receive every second, from the Unknown, a vew span of life).
For four consecutive days and nights, he glued his ears to the continuous recital of this verse and ultimãtely danced himself to death (10th Ramazan, 715 A.H./Nov. 1315 A.D.)
- (viii) His successor, Shaikh Faridud-Din, was not present at the time of his death, but he left instructions that the emblems of Shaikhhood, such as the Poak, the staff, the prayer-mat and the wooden sandals) be passed on to him 18th Rabiul Awwal, 718, A.H./May, 1318 A.D.

Khairal-Majalis adds to this meagre information by telling us that :

- (i) Shaikh Qutbud-Din hailed from Oosh, a village in Turkestan (32nd meeting).
- (ii) His father died, when the Shaikh was of school-going age (32nd meeting).
- (iii) He met and marked his prospective successor, Shaikh Faridud-Din Mas'ud in Multan while the latter was carrying on his studies in a mosque (65th meeting).

Siyarul-Auliya contributes the following additional points to the Shaikh's bio-data :

- (i) He was an extremely poor man and resorted to borrowing in the initial years of his career to make his two ends meet, but later learnt to depend upon God-sends.
- (ii) He was enrolled in the month of Rajab 522 A.H./July, 1128 as Khawja Muinuddin Sijzi's *murid* at Baghdad in the mosque of Imam Abdul-Lais Samarkandi.
- (iii) He avoided visits to the rulers of his time. In fact, he is said to have refused audience to Iltutmish, a number of times, but broke this self-imposed bar only once when he had to visit Balban's court to get a bureaucratic bottleneck, pestering Khawaja Muinud-Din's sons, removed.
- (iv) *Shaikhul-Islam* Najmud-Din Sughra's prestige had touched an all-time low on account of the great rush of people to Khwaja Qutbud-Din. Shaikh Sughra complained bitterly about this to his old friend Khwaja Muinud-Din (the *murshid* of Khwaja Qutbud-Din), who decided to accommodate him by shifting Khwaja Qutbud-Din's headquarters from Delhi to Ajmer, but there was a demonstration by thousands of remonstrating citizens, including Sultan Shamsud-Din Iltutmish, for retention of the Khwaja at Delhi with the result that Khwaja Muinud-Din had to relent and "left the city to Shaikh Qutbud-Din's protection."
- (v) Shaikh Qutbud-Din died on the 14th of Rabi'ul Awwal, 633 A.H./Nov. 1235 A.D.

IV

Some other relevant points that emerge about Shaikh Qutbud-Din, from these sources are :

- (i) He was a regular and studious student of Koran. As years passed, his attachment to it increased. So much so, that by the time the sun of his life was about to set, he had succeeded in committing the whole text to memory.
- (ii) He was so punctilious about *namaz* that even when he was in a coma, caused by extreme physical and emotional exhaustion and when his life had almost crossed the threshold of death, he did not forget to perform it at the prescribed time.
- (iii) (a) He used to be so deeply engrossed in meditation that once he forgot to pray for the long life of his infant son, even when he was sure that God would have accepted his prayer. Says a surprised Shaikh Nizamud-Din Auliya, "How total was his engagement with his Friend, that he clean forgot all about the life and death of his own son."
(b) During his later years, whenever people came to see him, he would request to be excused after a short while and would resume his remembrance of God's name.
(c) A stage came when he felt 'sleep to be a headache' He remained ever-awake and dedicated the whole of his time in repeating prescribed and in devotion.
- (iv) He did not believe in perpetual fasting. "Had it been so, Shaikh Farid would have followed suit very early in his life," asserts Shaikh Nizamud-Din. In fact, Baba Farid was once advised by Shaikh Qutbud-Din not to go in for a forty-day continuous fast as it 'brought about fame.'

One is tempted to recall the laconic comment that escaped Khwaja Muinud-Din's lips, when the great popularity of Shaikh Qutbud-Din among the masses, was established by their loud protest against his transfer from Delhi to Ajmer. While sanctioning the continuance of his headquarters in Delhi, Shaikh Muinud-Din is reported to have hinted that 'to remain hidden in seclusion is to be preferred.' Shaikh Qutbud-Din had to assure the great Shaikh immediately that he had neither stage-managed the show, nor had any weakness for fame.

Baba Farid was advised by Shaikh Qutbud-Din to be in for *tal* type of fasting i.e. breaking fast with god-sends only.

- (v) Shaikh Qutbud-Din is said to have issued instructions to Baba Farid to perform the difficult 'up side-down' *Chilla* (a penance which was to continue for forty days). It is not clarified whether these instructions were issued to test Baba Farid's perseverance, grit and concentration of mind or as a measure, conducive to the inculcation of such qualities'.
- (vi) When the Shaikh had not yet moved out of his village Oosh and was still a raw youth, he is stated to have repeated a prescribed text, for a prescribed number of times, at the prescribed place, to propitiate Khwaja

Khizr, without the least desire "either to seek wealth or for early squaring up of debts."

Later, when he had matured, he refused to accept the cash offerings made by Malik Ikhtiarud-Din Aibak Hajib (chamberlain). The satiation of his mind is sought to be conveyed by the author of *Siyarul-Auliya* through the miracle of a 'river of gold' that the Hajib saw flowing under the prayer-mat of Shaikh Qutbud-Din.

- (vii) He was a fine connoisseur of music and could appreciate subtleties of poetry.
- (viii) A couple of instances of Shaikh Qutbud-Din's clairvoyant anticipations are quoted. He demonstrated this faculty when he picked up his would-be successor, Baba Farid. He is also reported to have anticipated the zig-zag, narrow route that Shaikh Jalalud-Din Tabrizi took to the former's house.
- (ix) He was gifted with a fine sense of discrimination and value-assessment. Shaikh Barud-Din Ghaznavi, who was one of his earliest, very faithful and scholarly disciples and was a constant companion of the Shaikh, was made to cede his claim for succession in favour of Baba Farid, who used to spend, at the most, a fortnight per month with his mentor and spent the other fortnight at out-stations.
- (x) He had a fine sense of humour too. During the only meeting that he had with Sultan Shamsud-Din Iltutmish, the commander of the Oudh region, Ruknud-Din *Halwai*, took a seat higher than the one Khwaja Qutbud-Din was occupying. The Sultan was visibly incensed at his indiscretion. Sensing the Sultan's displeasure, the Khwaja saved the situation by quipping that whenever *Kak* (bread) and *Halva* got together, *Halva* was always placed above the *Kak*.

V

In view of the information, howsoever scanty, available in the foregoing paragraphs, it may safely be presumed that the most prominent characteristic of the Chishti educational system was the pivotal position that the teacher or the *murshid* held. He was all-in-all for his disciple or the *murid*. It was he who drew up the syllabus and prescribed the courses of study : it was he who suggested the types and the duration of the practice, to be undertaken by the *murid* and it was he who conducted or supervised the actual teaching work. All tests were given by him; punishments and prizes were also awarded by him and orders for promotions and demotions in the spiritual cadre too emanated from him. Finally, it was the *murshid* in whom alone vested the authority to present the diploma and authorise the *murid* to wear the robe in token of the degree obtained by him. Thus the authority of the *murshid*, over all novices of the mystic path, was supreme and unchallengeable, besides being indispensable.

The *murid* was trained to have such total, abiding and reverent faith in the validity, proficiency and integrity of the *murshid* and was expected to offer such unquestioning obedience to his *murshid* as to leave no scope for the continuation of a lukewarm, selective or apologetic person much less a dissident, under the over

all guidance of the *murshid*. The strict discipline of the *khanqah* admitted of no aberrations at all.

Another striking feature of the Chishti educational system was its emphasis on intimate contact between the *murshid* and the *murid*. Most of the candidates admitted to the *khanqah* had to be whole-time residents. Consequently, it was always possible for the *murshid* to keep track of their academic progress and observe their day-to-day conduct from very close quarters. Once the *murshid* had developed confidence in the capacity of the *murid* to stand on his own legs, he was allowed to leave the school, to continue his training independently, provided occasional reports of his progress were submitted by him personally to the *murshid*.

Further, education being a life-long process, the *murshid-murid* relationship, once established, was considered to be a continuing process. The *murshid* and the *murid* maintained their respective inter-se positions in life, with all their rights and obligations intact. Proper reverence and decorum, both in public and private, was insisted upon, even where the *murid* had been admitted to the household of the *murshid* as a family member.

Apart from percept and personal practice, the Chishti pedagogy leant heavily upon the illustrative and anecdotal method. Short incidents of previous *Shaikhs* and great men were used to draw out various morals. The effect, enhanced by the oratorical art of the *murshid* was usually very touching.

The *murshid* was absolutely clear in his mind that the aim of all training imparted by him was to equip the *murid* with an in-built value-apparatus that would reject the apparent in favour of the real, the transient in favour of the permanent and the physical in favour of the spiritual. This was no mean ideal; nor was it very easy to achieve. Therefore, the training programme was adjusted by the *murshid* in such a way that it involved, *simultaneously*, the body, mind, intellect, heart and spirit of the *murid*. Intensive study of the Koran and other prescribed texts such as *Awariful-Ma'arif*; proficiency in Arabic and Persian languages, hadith, law and theology; manual labour and free service; abstinence, fasting and penance; prayers, verbal repetition, meditation and contemplation; music and poetry; non-dependence on others, non attachment to worldly goods and self-abnegation were some of the means, through the inculcation of which, the process of cleansing and enlightenment were put into motion, leading to the awakening of a *part* that sought affinity with the *whole*. This was the psychological stage at which the consciousness of the *murshid* merged mystically with the consciousness of the *murshid*.

And that is exactly the moment where speech should fail the speaker.

Section II
THE SEER AND TEACHER

PARALLELS BETWEEN SHEIKH FARID'S TEACHING AND THE SIKH SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

Dr. BHAI JODH SINGH

Sheikh Farid whose full name was Fariduddin Masaud was born in 1173 A.D. at the village of Kothiwal¹ near Multan (Pakistan). The family claimed to have descended from Hazrat Omar Farooq, the second Caliph of Islam. Owing to political upheavals his grandfather migrated to India from his home in Ghazni. His father Sheikh Famaluddin Sulaiman ultimately settled in the village mentioned above. On account of the great piety and asceticism which he practised in his life, Sheikh Farid rose to be the head of the Chishti branch of Sufis in northern India. To have a quiet place for his meditation he shifted to Ajodhan, which was later named Pakpattan, now a Tehsil in the Montgomery (Sahiwal) district of Pakistan. Through his sweet persuasion several tribes of Hindu zemindars and low castes of the area accepted Islam. He was so greatly revered by the people of his Ilaqa (neighbouring country) that people considered it an honour to accept Islam at his hands.

The part of his activity has puzzled many people, when they see that his Bani was included in the holy Guru Granth, the scripture of the Sikhs. The cause of this perplexity is the ignorance that prevails among the objectors about the teachings of Guru Nanak and his nine successors. An attempt will be made through quotations from Guru Bani to clarify what the Gurus meant by a truly religious life.

It is a well-known fact of Guru Nanak's life that when he got a vision of the Supreme Reality on the banks of the Bein stream, flowing near Sultanpur Lodhi now in the district of Kapurthala, Punjab (India). He observed silence, as his oldest biography narrates, for full three days. When he opened his mouth the first words said by him were : "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman". What he meant by this, was later amplified in his hymns and those of his successors. But the Kazi of Sultanpur, who considered himself a devout Muslim, because he offered his prayers five times a day, kept fasts in the month of Ramazan and strictly observed other ceremonial connected with his religion was enraged to hear that he, too was not considered a good Muslim and complained against the Guru to the Nawab Daulat Khan, the ruler over that territory. Before his beautiful vision Guru

1. This place is now known as Chawali Mashaikh. (Ed.)

Nanak was acting as a storekeeper of the state granary. The Nawab, according to the oldest biography of Guru Nanak, at first dissuaded the Kazi from pursuing this matter because Guru Nanak had become a faqir, had distributed all his possessions among the poor and given up his service. But the Kazi insisted and Guru Nanak was requested to come to the Durbar. The Nawab asked the Kazi to put his questions to Guru Nanak, to which the latter would be asked to reply.

The Kazi asked why he was saying that there is no Mussalman when there were so many pious Mussalmans in the city. Guru Nanak replied :

To deserve to be called a Mussalman is hard;

if one is Mussalm let him be called so.

The foremost condition is love for the faith;

he should rub his heart clean of the rust (sin)

and give up property.

When one becomes a Muslim and makes religion the
helsman of his boat, he should cease

worrying about life and death i.e. he should

stick to faith even if he has to face death.

He should bow his head to the will of God,

obey the Creator and annihilate his self

When he shows mercy to all living beings,

he may call himself a Mussalman."

A tree is known by its fruit; a man's religion is known by his deeds. Mere intellectual assent to certain dogmas or mechanical performance of rites and ceremonies is of no avail. Time and again Guru Nanak has stressed this point in this teaching :

"When a Hindu comes to join the Hindu fold

they put a cotton thread round his neck,

after reciting certain mantras;

But if after investiture he commits evil

deeds, his washings and ablutions will stand

him in no stead.

A Mussalman extols his own creed and says :

"Without believing in the great Prophet, none

will find a place in God's court."

But very few follow the path indicated by him. None will enter paradise without good deeds. In the creed of Jogis they point out the way and for that purpose, they put rings in his ears. With rings in his ears he roams from place to place, (forgetting) that the Creator pervades all places. All men are wayfarers;

When the writ comes they would depart

without delay

He who knows Him here will know Him

When he departs. For the rest, all boast

of being Hindus or Mussalmans is in vain.

1. Var Majh, Guru I, Pauri 5 sloka I

All will have to render their account at His door,
None will be saved without righteous deeds.
Rare is the man who talks of Truth of all truths.
No questions will be asked of him in the
Yond, O Nanak !”¹

In fact the Guru did not believe and preach that religions are different. “There is only one *Dhrama* i.e. the practice of truth. In every perfection has been attained by this teaching of the Guru. The God-oriented man, who continuously keeps his attention fixed on the indestructible word, will find the Unknowable and the Limitless.”² Guru Arjan has emphasised this point by saying : “The highest of all religions is, the repetition of the name of Hari and performance of pure deeds.”³ The forms rites and ceremonies may differ and religion may be called by any name but success will be attained only by practising truth and engaging in righteous deeds. Guru Arjan clarifies this view point in Ramkali :

“Some call Thee Rama, others Khuda,
Some serve thee under the Name of Gosain (Lord of the Earth), others do the
same calling Thee Allah Thou Bounteous Lord, Thou art the cause of all
causes !”

Bless me with Thy mercy, Merciful one ;
Some go to bathe at Sacred places of pilgrimage,
Others go to perform Haj.
Some worship the Vedas, others the Semitic books;
Some wear white clothes, other blue.
Some call themselves Turks, others Hindus;
Some seek Paradise, others *Swarga*.
Saith Nanak, ‘He who realizes God’s will,
Knows the mystery of the Lord God,’⁴

So, whatever religious creed one professes, his aim should be to realise God’s will, and this realization comes to those who lose their self in Him.

“When the ego was destroyed, mind and body regained their health.”

“Nanak got the vision of Him who is fit to be praised.”⁵ For the vision of the Supreme Reality the Gurus prescribed, the constant remembrance of the Name and singing His praises :

“When a man ascends the ladder of truth with
the True Name on his lips, home and forest
become the same to him. His evil
understanding is destroyed automatically,
Praises of God take its place.
Subduing his mind he gets the illumination

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1. Var Ramkali, Guru I, Sloka 2 Pause II
 2. Basant Ashatpadi, Guru 1, 4.3
 3. Gauri Sukhmani, Pauri 8, Ashatpadi 3
 4. Ramkali, Guru V
 5. I. Gauri Bawan Akhari, Guru V.

mentioned in the six Shastras. He sees the light of God pervading everywhere, and serving the Guru reaches his real abode. But if he assumes only the outer forms of the various sects, his desires increase. He undergoes suffering resulting from sensual pleasures and happiness leaves his body. Lust and anger rob his inner wealth. Let him rid himself of scepticism and get salvation through the Name.”¹

Before Guru Nanak spread his teaching, the world was thought to be a creation of prakriti or a play of Maya. The strivers were asked to free themselves of the bonds of Prakriti and obtain *Kaivalya*. The Vedantists preached that as long as man is bound by the enticements of Maya he cannot get liberation. Naturally, as a result of these doctrines those who sought liberation gave up all worldly activities and resorted to forests for their spiritual elevation. Guru Nanak raised his voice against this. He taught that the universe is the outcome of the Divine Will. Maya or Prakriti are not independent of Him.

“By contemplating truth the light dawns, then one becomes indifferent to worldly pleasures. Such is the greatness of the Guru that one while living with his family obtains liberation.

Again :

“Nanak ! on meeting the True Guru a man learns the way to perfection
Then laughing, frolicking, eating and wearing garments he obtains salvation.”

By analysing Sheikh Farid’s teachings preserved in the holy Guru Granth we find that he too emphasized the practice of truth, which Guru Nanak preached as the one religion worth pursuing :

“Saith Sheikh Farid thou loved one, trying to find God !
This body will become dust, its abode will be a humble grave. Sheikh Farid will meet God, if he could restrain the wanderings of his mind.
Always on the wing like Cranes.
If man realized that he would die and will not return, he should not lose himself in the evenescent things of this world.
We should speak the truth as is ordained by religion and not speak falsehood.
The disciple should follow the path indicated by the Preceptor.
When determined strivers were seen crossing the river, the feeble-minded novice also took courage.

1. Asa 2. II Guru I. Var Gujari, Guru V. S. 2 p. 15

Those who turned towards accumulation
of gold had their sides cleft with a saw.

O Sheikh ! none could live eternally in this world.

Many occupied the seat on which we are sitting now

Kulangs come in the month of Kattak,¹

the forest fires rage in Chet,²

Lightings flash in Sawan,³

In winter the arms of the wife adorn
his partner's neck.⁴

All those transitory things pass, revolve it in
thy mind.

What takes six months to form (i.e. body) is
broken in a moment.

The earth asks heaven, saith Farid, how
many pilot have passed ?

graves and their souls are being reproached.'''²

This topic of the transitoriness of the things and pleasures of this world has
been emphasized in a number of slokas :

“The pleasures of the world are like the shoots
of poison. Some died whilst sowing their
seed, others deported when they had finished sowing.

Those whose approach was heralded by
kettle-drums and trumpets, who had royal conopies
over their heads and whose praises were chanted
by bards went to sleep in graveyards,
buried like orphans. (45)

Those who had built houses, pleasure-bowers
and palaces have gone to lie in graves
after engaging in this false trade (46)

O Farid, there are many
patches in thy coat, and it can be mended
when torn, but life cannot be so repaired'
Sheikhs and their disciples all depart
when their turn comes (47)

Farid, do not attach thy heart to mansions
pleasure-bowers and palaces. None will
befriend thee when thou art covered with a
great load of earth. (57)

Farid ! Their palaces have been left empty.
Now they abide in a deserted place. The

1. October-November

2. March-April

3. July-August.

4. All these occur only in their proper season and are not permanent.

departed souls will occupy humble graves.
O Sheikh, engage in devotion to God,
thy departure may be today or tomorrow (97)

Sincerity of heart and persistent effort in the face of innumerable difficulties that lie in the path of spiritual progress, are the two indispensable qualifications that a striver should possess if he seeks success.

“Always try to advance forward, do not look back” says the Fifth Guru. “This is thy opportunity to succeed so that thou might not be born again.” Sheikh Farid has laid great stress on these two virtues.

“There is some defect in thee, O seeker of the bliss of union with thy groom, Those who are called blessed wives do not look at any stranger”. (110)

The Sheikh describes the difficulties that lie in the path of a godly life.

“It is difficult to be a *dervish* at His door;
My love for Him is only on the surface.
Rare is the man who treads the true way
of a dervish” (118)

To be a dervish at his door is difficult.
I follow the way of the world. But now
I am carrying this tied bundle, where
can I go after throwing it away. (2)

When a woman is yet unmarried, she longs for the day of marriage, but marriage creates more problems. She repents, O Farid, but she cannot become a virgin again” (63)

So I shall persist in the path, says he :

“The abode of my Beloved is far away
and the lanes are full of mud.
If I go to Him my blanket will get wet,
If I hesitate my love will suffer a break. (24)
Let the blanket get wet and soaked. Let the
God-sent rain pour. I shall go and meet my Friend,
So that my love may not be disrupted” (25)

The company of saints helps to remove the obstructions and encourages the striver to continue in his search.

“Burning in the fire of separation and
in dire distress I wring my hands,
and frenzied I seek that spouse of mine.
Is my Master angry with me ? That may be
on account of my faults; This is not the fault
of the groom.
I did not realize the worth of the Lord.
After wasting my youth I now repent.
O black Koel ! why art thou black ?
Singed by the fire of separation from my Beloved

I have got this colour. Bereft of the Beloved,
Where can one find joy ? One can unite
With Him through His grace alone.

“The woman stood alone near the frightful well,
Without a companion or helper. When through mercy He made me join the
company of saints, I found that Allah was my helper.
The path I am treading is extremely cheerless—
sharper than a double-edged sword and very narrow. On that lies my way.
O Sheikh Farid, get ready early to treat it.” (4.9) Suhi.

Like Guru Nanak, Sheikh Farid warns man against indulging in sin. Guru Nanak says, “Of vice and virtue that we practice we shall get the recompense. If we are bound to get retribution for our actions, then why engage in sinful deeds...“Do not indulge in vice at all, look for ahead. Throw the dice in such a way as not to lose the game with the Master. Perform actions that will bring gain to thee.” (Var Asa, Guru I, Pauri 21).

Baba Farid stresses the same point in his teaching :

“O Farid ! Thou hadst wasted the whole day in
aimless wandering and the whole night in sleep.
God will call thee to account for neglecting the purpose for which thou camest
into the world.” (28)

“The boundary of death is similar to that of a river in spate eroding its banks. [i.e. just as you cannot prevent a river in spate from eroding its banks so you cannot prevent death from claiming its victims]. In the Beyond are the burning fires of hell and the shrieks and laments of its denizens fill it. (Knowing this) understanding has dawned on some people: others are still indifferent to it. The actions that they performed in this world will bear witness in His Court.” (98)

Again :

“The body weighing three and a half munds is kept
moving by food and water. Man comes to this world
with a bundle of hopes with him. When the
Angel of Death enters the body, shattering all
doors, those loving brothers of his will place
him in the hands of this Angel, wrapped in a shroud.
Look ! man is now being carried on the shoulders of
four bearers. The good deeds that he performed in
this world will serve him in the Lord’s court.” (100)

But a man disregarding of the recompense
continues in his evil ways. So, the Sheikh warns
him of the consequences :

“O Farid, the ignorant man wants to taste grapes of
Bijaur but is sowing the seeds of acacia.
He goes on spinning wool, but expects to wear
silk.” (29)

He persuades man not to see the mote in the eyes of his fellow-men, but to mend

his own ways.

“If thou hast a far-seeing intellect do not indulge) in sinful deeds. (Instead of criticising others) examine thy own conduct.”(6)

He paints a frightful picture of the punishment for those engaged in evil deeds :

“Look at what hath befallen cotton and the sesame seeds; sugarcane, paper and the charcoal Under the pot.”¹

He advises men not only to refrain from evil, but also from all actions which bring no merit :

“O Farid ! forget those deeds which bring no merit, lest thou be put to shame at the Lord’s court.” (59)

“Sweetness and humility are the essence of goodness and virtue,” says Guru Nanak. Baba Farid counsels to practise humility and to avoid insipid speech.

“Be like the grass strewn to indicate the way, if thou shouldst wish to meet the Lord of all. Thou shalt enter the Count of the Lord when like the grass thou art trodden upon and broken into bits.” (16)

“What is the word, what the virtue, what the supreme Mantra, what the gerb that I may do, so I may captivate my Spouse ?” (126)

‘Humility is the word, forbearance the virtue and sweet speech the supreme *Mantra*. Wear these three merits, sister, and thy Spouse shall then be thine.’ (127)

“Do not utter a harsh word, the True Master pervades all, Do not break the heart of any; each is a priceless jewel.” (129)

“The hearts of all men are jewels; it is not good to break them. If thou longest to meet the Beloved, do not injure the feelings of any man.” (130)

Forbearance and patience are stressed in the following distiches :

O Farid ! serve the Master, remove all doubts from thy mind.

Dervishes should imitate trees in forbearance. (60)

O Farid ! return good for evil and do not let anger abide in thy heat. Thus thy body will suffer no malady. and thy heart’s desires shall be fulfilled (78)

“Make the bow of patience and string it with fortitude. From it shoot the arrow of patience;

1. Cotton is passed through a press to separate the seeds. Sesame seeds are pressed for oil. Sugarcane is similarly pressed for its juice. Hand-made paper was similarly treated and charcoal was burnt to heat the cooking-pot.

the Creator will not let it miss the mark." (115).

"The patient devotees burn their carnal desires.
By this they get near to God, but do not reveal their
secret to others". (116)

"O man ! if thou get confirmed in patience,
Thou shalt succeed in the purpose of life.
Thou wilt expand into a river and not
shrink into a streamlet." (117)

Resignation to God's will is emphasized in the following slokas :

"O Farid ! treat pleasure and pain alike and rid
thy mind of evil. When thou consider that whatever God
wills is good for thee, then wilt thou find His court."

The devotee should not think of any worldly recompense for his devotion,
otherwise his devotion will not last :

"Where there is greed, there is no love.
Love is false if contaminated by greed.
How long can a man stay in rain in a hut with
thatch broken ?

The Sheikh condemns the mere donning of the garb of a dervish without
sincerely trying to earn the merits that should be the aim of a dervish's life.
He reminds such a pseudo-Sufi that death will put an end to all these tricks.
Farid calls a pseudo-dervish a crane and a real one a swan.

"O Farid ! He carries a prayer-carpet on his
shoulder, and wears a Sufi's garb. He is
sweet of speech but carries a knife in his heart.
Externally he appears enlightened, but
pitch darkness fills him inside". (50)

"A crane sitting on the bank of a river was
engaged in sport. Amidst its mery-making
when it was parading as a swan, unexpectedly
a hawk fell upon it. All the merriment
vanished when God's hawk swooped. God
brought to happen what the crane never thought
of." (99)

Like the early Sufis, Sheikh Farid believed in the mortification of the flesh
by resorting to forests and undergoing ascetic discipline. The Guru's views differed
in this respect and in the slokas of Sheikh Farid we find that difference
clearly expressed in their own compositions at several places. Says Farid :

"With an axe on his shoulder and a water-pot
on his head, an iron-smith is ready to cut a
van tree; I am searching in the forest for my
Beloved, but thou seekest only charcoal." (Sloka 53)

According to Macauliffe, Farid was sent to the woods thrice by his mother to
undertake ascetic practices to subdue his pride. In one of these periods of 12
years he had himself suspended in a well with his head downwards. Macauliffe

has translated into English a Punjabi couplet given in *Jawahir-i-Faridi*.

“Farid, thy body is fixed on the stake, thy head has become a skeleton, crows peck at thy feet. If God come to me even now, happy shall be my lot !”

We find an echo of this event in three slokas of Farid preserved in the holy Scripture of the Sikhs :

“Farid ! my body has shrunk into a skeleton, the crows peck at my soles. Even now God has not come to my help. Behold my misfortune. (90)

“O crow, thou hast searched the whole of my skeleton and eaten all the flesh; pray do not touch my eyes; I still cherish a hope of seeing my beloved. (91)

“O crow do not peck at my skeleton now, fly away if thou canst. Do not eat the flesh of the body wherein my Beloved dwell.” (92)

But after these ascetic practices for thirty-six years, when the Sheikh settled down to family life, his views appear to have undergone a change :

“Farid, why art thou wandering from forest to forest treading over branches and prickly bushes ? God dwells in thy heart, what art thou seeking in the forest ?” (93)

Ultimately he came to the conclusion that it is the change of heart that matters. Mortification of the body may not bring about that change. It was revealed to him :

“Thou shalt meet me when thy heart is reformed and on meeting me thou shalt get peace. If thou become Mine, the whole world will become thine.” (95)

The Gurus believed that mere effort on the part of an individual cannot bring success in his spiritual uplift. The grace of God is indispensable for achieving freedom from bondage. Dependence upon one's effort alone increases a man's pride which becomes a hinderance in the way. Says Guru Nanak :

“Our deeds procure a body but the door of salvation opens through His grace.”.....“When I say I am, then Thou art not; When ‘Thou Art’, ‘I am not’.² Annihilate egoism and realise His presence inside your self and outside.”

Sheikh Farid says :

“O Farid, devotion in the first watch of night in like the blossom; it bears fruit when practiced in the last watch. Those who keep awake will be blessed with gifts from the Master.” (112)

1. Japu-Guru I, Pauri 4.

2. Var Mara-Guru I, Sloka I; Pauri 20.

On this Guru Nanak expresses his view :

“The gifts all belong to the Lord, none can force Him to bestow them. Some do not receive them even when awake; to others He gives these, Shaking them out of their sleep.” (113)

Donning a particular garb does not help in God-realization;

“Farid, I shall tear my silken robe into threads and wear a blanket. I shall wear whatever garb makes me meet my Beloved.” (103)

Guru Amar Das comments on this as follows :

“Why dost thou tear thy silken robe and wear a blanket; thy spouse will meet thee in thy home, if thy resolve be sincere.” (104)

Speaking of his ascetic life, Sheikh Farid says :

Not a drop of blood will come out if one pierces my body; Those who love their God have no blood in them” (51)

Guru Amar Das further explains and says :

“This body wholly depends on blood, without blood it cannot exist. Those who love the Spouse, do not have the blood of greed in their body. The fear of God makes their body lean and the blood of greed oozes out of it. Just as a metal is purified when put into the fire, the fear of God destroys the dross of their evil understanding.” (52)

Farid :

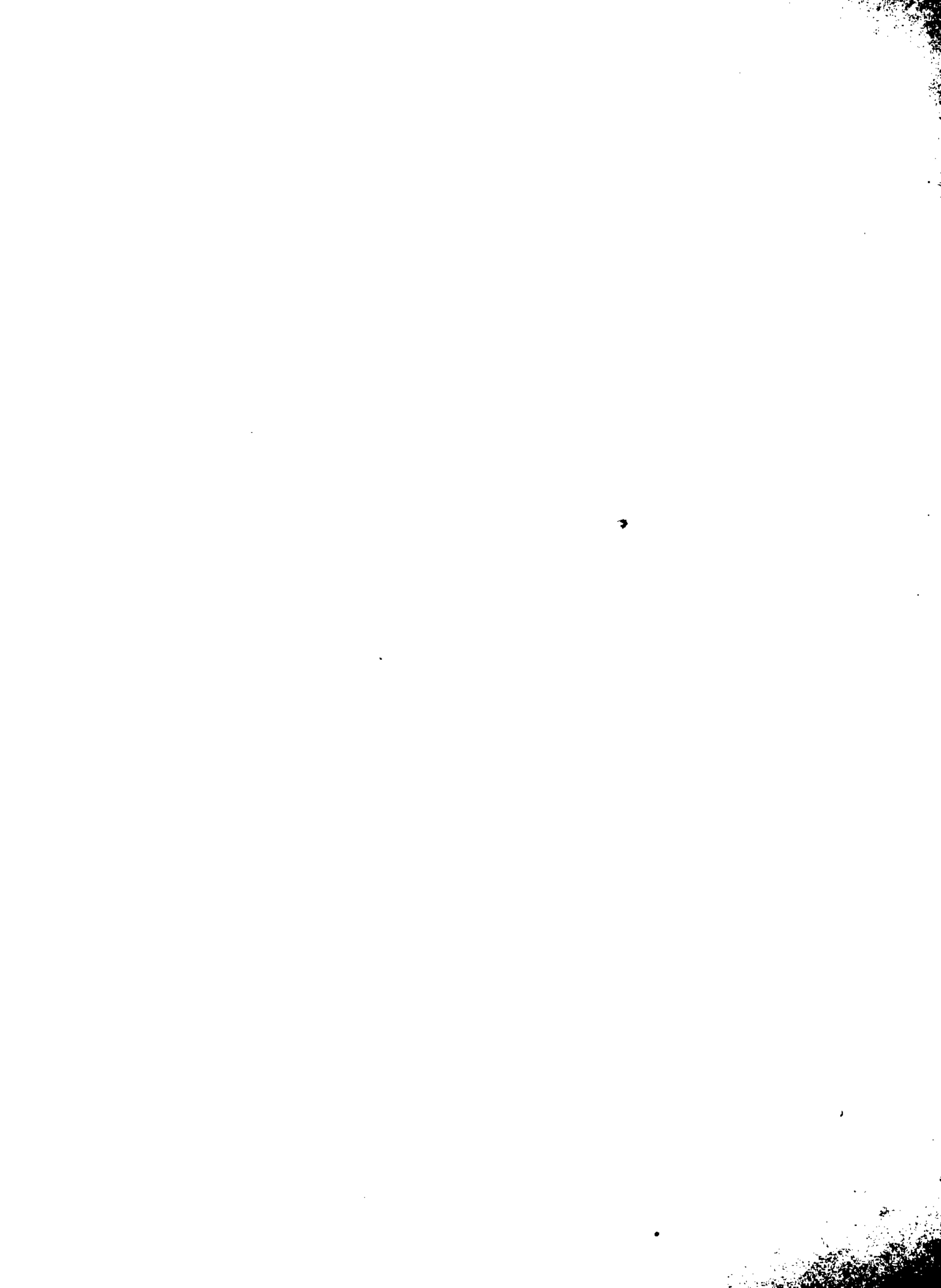
“My body is burning like an oven; my bones supply the fuel. While going to meet my Beloved if my feet tire, I shall walk on my head.” (119)

Guru Nanak :

“Do not burn thy body like an oven, do not burn thy bones in it. Thy feet and head have done no harm to thee. Look for thy Beloved inside thee. I go to seek the friend outside, but He is always with me. Being unknowable, He cannot be cognized. but the Master makes me see Him.” (120, 121)

We end with a sloka of Farid wherein he advises man not to wait for dates and rivers of honey to be found in Paradise and waste their lives in such hopes. One can taste those things in this life by devotional prayer to Him in the company of saints.

“O Farid, God’s dates are ripe and the rivers of honey are flowing. Each day that passes is snatched from thy appointed stay in this world.”



BABA SHEIKH FARID—A BRIEF STUDY OF HIS SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

I

FARID THE 'UNIQUE'

In this paper I propose to limit myself to what the title herein indicates—the study of the spiritual experience of the great saint Sheikh Farid, who for eight centuries has drawn the veneration of vast multitudes—Muslims as well as non-Muslims—in India and some of its neighbouring lands. His early biographers writing in Persian, have related him to the thought and tradition of Sufism, particularly as these formed the basis of the belief and practice of the great Chishtiya Order to which in the famous words of his Master's Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, he was 'as the refulgent lamp.' In this context his great scholarship in the various branches of the theological learning of his day and his great penance, culminating in the famous Chilla-i-Makus or forty days' silent prayer hanging head downwards have been prominently mentioned. This last, a rare test from which only the greatest among the Chishti Sufis could obviously come out successfully, is stated to have drawn on him Divine benediction in the form of a celestial Voice. This early excruciating penance also drew from his Master Khawaja Quitbuddin and the great Khwaja Muinuddin great ecstatic praise and blessing. In several places, including the town of Faridkot in Punjab, which is stated to be named after him and in Hansi, sites are shown as marking the place of his Chilla. Obviously his devotees in different places erected monuments to the great spiritual achievements of this eminent saint whose blessing they have so greatly valued.

His disciples carrying on his name and tradition are spread all over the length and breadth of our county and Pakistan, where he spent some sixty years of his life at Ajodhan, now known as Pak-Pattan, 'sacred ferry', in his honour. This is a vast spiritual movement, of course within Islam, whose fundamentals Baba Shaikh Farid emphasized all his life in his teaching. Owing to his great learning and piety he was known as Sheikh-i-Kabir (The Supreme Divine). But Sheikh Farid, notwithstanding this great veneration from Muslims was not of Islam or the Muslims only. Non-Muslims have since his day claimed him in a unique manner, reflecting the literal meaning of his name Farid, which means 'Unique'. Of this mention will be made below. This feature as a matter of fact, is the main burden of this paper.

In the course of the narratives of Sheikh Farid, mention is made of his voluntary poverty, embraced in the way of God as a dedication and repudiation of the pleasures of his world, and of the noble quality of forbearance and forgiveness which, following the great divine commandant of the Koran 'wa Allah mai-as-sabirin' (and verily Allah is with the forbearing) the Sufis adopted as the cardinal guiding principle of their creed. Of his forgiveness, asceticism and voluntary poverty a number of anecdotes are narrated, as also of the miracles attributed to him. All this part of the traditional lore of the Chishtiya Silsilah may be met with in the writings of the hagiographers belonging to that Order. This aspect, however, is well-known to the Muslim scholars and to devotees of the great Sheikh lovingly known as Baba or Father, a title reserved in our own country and over the Muslim world in general for saints who have drawn to themselves the hearts of the masses as healers of their life's sorrows rather than as mere scholars or divines. This feature again has a remarkable uniqueness about it.

THE POET

Among the great features of distinction attaching to the name of this eminent teacher, Baba Sheikh Farid is the fact of his *Bani* or Sacred Word available in his native Multani-Punjabi dialect being preserved in the holy scripture of a faith other than Islam, the Sikh faith. Muslims all through these centuries, by a strange historical oversight have some how continued to be silent about this *Bani*, the most valuable relic and heirloom coming down from the Master. I am aware of a controversy that has been in existence for nearly seventy years now, as to the authenticity of the authorship of this *Bani*. The proper resolution of this issue would require a detailed discussion involving a study of history and the linguistic developments in the Panjab. Suffice it to say however, that Guru Nanak and his spiritual successors who studied and preserved this *Bani* and inculcated the duty of a reverential study of it by their own followers accepted this as the statement of the spiritual experience and moral teaching of Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj, the greatest Muslim saint of the Punjab and one who was no narrow theologian but a teacher of vast humanitarian sympathies, whom the people loved. The holy Gurus gave to this *Bani* the same status as to their own spiritual outpourings, that is, as God's inspired Word. In that great spiritual movement, originating in the Vision of Guru Nanak, constricting theologies of whatever creed were denigrated and mankind exhorted to seek communion with the Supreme Being and to establish an intimate coordination between the spiritual and moral life to embrace Duty in the widest sense. In these traditions set up by them, an inevitable concomitant was a People's Bible which should be of no exclusive creed, but be a guide to the higher life. In this Bible, the Granth Sahib, thus, have figured holy men of several creeds including Islam. And one of the most illustrious of these is Sheikh Farid, to whose Word every Sikh must show as great respect as to Word of Guru Nanak himself. This aspect of the Sikh creed, not known to non-Sikhs generally and obscured by much misunderstanding, needs to be emphasized deeply by all who study Religion in its higher aspects as a force for the enlightenment of humanity and the broadening of its moral horizon.

There are two related aspects from which particularly in this paper, the life-work of Sheikh Farid may be discussed. One is the great teacher, whose spiritual and moral vision was shaped by his Sufistic asceticism and his individual meditation on the human problem in relation to the evil hidden in the dark recess of the human personality, which manifests itself as temptations gross and subtle on the one hand, and callousness and inhumanity on the other. Evil in the individual sphere of conduct and in the social sphere is the theme of the moral teacher, the prophet-and Sheikh Farid in seeking to cure these is in the highest traditions of religious and moral teaching. A few points on this aspect of the great Sheikh's work will be brought out below, as these are revealed especially in his Bani referred to above. Related to this aspect is the spiritual experience which is the state of cosmic awareness, of the supreme joy in God the state where problems cease to exist and the soul disports in an atmosphere which transcends the social and human spheres of reference. Of this too there are a few fleeting echoes in the Bani, which place Sheikh Farid in the rank of the great mystics. Hagiographers of the earlier centuries have overlaid the entire experience of Sheikh Farid with miracle and have woven a myth round him, which obscures his real and total personality and presents a picture which has all the usual elements of obscurantism about it. Should one seek to know the real Farid, the mystic, the moral Preceptor, the holy Father or Baba loved by the people of the Punjab, one must seek him in the brief testament of his Bani found in Guru Granth Sahib and preserved with such loving care for humanity by that great Teacher, Guru Nanak, whose vision brought about such a transformation in the lives of millions and gave them a creed into which broad humanity and liberalism have been infused so as to become a way of life.

The Bani of Sheikh Farid in Guru Granth Sahib, therefore, provides the corrective and the complement to whatever has come down about him from other sources. While those who have written about him in Persian had allowed the traditional hagiological imagination to build up the picture of a saint not greatly different from that of so many others, and ascribed to him sayings and verse-pieces about the authenticity of which the historical conscience may be left doubting, here in his native Panjabi accents may be heard the very voice of the man, in its vowel modulations and in its deeper moods of compassion, rejection of the lure of the world and the exalted experience of joy in God and in the sheer abandon of love of all creation. This Bani, therefore, is truly a blessing for which mankind in general and the Punjabi-speaking people in an especial measure must be grateful to Guru Nanak. It brings us in touch with the warm, feeling heart of Farid for which in the second-hand exposition by hagiographers anxious to present pictures of him in colouring of their own making may only look in vain.

Before dilating even though briefly, on the theme of the spiritual and moral experience of Sheikh Farid, I may seek leave to say something about him as poet, since our entire approach to him would be based upon his own recorded word, which in form is poetry and is like all great poets untranslatable in its total meaning and appeal. Nothing short of a study of it in the sweet, musical Multani Punjabi in which Sheikh Farid wrote, may be expected to bring the reader close to the vibrating heart of this great man. A rendering, however conscientious, must

fail to catch these subtle aspects of appeal which set poetry apart from its mere semantic rendering into good prose or even verse. This language of western Punjab is made as though expressly for poetry and song, and to this day the sweetest folk and other poetry of the Punjabi-speaking people is found embodied in its faery sounds. Analysis would not catch the secret of its spell over the mind. Guru Nanak himself in his most deeply human outpourings, adopts as if by an inevitable urge, this very dialect of Punjabi, although in his philosophical and intellectual phases of experience he uses either a variety of Hindi or his native idiom of central Punjab.

As poet Sheikh Farid may be seen to be deeply sensitive and with a vibrating imagination which is responsive to pity, to the tragic waste of the previous years of life by thoughtless man whom he constantly warns both by raising the pointing fingers to the consequences and by the deeper method of arousing him to search himself, to find that pity whose touch he has lost. With this, the poet Farid warns men against the subtle attractiveness of sin, stealing unawares into the soul and in the words of one of the couplets making a forfeit of him to Satan. The total effect of this poetry is what in the native Indian spiritual tradition is called Vairagya or dispassion for which attitude the Muslim theological term is Tauba or 'turning away.' This step known by whatever name, is the beginning of that steep ascent which may lead a man to turn mystic, yogi or saint. Withal in Sheikh Farid's, poetry if found expressed the pure spiritual vision untrammelled by our references to the problem-ridden world of human relationship. And in places it is such poetry as is transmuted into symbols, dumb yet eloquent, signifying little in terms of the usual framework of logical thought but standing for deep experience which can in no other way be expressed except through symbol. This quality is found only in the greatest poets of the world—in Shakespeare, Hafiz or others of their stature. Persian is particularly rich in this mode of poetic expression, but in Punjabi Sheikh Farid is perhaps unique in practising this mode. That itself is an argument to beat the erroneous belief that anyone other than Sheikh Farid could have composed the poetry known to be his. It would be contrary to all human probability to ascribe poetry of such power to any but a personality endowed with the highest spiritual experience and a genius capable of rendering into language the subtle states of the mind, ranging from the haunting sense of tragic waste through the grasp of the moral truths to the attainment of peace and joy in God. All these themes find expression in Sheikh Farid's couplets, each of which is charged with tremendous power to touch the heart and to move the soul.

II

THEMES OF HIS POETRY—THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

In the poetical compositions of Sheikh Farid, a few themes stand out prominently, which can by careful study be grasped and stated. The Bani or composition is not thematically arranged, but is the outpouring of the soul in moments of inspiration or communion and like all poetry, its essence has to be caught and studied by the analytical process. On a study these compositions may be seen to be the work of a man who has entered upon the period of life when the body grown

feeble in its functions, mind and soul are in that mood of meditation wherein the ordinary concerns of the world and demands of daily life are reduced to the minimum. This state is both serene and tragic. Its tragic tone is provided by the contemplation of the spectacle of man's way of life, wherein the urges of the flesh and of acquisitiveness have constantly the upper hand. When middle age is past and death is seen to be approaching, there is little left except regrets for lost time — time never again to be recalled. This regret is not for the pleasures of life missed as in the case of the hedonist who sees the faculties losing the capacity for extracting pleasure from the objects of which the world is so tantalizingly full, but for time wasted in pursuits which keep man away from devotion, from attachment to the way of God. This is the reverse of the mood of the hedonist whom the spectacle of passing life spurs on to seek, vainly though, more and more such pleasure. With this kind of mood the readers of poetry such as that of Omar Khayyam would be familiar. As a matter of fact, all romantic poetry carries some colouring of it.

The death-theme affects the hedonist and voluptuary on the one hand and the devotee on the other, in different ways according as either understands the fulfilment of life to consist in what he has been seeking. For the life centred in the senses, the decline of the power of the body to cope with the sources of pleasure is a hunting regret, which makes not only approaching old age, but even the moments of surfeit of pleasure an unbearable terror. To the devotee on the other hand, whose life is centred in self-denial and disciplining the demands of the ego, pleasure is of little value. He seeks from life something higher — joy in God — consciousness which transmutes even sorrow and suffering into peace and communion with God. In Sheikh Farid, Death is seen with the eye which beholds the underlying law of the universe in which all that is created is seen to be in a state of flux and subject to annihilation under the operation of the inexorable law of Time. To some whom God has endowed with such vision, such as the great teacher Farid, Death is a visible presence, not to be ignored in the course of the daily round of life. In one sloka or couplet, built on powerful imagery as is usual with him, he has seen the face of Death thus :

Farid, Death is visible as the opposite bank of the river :

Beyond is said to be flaming hell, resounding with ear-piercing shrieks :

Some there are who have realization of this :

Know that the deeds done in this world will bear witness against us in the next (98).

Not only is Death a visible presence, no way frightful as to the ordinary mortal, but as a suddenly swooping bird of prey, whose possibility man forgets while engaged in his daily round of evanescent pleasures :

Farid, life is like a crane sporting on the river's bank :

Suddenly on it hath swooped the swift hawk;

As comes this hawk from God, all sporting is forgotten.

God sends on man what never he thought or imagined. (99)

Life is like a tree growing on the river's bank — how long may it last ?

How long may the unbaked pitcher retain water ? (96)

For man's state his heart is full of compassion and pathos, such as only the greatest and noblest among mankind feel. To thoughtless man he speaks as the great Teacher, the Awakener : Life, warm, pulsating and beautiful must send. This is said again, through imagery which is powerful and grips the heart :

Farid, lofty mansions have been deserted—

Their inmates gone to occupy abodes under the earth;
In the lowly graves abide the dead.

Tell the proud ones of the world : Engage in prayer, for the Departure is at hand. (97)

This body weighing three and a half maunds is sustained by food and water;

Man comes into the world with a vast store of hopes;

As visible Death approaches, smashing through all doors,

Those loving friends and brothers perforce surrender thee to him.

Behold Man, departing this world borne on shoulders of four pall-bearers;

Farid, only the good deeds done in this life stand by us in the next. (100).

Consider Farid, where are thy parents who begot thee ?

Gone on a never-ending journey—yet still is thy heart unmoved to see thy own end. (73)

Farid, the beautiful pitcher of the body is broken;

The firm cord of breath is snapped:

In what home Izrael, Angel of Death

Finds entertainment tonight ? (68).

Farid, such is the end : the beautiful pitcher will break; the firm cord be snapped:

To what end were born those who were merely a burden on earth ? (69)

Farid, once these frail legs of mine scoured over hill and desert;

Today the prayer-jug at hand is removed a hundred miles. (20)

Compassion for man's state is the theme of the very first of his slokas in Granth Sahib, wherein Death is figured as the bridegroom who must carry away on the appointed day, his betrothed Bride, loth to leave the parents' home like the typical Indian bride. In the imagery of this sloka is woven great teaching, through the attendant pathos of the bride's departure, for whom leaving the parents' home would be leaving it for good. The sands of life run out. In the Indian imagery which comes to the mind of the great Sheikh, life is like a slender store of sesame, not to be scattered wide. Vanity and pride in a frail being like man are evidence of folly, which leaves only a crop of regrets behind :

Farid, had I known the store of life so slender,
sparing would I be of scattering it about;

Did I know the Beloved so indifferent, less would I
show of woman's vanity. (4)

Did I know the knot of love so frail,
firmer would I tie it:

Lord, none to me is dear as Thou—thus have
I determined after life's sojourn. (5)

As said earlier, unlike the regret of the hedonist for lost time. the ascetic—

devotee's regret is for a life passed without devotion to God :

The crop destroyed by water will not revive if
soaked again in water.

Saith Farid : As this, one bereft of God will find
no respite from sorrow (62)

Farid, how long this play of thoughtless pleasures ?

Wake up to serve the Master !

The few days of life are fast slipping by. (56)

Farid, one part of the day didst thou waste in
wandering, part in sleep;

When God asks thee to render thy account,
what wilt thou say was thy life's aim ? (38)

Farid, thy long life hath thus been passed:

Thy days sorrow-filled, thy nights lying on thorns !

Now towards the close the Pilot shouts :

"Thy boat's in jaws of storm". (85)

Saith Farid, in youth this life-female loved not the Lord:

Grown in years, she died:

In the grave her soul walleth :

Lord ! Thee I failed to meet. (54)

He exhorts man, while life lasts, to taste of what he has called the dates and
honey of divine love :

Farid, in this life, joy in God attractive like the ripe
dates and rivers of honey of paradise;

Realize these, since with each passing day the grip of
Death tightens. (89)

In a whole lyric, called Shabda in Sikh parlance, this vision is expressed
through a pageant of images, in poetry which is of the very highest in its sheer
appeal to the imagination. The exhortation is addressed to man to stop making
waste of his limited moments of life before 'life's swan makes his reluctant flight'.
This short beautiful lyric will bear being reproduced here in full. It may be
mentioned that Guru Nanak composed a lyric in the same measure, Suhi, as
Sheikh Farid, with the imagery of the original harnessed to express the vision of a
life anchoring itself to divine grace through practice of austerity and meditation.
Thus would be equipped the boat of life, of the ruin of which Sheikh Farid warns,
as a boat without tackle and rudderless. Sheikh Farid's lyric is reproduced here :

Listen O Man, thou didst not look to the tackle of
thy boat when it was yet time.

In the lake swollen with tempests, how shall it float ?

Fugitive are pleasures like Kasumbha, burning away at a touch :

Touch it not, beloved, lest it wither away.

This frail life-female is atremble under the
Mater's stern accents.

Past is youth; never will the breast be brimful again
of milk; never again the love-embrace !

Satih Farid : Listen, sisters of my soul !
One day life's swan shall take his reluctant flight;
This frame will turn a dust-heap !

Sheikh Farid was one of the early Fathers of the great Chishtiya Silsilah of the Sufis in India. This Silsilah attained great influence and power in the life of the Muslim people, so that the most important twin centres of Muslim pilgrimage in India are the Mausoleums of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer and Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi, who helped to establish this Order in our country and set the general trend of the life of the Sufi. This Silsilah also helped to obtain for the general principles of Muslim piety and belief considerable acceptance among non-Muslims, of which the most important example is Sheikh Farid, veneration for whom has been woven into the sentiments of the people of the Punjab. Living at that time eight centuries ago, when the tradition and system of thought of Sufism were still in its earlier phase before the great exposition of Rumi, he embodied in his life and teaching the best traits of the Sufi's life. Abstinence, penance devotion, forbearance, subduing the senses to make the mind free for the higher spiritual experience, Divine love and joy in God—these are intensely reflected in what we know of him and in his poetical work which is extant. Like every claimant to the Sufistic state he calls himself repeatedly 'Dervish' (the later abandon had not yet entered Sufism). Moreover, in Sloka numbered 50 in Granth Sahib, he sets the seal on the definition of the Sufi, which is therein seen to be derived from Sufi or coarse woollen wear. This Sloka reads thus, in English rendering :

Farid, those who carry the prayer-mat on
their shoulders who wear rough wool,
But bear baggers in their hearts and utter falsehood
with glib tongues—
These are bright outside but have the dark night
in their hearts. (50)

The Sufi's life must pass through the stages of strenuous self-denial and self-purification, so that the true vision of God be attained and man find fulfilment in the higher wisdom which penetrates to truth. He must live at the height of morality of which humanitarian feeling and universal love are the essence, and find joy and fulfilment in God. Above all, passionate love of God, a peace and joy, inexpressible except through the medium of symbol, are essential features of that spiritual fulfilment which is the crowning attainment of the life of the Sufi, the Yogi, the mystic—find expression in the poetry of Sheikh Farid recorded in Granth Sahib. Not here the later phase of the Sufistic experience, taking the form of an abandon, an ecstasy and even a kind of antinomianism, but the earlier phase of it in which austerity, meditation and devotion were emphasized—the path of *Sahu* rather than of *Sukro*. The later phase mentioned here came into vogue during the centuries following after the age in which Baba Farid lived.

True religion for the Sufi is not formal orthodoxy, but realization and sincerity in the quest :

Farid, why wanderest thou over wild places,

trampling thorns under thy feet ?
God abides in the heart · seek Him not in
lonely wastes. (19)

Farid, those who carry the prayer-mat on
their shoulders and wear rough wool,
But bear daggers in their hearts and utter falsehood
with glib tongues—

These are bright outside but have the dark night
in their hearts. (50)

Against the narrowness of creeds, the religion of the man of God must be vast,
universal, with principles and appeal. Through the contrasting symbols of a vast
lake and a muddy pond, Sheikh Farid exhorts man to seek the former and discard
the latter.

Farid, seek a vast lake wherein thou mayst find
what thou seekest—God's Name;
Why seek a filthy pond, muddying thy hands ? (53)

The man of God must conduct himself though life in the spirit of patience
and resignation. He must be like the grass trodden under feet and bear up all
suffering like trees which bear with equanimity the severities of weather and the
sharp blows of the axe :

Farid, wouldst thou seek the Master of All,
Look to the grass under thy feet;
Be like it cut and trampled. (16)

Farid, serve the Master, throw all doubt from thy mind;
Men of God need to be forbearing like trees. (60)

What are the characteristic qualities of men of God ? Baba Farid answers
this query, in words saturated with spiritual experience and charged with great
power. They are the birds who skim over the surface of the world, without
touching it, bear hardships and complain not, sticking fast to their devotion to God.
Through such symbols this theme is repeatedly adumbrated :

Farid, I am a sacrifice to those birds who pass
their days in solitary places,
Picking pebbles, living on sandy mounds, yet turning
not away from God. (101)

On the marge of the pool of the world have alighted
Swans;

They dip not their beaks in it.
Spreading their pinions for flight ever. (64)

The Swan hath alighted in the field of chaff;
People scare it away;
The ignorant multitude not knowing,
The Swan pecks not at chaff. (65)

Patience is the armour and secret strength of the devotee. Sheikh Farid's
words while dwelling on the theme of patience, get charged with irresistible power
like the very arrows to which this spiritual quality is compared. In a remarkable

trio of couplets, this theme is thus developed :

Make forbearance thy bow and bow-string;

The arrow too of forbearance—

God will not let it go off its mark. (115)

Those who adopt forbearance and take upon themselves
suffering—

Such alone will be near God: their secret strength

none will know. (116)

Make forbearance thy life's ideal; learn hard
this lesson;

Thus wilt thou become a mighty river, not a petty
channel. (117)

What are the moral qualities with which the life of devotion endows the
seeker? These are forbearance and a vast, limitless spirit of humanity.

Farid, return thou good for evil; bear no revenge
in thy heart;

Thus will thy body be free of maladies,

And thy life blest. (78)

Farid strike not back those that strike thee;

In utter humility and forgiveness turn towards
thy home. (7)

Speak never a rude word to any—the Lord Eternal
abideth in all;

Break no heart—know each being is a priceless
jewel. (129)

Each heart is a jewel; evil it is to break any;

Shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no
one's heart. (130)

This is the testament of this great saint, who however, has warned man against
indifference to the cultivation of the moral qualities. As the great Rumi, a
contemporary of Sheikh Farid, has said :

Be not needless of the consequences of thy deeds :

Wheat shall sprout from wheat, and barley from barley—

So Sheikh Farid, in a figure drawn from his native Punjab, says :

Farid, the ignorant peasant seeks luscious grapes while sowing thistles:

And seeks to wear silk while carding and spinning rough wool. (23)

Listen Sheikh Farid, union with Allah may come about,

Shouldst thou restrain the cries of these cranes of desire, frisking about in
thy mind.

Worldliness is a hidden fire clouding thought and vision :

I thank the Master for this gift of indifference;

Else would it burn me through. (3)

Farid, the world's pleasures are poison-shoots coated with sugar :

Some there are who spend their days cultivating these;

Others uproot them from the field. (37)

I should like to conclude this brief discussion of the spiritual experience of Sheikh Farid with the manifestation in it of the love of God. Love is at the centre of high Sufistic experience, as of Bhakti with which it holds numerous parallels. Like to mundane love, love of God too has its moods and phases, when it has become for the devotee a cherished value. In the later phases of Sufism and Bhakti, the Love theme is presented with an abandon and elaboration in some of the great poetry of the world, in Persian and numerous Indian languages. In the earlier phase, to which Sheikh Farid belongs, while this passion is still an integral part of the Sufistic experience, its expression is terse and intense, owing to the predominance of asceticism in the way of Sufism. For the cherished Beloved there is passion, yearning and the sorrow of separation. In the symbol of the Indian Koel, yearning in love is expressed as the sovereign quality of the devotee. This theme is expressed in words which bear close affinity with the style and symbology of Indian mysticism.

Thou Koel sable-winged, what hath darkened thee ?

Sorrow of separation from the Beloved hath singed my wings

To one parted from her Lord, what comfort ?

Through His grace alone may she find union. (2)

To yearn in longing and to feel the separation from the Master is itself a high value and spiritual attainment. Thus is this theme developed :

Farid. anguish is my bed, suffering the bed-strings,

Separation from the Beloved my bed-sheets :

Such is my life;

Cast Thy glance of compassion on it, Lord. (35)

Sorrow of the Beloved's separation is the Lord of Life;

Saith Farid : like to the cremation-yard is the heart

that knoweth not such sorrow. (36)

In a verse celebrated for its power and a parallel to which is reproduced in *Jawahir-i-Faridi*, a Persian work of Jahangir's time, the devotee's long, yet unavailing penance is thus expressed as in cry :

Farid, penance hath left my body a skeleton;

crows peck at my soles;

God still hath not revealed Himself—

such is my destiny. (90)

As in the poetry of Bhakti, the Seeker is figured as the yearning female, seeking fulfilment in the spouse, the Beloved Lord. This mood has given rise to great poetry in Bhakti no less than in Indian Sufism. Says Sheikh Farid in this figure :

Farid, in separation from the Master

the nights seem endlessly long;

My sides are burning in pain:

Crused is the life of those that have sought
other than Him. (21)

This night I couched not with my Lord;

My limbs are all in torture with unfulfilment :

I ask the woman cast off,
In what agony must thy nights be passed ? (30)
I fear not loss of youth were not the Beloved'd love
lost;

Many a youth hath withered away for lack of love's
sustenance. (34)

In a related mood, is expressed the regret of the seeker female at not winning
her Lord's love through foolish vanity, while He must be won by humility :

Farid, had I known the store of life so slender,
sparing would I be of scattering it about;

Did I know the Beloved so indifferent, less would I
show of woman's vanity. (4)

Did I know the knot of love so frail,
firmer would I tie it :

Lord, none to me is dear as Thou—thus have
I determined after life's sojourn. (5)

(These two couplets have been quoted also earlier in this paper, to illustrate
another point).

The Quest is expressed through another figure, typically Indian and Punjabi,
in the journey to the Beloved's home in pouring rain, through muddy rain, like
to the love-odessey of a Punjabi damsel of a later day, Sohini, who swam the
swollen Chenab river to be with her cow-herd lover on the other bank :

Farid, the lanes are muddy; the Beloved's home far,
Yet my love for Him is deep;

If I stay back, am I false to my love. (24)

Let the cloak be drenched through;

let it rain never so much—

Go I must to meet the Loved One,

So my love prove not false. (25)

Gone are those pearly teeth, those quick-moving

feet, those sparkling eyes, vigilant ears :

A loud cry hath arisen from the flesh at departure of
such companions. (77)

Farid, at midnight is scattered fragrant musk;

Those asleep share not this blessing :

What union for those with eyes slumber-oppressed ? (80)

Prayer done in the first part of night is like the flower;

These blessings of the Lord's descend upon those who
keep vigils in prayer. (112)

Joy in God is thus expressed:

Sugar, sweets, candy, butter, rich creamy milk—

Lord, nothing for Thy devotees approaches the
joy in Thee. (27)

Prayer done in the first part of night is like
the flower;

Prayer continued later in the night the fruit thereof;
These blessings of the Lord's descend upon those
who keep vigils in prayer. (112)

Farid, at midnight is scattered fragrant musk;
Those asleep share not this blessing:

What union for those with eyes slumber-oppressed ? (80)

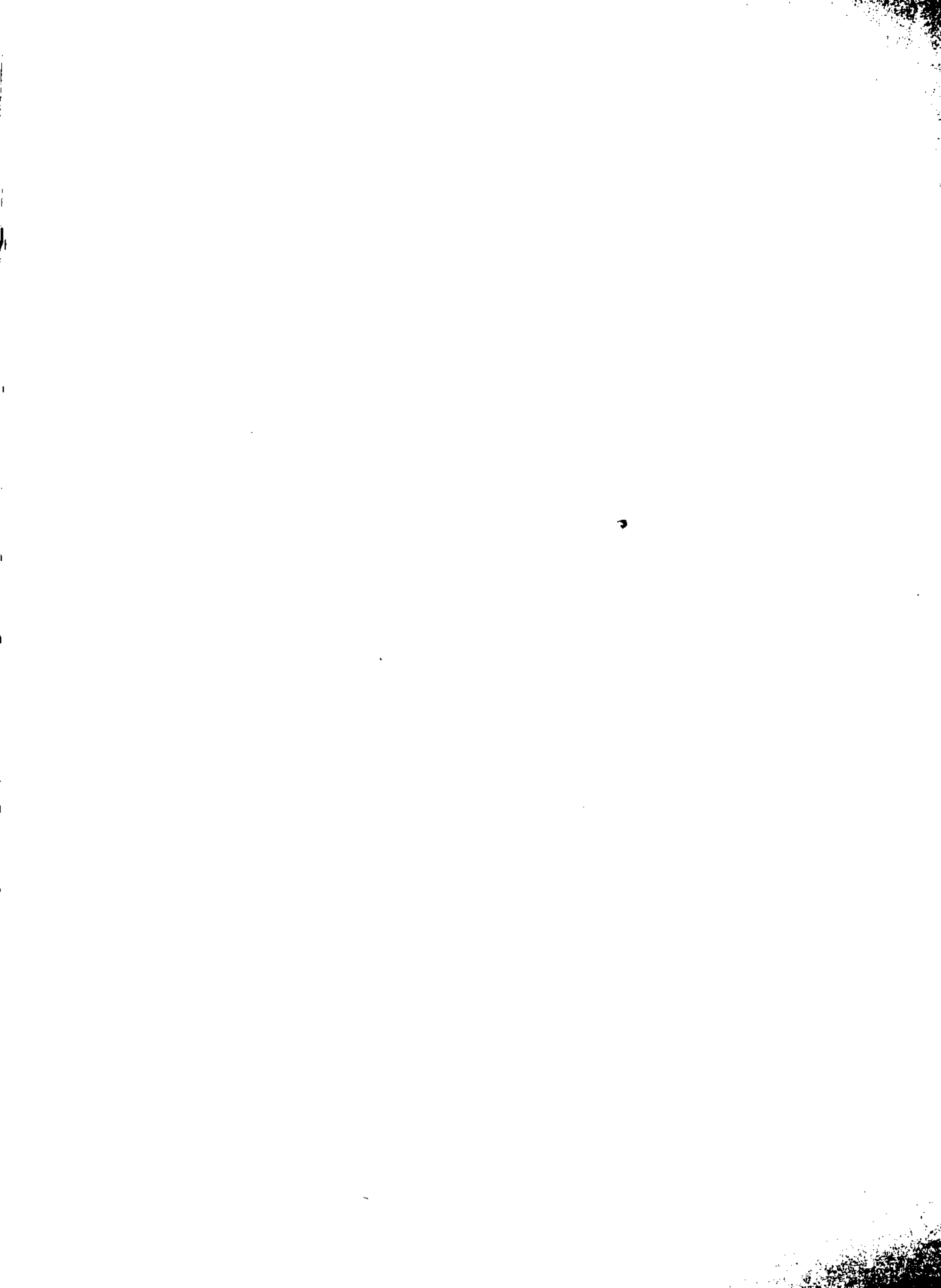
To this last experience, Guru Nanak, in an appended verse, emphasizes also
Divine grace which descends upon whom God is pleased to bless :

The Lord's blessings may not be forced out of His hand :

Some may not get these though awake;

On some He may confer these shaking them out of
slumber. (113)

Such are some of the facets of the spiritual experience of this great saint, as recorded in Granth Sahib. He truly, in the classical Indian phraseology is 'the crest-jewel on the head of Mother India', and 'the illuminating lamp of the Silsilah of Dervishes', as the great Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, Hazrat Gharib Nawaz pronounced him to be.



SHEIKH FARID AND THE EVOLUTION OF SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS IN INDIA

A. A. K. SOZE

It is a truism to say that Sheikh Fariduddin Shakarganj was a bridge between the two main communities of India. What is, however, much more important in my opinion is the fact that he was a bridge between two opposite approaches to reality as well.

Sufism and mysticism are generally supposed to be equivalent terms. But it would be difficult to equate the two if one were to keep in view the examples of such sufis as Sheikh Farid or his disciple Sheikh Nizamuddin. These and other sufis of their type were basically men of religion, who not only believed in and practised Islam, but also propagated it among the non-Muslims. This can hardly be regarded as something praiseworthy from the purely mystical point of view, which recognises no essential difference between one religion and another. The only meaningful conversion, from the mystical point of view, is the one which converts a man into a mystic.

The clear implication of the above statement is that mysticism is not Religion. In fact the mystic tradition has been present throughout human history side by side with the religious tradition. No doubt there have been occasions when mysticism has come so close to religion that the difference between the two has become negligible. But generally the two have always maintained distance.

However, the exact opposite of mysticism is not religion but something which, for want of a better name, I call *externalism*. The difference between the two concepts will be more clearly understood if we gave a more expressive name to mysticism also. I suggest *internalism* as an alternative.

The externalist approach aims at analysing all existence with the help of the five senses. It tries to understand the universe with the instruments of analytical reasoning and scientific experiment. As is obvious, this approach is neither moral nor immoral. It is not amoral.

That, however, does not mean that its votaries have always been immoral or amoral. On the contrary, they have honestly tried to analyse the physical world without bringing into their calculations anything which may be beyond the reach of their senses. For them, anything which can neither be seen, nor heard, nor tasted, does not exist at all, except in the world of whims and superstitions.

Few (externalist) philosophers have arrived at something like the moral categories of Kant in their search for a *terra firma* for human behaviour. Scientists

too have to be generally neutral in discussions on morality, for the simple reason that they find no moral order in the material world, which they investigate.

As opposed to this, the internalist approach dispenses with the data provided by sense perception right from the very beginning. Internalism is, so to say, interested in the study of an entirely different dimension of existence. The five senses instead of being in anyway helpful in the internalist study, prove to be a positive hinderance. That is why the internalist has to make a start by shutting all the windows of sense perception. An eminent mystic (internalist) poet of Islam, Jalaluddin Rumi, says :

Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips,
Blame me, if you do not see the light of truth even then.

Innumerable mystics have declared that by discarding the data supplied by sense perception, they have been able to explore an entirely unknown and far more interesting level of existence, than the one known to philosophers and scientists. Their books are full of descriptions of their experiences and experiments in the inner regions of the soul or the self. Although these experiences and experiments have not yet been fully and scientifically analysed (after the fashion of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*), yet they are so numerous, and those who relate them are unimpeachably honest, that it would be unjust to dismiss them as so much nonsense.

Indeed, the evidence in favour of the inner world is so overwhelming that no reasonable person can deny its existence. This inner world seems to possess such beauty and attraction that those who have witnessed it, generally tend to lose their interest in the external world of the senses. To live in society and to perform social obligations becomes extremely unpleasant for those who have gone deep into the regions of the inner world.

However, it cannot also be ignored that the descriptions of the inner world given by the mystics or the internalists are not exactly the same in all cases. All of them do not seem to possess the same spiritual vision. The differences in their observations are as numerous as the differences in their backgrounds. It is noteworthy that, by and large, the mystics see, during their moments of inner perception, more or less the same things, in a rarefied form, which they ordinarily believe in.

The inner world may, therefore, be regarded as more or less a reflection of the external world. This inner world, however, appears to be the reverse of the world of change and flux which is observed by the senses. As one advances in the inner world, one observes greater and greater permanence till a stage comes when existence in the abstract is alone observable and all distinctions are wiped out. In the words of a great sufi whom I personally know, the whole universe seems, in moments of inner perception, to melt into something like a wave of light. This, to a mystic appears to be the only reality; the rest being nothing but illusion. Those mystics who believe in theistic religions give this all pervading base of existence, the name of God or Brahman or Haq, and cry out in ecstasy, "Aham Brahmasmi," like Shankara, or "Anal Haq" like Mansur. This does not mean that they lay claim to Godhood. It only means that they are unable to observe anything except the

spiritual base of existence.

It is remarkable that this spiritual observation is also available to irreligious and atheist mystics. The irreligious or atheist mystics cannot, of course, call the spiritual principle, observed by them, 'God.' They call it just *Existence*.

Since there is no conclusive proof that this spiritual base of existence is God, even religious mystics (I have in my mind Muslim mystics in particular) often prefer to call it *Absolute Existence*, rather than God. Hence the expression *Unity of Existence*, used by Muslim mystics for *pantheism*.

There is nothing incomprehensible about this internally or mystically observed *Unity of Existence*. Even in the External world, we observe more or less the same Unity. When a physicist studies matter, he too arrives at the conclusion that the material base of the whole external universe is one and the same, notwithstanding the bewildering diversity of the elements and compounds which go to its making.

There is nothing incomprehensible about this internally or mystically observed *Unity of Existence*. Even in the External world, we observe more or less the same Unity. When a physicist studies matter, he too arrives at the conclusion that the material base of the whole external universe is one and the same, notwithstanding the bewildering diversity of the elements and compounds which go to its making.

Sir Arthur Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical Universe* is one of the best studies in this field. This is how he begins his introduction to this work :

"I have settled down to the task of writing these lectures and have drawn up my chairs to my tables. Two tables ! Yes; there are duplicates of every object about me—two tables, two chairs, two pens." (Page 8).

Then he goes on to explain that the first of these pairs is what appears as concrete and substantial and distinctive, while the other "is mostly emptiness. Sparsely scattered in that emptiness are numerous electric charges, rushing about with great speed; but their combined bulk amounts to no less than a billionth of the bulk of the table itself." (Page 9)

So, from the point of view of the latest scientific researches all material objects are in reality nothing except "numerous electric charges rushing about with great speed in space which is about a billion time as vast as the bulk of the "electric charges."

If a microscope were invented which would be powerful enough to make the electronic base of the matter visible, all objects under it would totally disappear and we would see nothing except the "electric charges". This would be the material or physical counterpart of the spiritual base of the universe, observed by the mystics. This external research too has to be amoral in its nature.

Yet neither the material microscope of the external world nor the spiritual microscope of the inner world can wipe out the distinctions which, however ephemeral they may appear, are nevertheless real from the commonsense point of view. Men, notwithstanding the discoveries of the physicists and the mystics, must continue to distinguish between dung and meat, wife and sister, forgiveness and revenge.

The middle course between externalism and internalism, which is the path of

commonsense, and also of prophetic revelation, is entirely dependent on moral and material distinctions. Internalism, thus, can be considered as one amoral region lying to the left, and externalism as another amoral region lying to the right, of the straight path (sirat-e-mustequeem) of morality in the centre.

This straight path of morality is also the path of Religion, which means that Religion is neither internalism (or mysticism) nor externalism (or philosophy and science), though religious people have been both mystics and philosophers. As long as religious people explore the regions of the inner or the outer world from a purely utilitarian point of view and do not confuse their observation with the tenets of revealed Religion, the harmony between the two is easily maintained. But the moment mystics or physicists give their observations the status of Religious truth, they produce a confusion which becomes worse confounded with the passage of time, with disastrous consequences for human society.

As far as India is concerned, it has always abounded in both internalist and externalist explores. But the Straight Path in middle, though never totally obliterated, has been generally ignored by the great minds in this country.

The Buddha may be considered to be the greatest exponent of the Madhyam Marg of Religion in ancient India. But after the expulsion of Buddhism from this country, internalism reigned supreme for a long time. The greatest exponent of Indian internalism was Adi Shankaracharya.

The gulf between internalism and externalism, notwithstanding their agreement regarding the nature of ultimate reality, became wider and wider, till it seemed to be totally unbridgeable, and since the Religious Path could be built only on this bridge, Religion appeared to have little chance in this country, except in a purely formalistic sense.

It was at this critical juncture that Islam entered India. Islam was Religion pure and simple, having little in common with internalism or externalism. The Prophet of Islam was neither a mystic nor a philosopher, but a simple man of Religion, whose teaching appeared to have been tailored to the needs of practical morality. His Religion did not seem to bother much about philosophical consistency or mystical corroboration. It included everything, regardless of the demands of logic or mysticism, which could in any way be helpful in strengthening the moral fibre of man.

The immediate followers of the Prophet, too, were of a similar type. It was only in the third century after the death of the Prophet that mystics and philosophers began to make their appearance in Islam. However, since neither group wanted to give up Islam, they tried to adjust their spiritual or intellectual discoveries, which were amoral in nature, within the moralistic framework of Islam.

Muslim mystics, who were called sufis, consciously tried to follow the example of the Prophet in their day-to-day life much more than the philosophers. Hence their greater popularity among the Muslim masses. Although many of them did become mystics through and through, making Islam subservient to their mystical experiences, the majority continued to believe that the revelations of the Prophet were the criterion by which their mystical experiences had to be judged. This was not as easy as it appears on the surface. It often implied ignoring or even falsifying

one's inner observations.

The sufis also became the propagators *par excellence* of Islam among the masses, both in this country and abroad. The twelfth century was the age of the consolidation of both the political and the spiritual power of Islam in India, the latter being mostly represented by the sufis of the Chishti order. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti established his spiritual centre at Ajmer at the same time that Shahabuddin Ghorî established his political capital at Delhi. He and his chief *murid* (disciple) Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, who lived at Delhi, became the idols of the masses both among Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Chishti sufis were, however, a little too much inclined towards internalism. Hence their popularity among the internalists of this country. The best of the Chishtis no doubt did a lot to bridge the gulf between Externalism and Internalism in India. But they could not accomplish this task fully, and continued to be more inclined towards internalism.

Sheikh Farid, whom Maulana Abul Hasan Nadvi calls "the Second Adam of the Chishti order in India" in his book *Tarikh-e-Dawat-o-Azimat* Part III Page (36) is indeed the real bridge between these two opposite views. He, together with his disciple Hazrat Nizamuddin, gave a new turn to Chishti mysticism, and made it convergent with the straight or Middle path of Religion. This unique service becomes all the more significant when we remember that "the Chishti attitude ranged from a basic inclination to forgive and forget deviations and delinquencies to exhortation by word and deed to follow the shariah." *Indian Muslims*, by M. Mujeeb, Page 137).

As a matter of fact, the extraordinary popularity of the Chishti order in India was, to a large extent due to its similarity with Hindu internalism and mysticism represented by Jnan Marg and Bhakti Marg. It was Sheikh Farid, "the second Adam of the Chishti order" in India, who gave a new turn to the Chishti attitude, which culminated in the strictly religious, moral and disciplinarian attitude of the Chishti sufis of the 16th century. The typical instance of this culmination is Sheikh Nizamuddin of Amethi who died in 1571. Though a Chishti, he was opposed to *sama* and strictly followed all the injunctions of the Shariah. He is reported to have snatched from the hands of the son of a Sheikh whom he greatly respected, Mohiuddin Ibn-i-Arabi's *Fusus-al-Hakim*, that *magnum opus* of Wahdat-al-Wajud, because it could mislead the young man and blur his moral sense. *Ibid*—Page 307).

But what is even more remarkable is the impact of this religious tilt given to mysticism by Sheikh Farid, on the Bhakti movement, which was the chief standard-bearer of Hindu internalism or mysticism at the popular level. During the two centuries between the death of Sheikh Farid (1265) and the birth of Guru Nanak (1469), popular Hindu mysticism or the Bhakti movement had undergone a deep change.

The Bhakti saints of the 15th and the 16th centuries, Kabir (b. 1440), Guru Nanak (b. 1469) and Chaitanya (b. 1485) were all moralists and men of Religion. They preached not only individual morality but also wanted to reform their society on moral lines.

It is needless to say that Guru Nanak was the most important of all the Bhakti saints of the period. Notwithstanding his mystic ways and devotional yearnings, Nanak was the man of Religion and Morality *par excellence*. He was the one to point out in most clear and emphatic terms the pitfalls of amoral Bhakti, gnan and inner perception. He discarded idol-worship which had attracted many Bhakti saints, and denied the very concept of Avatar. For him no one could at any stage transcend the limits of right and wrong. To trace pantheism or the internalist concept of the Unity of Existence in Guru Nanak's *Bani* is, in my opinion, in no way less difficult than to trace it in the Quran or in the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid.

It was this similarity of attitude that urged Guru Nanak to establish relations with Sheikh Ibrahim, his contemporary successor of Sheikh Farid. It was again due to this very reason that Sheikh Farid's *Gani* was included in the Guru Granth Saheb.

Guru Nanak had tried to bridge the gulf between externalism and internalism, or between formalism and devotionalism. He was burning with the love of God, and yet this love of God did not burn his sense of discrimination between right and wrong, between virtue and vice, between God and the Devil.

Looking around him, Nanak found that among the Muslim saints the closest to him in all these respects was Sheikh Farid. Sheikh Farid too had been a great lover and devotee of God, who hated religious formalism or externalism as much as Guru Nanak. He accepted many unorthodox ways of keeping the fire of God's love burning in his heart, and yet Farid was deeply-rooted in Religious morality. He never flouted any explicit command of God, and never stooped to do anything clearly forbidden by the Prophet. He too, like Guru Nanak, did not pay much attention to pantheism because it tended to blur the moral sense of man. Before becoming the murid (disciple) of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, he had fully equipped himself with formal religious education, and never ignored these religious teachings throughout his long life of ninety years, meticulously abiding by all the injunctions of the Shariah. His moralist bent of mind is manifest in his sayings, a few of which, culled from *Siyarul Aulia*, are given below :

"Invent excuses for doing good."

"Acquire vision through your faults."

"Do not consider anything a substitute for faith."

He has described his Path, the straight Path (Sirat-i-Mustaqim) of religion, in the following sloka included in the Guru Granth Saheb :

"Our path through life is cheerless—sharper

than the sword, narrow in extreme.

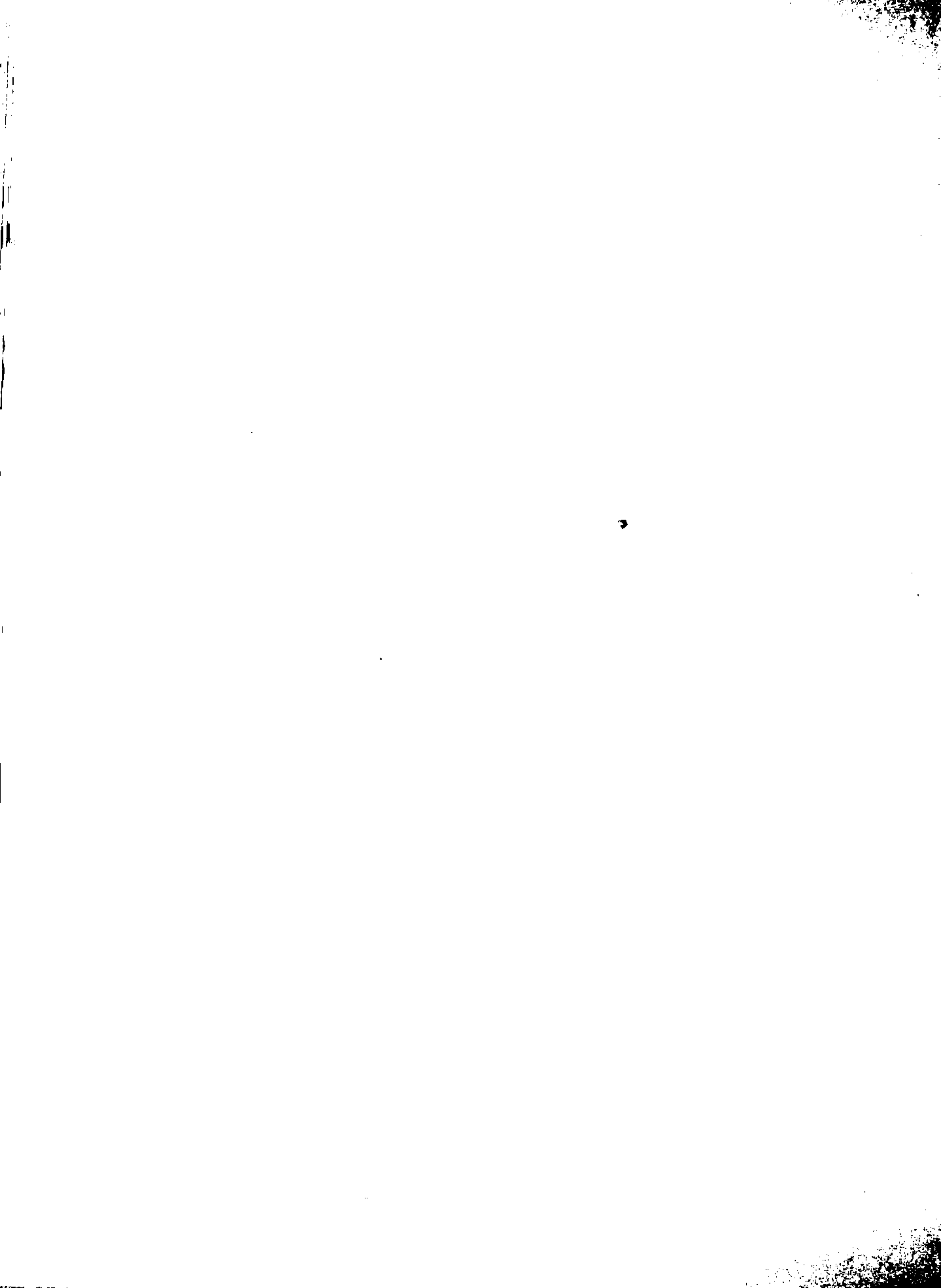
Over such a path doth my way lie :"

(Adi Granth, page 794).

This was the straight path of Religion and Morality. Being a mystic as well as an orthodox scholar, both in theory and practice, Farid acted as the most important bridge between the two extremes of internalism and externalism in India. Two hundred years later, this bridge was consolidated by Guru Nanak.

Among the Muslims, the great popularity of the Naqshbandi order in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries may also be traced to this moralist influence. Naqshbandis had always consciously tried not to swerve from the path of religion in their mystic pursuits and hence were always considered to be more orthodox. Naqshbandi saints from Khwaja Baqi Billah and Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi onwards did among the Muslims the same work of consolidating the bridge built by Sheikh Farid, which was done by Guru Nanak among the Hindus. In the latter half of the 19th and the first-half of the 20th century a great transformation took place in the Chishti order itself, and almost all the great Chishti saints of the day (most of whom were related to the Deoband movement in one way or the other) became as anxious, if not more, as the Naqshbandis, to conform their mysticism to the revealed path of Religion.

Thus Sheikh Farid, "The second Adam of the Chishti order", initiated one of the most epoch-making processes in the history of sufism or mysticism in India.



THE MISSION OF BABA FARID

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A learned man from Kabul, Qazi Shu'aib, disappointed by the political condition of his country migrated to India around 1157 A.D. and settled at Kathwal¹ in the district of Multan as the chief Qazi of the town. To one of his three sons, Shaikh Jamaluddin, was born Baba Farid (1176-1265)*.

Baba Farid's first teacher was his own mother, a pious a very religious lady. Under her care, while still a child, he spent most of his time in devotion and prayers. Even in his adolescent years he was so much absorbed in saying prayers and acquiring mystical training that he was nicknamed by the town folk as *Qazi bachcha diwana*, the crazy son of the Qazi.

After finishing whatever education and guidance were available at home, Baba Farid left his town in search of higher education. In Multan at the age of 18, when he was studying the formal traditional and curriculum of the time he met his future spiritual teacher, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. After a short stay at Multan the Khwaja moved on to Delhi. Baba Farid, according to one account accompanied him to Delhi where he was admitted into his discipleship. But there is another account which suggests that he remained in Multan and other places for about four or five years in order to complete his education. Afterwards he went to Delhi and gained mystical experience under the guidance of the Khwaja².

Baba Farid underwent rigorous mystical exercises prescribed by his spiritual teacher. Once his teacher's teacher, Khwaja Muinuddin of Ajmer, the founder of the Chishti order in India, visited the *Khanqah* (monastery) of Khwaja Qutbuddin. On seeing Baba Farid he remarked : "Baba Bakhtiyar ! You have caught a noble falcon who will not build his nest except on the holy tree of paradise. Farid is a lamp that will illuminate the *silsilah* of the *durweshes*"³. It is also said that during the same visit Khwaja Muinuddin asked his pupil to bless the young Farid, to which Khwaja Qutbuddin apoligized saying that in the presence of his ours teacher he did not dare to bless any of his disciples. Thereupon both the master and the disciple blessed Baba Farid jointly. And as Khaliq Ahmad Nizami remarks : "It was a unique honour in the history of Chishti Silsilah. No

*There is a dispute about the year of the Christian era as to Sheikh Farid's birth. The more commonly acceptable view puts it as 1173. (Ed.)

saint before him, or ever after him, was thus blessed by the master and the master of his master”⁴. In the words of Amir Khurd, the disciple of Khwaja Nizamuddin :
The two saints have bestowed the two world on thee,
Thou hast received kingship from these kings of the age,
The realm of this and the other world certainly belongs to thee
The entire creation has been, in fact, assigned to thee.⁵

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, the most famous and distinguished of all disciples of Baba Farid is reported to have once said that a spiritual leader ought to possess the following qualities :

1. He must have attained the spiritual eminence which he desires, so that he is fit to instruct other.
2. He must have travelled the road along which he has to guide others.
3. He must know the rules of conduct, so that he may teach the murids.
4. He must be generous and sincere.
5. He must not desire anything which the murids possess.
6. He must instruct the murids gently and firmly.
7. As far as possible, his instruction should be indirect.
8. He must command positively what has been commanded by the Shari’ah.
9. He must abstain from doing what is not permitted and make his murids do the same.⁶

In short we can say that according to Khwaja Nizamuddin the qualities to be found in a teacher are deep knowledge, capability to guide, generosity, sincerity, selflessness, religiousness and piety. Shaikh Nizamuddin, while enumerating the above qualities was certainly not talking just academics. He indeed had before him as the model his own teacher Baba Farid.

Baba Farid was a perfect teacher. He always tried to transmit to his pupils whatever experience he himself had acquired. While his *pir*, Shaikh Qutbuddin, was still alive, Baba Farid’s fame had already started spreading far and wide. Those who considered the prayers of a sufi the last cure of any illness used to come to Baba Farid praying to him to write *ta’s wiz* (amulet) or just pray for them. Gradually the number of the visitors increased and Baba Farid found it difficult to accommodate all of them. Since he did not find enough time for devotion and meditation, he finally asked his teacher as to how to get rid of the demanding crowds. Contrary to his wishes the teacher urged him to give as much time to the needy people as possible. He said : “Look, the matter is not in our hands. We are only the instrument. The *ta’wiz* which you write bears the name of God and it is He who cures. So keep on writing”.⁷

Baba Farid took his master’s advice very seriously and made it an essential part of his own teaching. He always insisted on his pupils attending the needy people cheerfully. He once placed an inkpot and a piece of paper before his disciple, Shaikh Nizamuddin, and asked him to write *ta’wiz* on his behalf. Seeing that Shaikh Nizamuddin, because of the large numbers of the *ta-wiz* he had to write every day, was looking depressed Baba Farid counselled him : “You are distressed already by having to write out *ta-wiz*. What will your condition be when large number of needy people come to your door and ask you for a prayer ?”⁸

Shaikh Nizamuddin, following his teacher's instructions, put no restriction on visitors. According to a story narrated in *Siyar-ul-auliya* Baba Farid used to correct his disciples by appearing in their dreams—or by means of telepathy, if we may thus call it—if, even unintentionally, they overlooked their duties to the poor and needy people. It is said that once while Shaikh Nizamuddin was having his siesta a beggar was turned away from his door. Baba Farid appeared to him in his dream and said: "If there is nothing in the house, the visitor should at least be treated as courteously as possible. Where is it stated that a man so weary and worn as the beggar should be turned away?"⁹

Shaikh Mu'inuddin of Ajmer, the founder of the Chishti order in India, was of the opinion that those who wanted themselves to be saved from the tribulation of the Day of Judgement must answer the call of the people in distress, fulfil the needs of the helpless and feed the hungry. He has also said: If anyone has the following three qualities, you may know that God hold him to be his friend. First, a generosity like the generosity of the river, second, a benevolence like the benevolence of the sun; and third, a hospitality like the hospitality of the earth.¹⁰

All the Chishti saints followed this advice to the letter. They in their generosity, benevolence and hospitality were really like a river; the sun and earth to which everyone irrespective of his religion is always welcome. Although the saints themselves spent their days and nights in voluntary fasting for spiritual elevation, their *khanqahs* (monasteries) were open to all, where everyone was sure to get food and shelter, and quite often some cash for his future needs. Baba Farid's conduct was exemplary in this respect. In his *khanqah* people of other faiths used to come not only for their worldly needs, but also to discuss spiritual matters with him. Shaikh Nizamuddin tells us that when he was living with Baba Farid, he had the occasion to meet many Hindu Yogis who used to come to the *khanqah* to discuss some spiritual or mystical problems with Baba Farid.

Besides the Yogis who usually came to exchange ideas, there is strong ground to assume that the common Hindus also frequented him. We have seen earlier that Baba Farid had to oblige large numbers of people by writing *ta'wiz* for them. We hardly have any recorded evidence to show as to how many of them were non-Muslims. But it can safely be assumed that along with Muslims the non-Muslims also came to him asking for *ta'wiz*. This is because even today one may find in normal days the Hindus coming to mosques and tombs of Muslim saints to pay their homage. In those days, as a matter of fact, there was nothing strange in non-Muslims coming to Muslims asking for their blessings. The fact which may surprise most of us is, that the sufis did not take undue advantage of the situation by inducing the Hindu visitors to accept Islam. In this respect Baba Farid was so strict that everyone felt fully at home. It was due to his influence that his chief disciple, Sheikh Nizamuddin, once openly refused to do anything in the way of inducing the brother of a convert to embrace Islam. It is said that a Hindu who had accepted Islam brought his brother before Shaikh Nizamuddin and requested him to use his spiritual powers to convince his brother to change his faith. At this request the Shaikh started crying and said: "Nothing anyone can say will change the heart of this man. But if he is placed in the company of

virtuous men, it is possible, he may accept Islam."¹¹

This, however, should not be taken to mean that the Sufi, as a matter of principle, were against conversion, as some people think.¹² On the contrary, they did convert people, but they never forced anyone to change his religion. They were the true followers of the Quranic injunction which says: "There is no compulsion in religion." That was the reason that Baba Farid never approved of direct method of asking people to change their religious belief. He was so careful in this respect that he had not like to cross-examine even his own disciples if some allegations were made against them. He was once told about a disciple that he had taken to drinking. On being asked the disciple flatly denied the charge. Thereupon Baba Farid said that people sometimes were wrong in their observations. For all practical purposes he accepted the statement of the person blamed and exonerated him. Afterwards, he asked the man to stay in the *khanqah*. The man, who had actually taken to drinking, felt ashamed of his lapses, confessed his laxity and asked Baba Farid to forgive him for his shortcomings. This was the way he preferred to convert people.

We must remember that no sufi could ever refuse a person to be retaken into the fold of Islam, if he himself was willing to change his religion. In the case of Baba Farid we can say quite confidently that formal conversion was not the mission of his life. Nevertheless, it is a fact that people, influenced by his personal conduct, accepted Islam. There are about a dozen Rajput and other Hindu tribes still living in the vicinity of Pak Pattan, the seat of Baba Farid, who claim to have been converted to Islam by Baba Farid.¹³

IV

Contrary to popular belief that the sufis considered *shariah* as less significant than the *tariqah*. Baba Farid took both of them as being supplementary to each other. According to him the *shariah* and the *tariqah* were the two facets of real Islam. *Shariah* was knowledge of religion, and the *tariqah*, was a way of implementing that knowledge. No knowledge was perfect and useful unless one had the means of experimenting it. Unlike some other sufis, who in their state of spiritual intoxication have sometimes appeared acting against the *shariah*, Baba Farid was always very careful in observing that his disciples must not transgress the *shariah*. Once in the month of Ramsan, the Islamic month of compulsory fasting, Baba Farid on account of his illness was not fasting. One day around noontime when he was partaking of a melon Shaikh Nizamuddin came and sat before him. Knowing fully that Shaikh Nizamuddin because of his fast could not eat at day time, Baba Farid gave him a piece of the melon of which he was eating. That was a big temptation for Shaikh Nizamuddin to break his fast. He says that for a while he could not decide what to do. Finally he came to the decision that he should not refuse the gift from the master. Thus he was about to break his fast that Baba Farid stopped him saying: "Don't do it. It is against the *shariah*, you should know it. Keep the melon with you and eat it in the evening when you break your fast. You must remember that you are always to observe the rules of *shariah*."¹⁴ Shaikh Nizamuddin has provided us a brief description of the manner in which Baba Farid

admitted people into his order. He used to ask every new entrant first to recite some portions of the Quran. Then he asked him to promise solemnly to God that he would control his hands, feet and eyes and would always follow the rules of the shariah.¹⁵

We must not, however, confuse the higher ideal of *shariah* with the common folk's conception of it. What Baba Farid meant by *shariah* was not the same which most Muslims think to be. To them the *shariah* is confined only to outward performance of some religious injunctions. But to Baba Farid and to the sufis like him the outwardly performance was the lower standard of observing the *shariah*. That was the minimum which every Muslim is supposed to do. The real *shariah* to Baba Farid was "inventing excuses for doing good." This has been very well explained by Shaikh Nizamuddin. According to him the obedience of religious laws is of two kinds—transitive and intransitive. "The transitive form is that the benefit of which remains limited to the person who performs the act of obedience, which are prayers, fasting, *hajj* and the repetition of litanies. The intransitive form, on the other hand, consists in providing benefit or solace to another. The merits of this are beyond limit and conjecture. Acts of transitive obedience have to be performed with sincerity in order to be accepted to God, but acts of intransitive obedience are acceptable of whatever kind they may be."¹⁶ In this way the sufis maintained a balance between the spirit of the *shariah* and its legalistic interpretation. They considered the *shariah*, not just as rites and rituals, but a way of life which everyone had to live. This higher ideal of life they could live only in atmosphere of love and peace, which was available only by winning the hearts of the fellowmen. A famous sufi, Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul-Khair was once asked that how many paths there were to take to God. He replied: "There are as many paths to God as there are particles in the universe, but no path is shorter than that of bringing solace to the heart."¹⁷ The same concern Baba Farid showed when some one presented him a pair of scissors. He said: "Do't give me the scissors. Give me a needle. I sew, I do not cut."¹⁸ Because of his all-loving nature Baba Farid has always been loved and respected by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. We find him occupying an important place in the Sikh scripture, although it is still a moot point among scholars whether the Farid who is found in *Adi Granth* was the same or someone else. One thing is quite clear, however, that even those who reject the possibility of Baba Farid himself finding a place in the *Granth Sahib* do concede the point that at least his teachings did find a way in the Sikh scripture. In any case, we are not here to discuss this problem in detail. This point has been brought in here only to show how Baba Farid has become a bridge between two different religious communities. Baba Farid is perhaps the only Indian sufi who, although openly a Muslim, has equally been revered by the Sikhs. This was the real success of his mission, for which he lived and died.

V

Baba Farid, following the Chishti tradition, always remained at a distance from the rulers. The Chishti saints, in fact, were convinced that a sufi would become less effective in discharging his duties to the people, if he developed close

relations with the rulers and nobles. They unhesitatingly used to turn down royal offers and were always prepared to take the consequences. Nevertheless, however, they never refused to approach the state authorities if they saw no other means of helping the people. Baba Farid who had once refused to accept a gift of land given by Balban, did not hesitate to write a letter to him recommending the case of a person in need. But even then he maintained the usual dignity of a saint. He wrote : "I have placed the matter before God and then before you. If you are able to grant something to this man, the real giver, you should know, is God, but you will be thanked. If you are unable to give him anything, even then you should remember, it is God who has held it back, and you are excused."¹⁹

Why were the Chishti saints so adamant in their attitude towards the state? The answer, which I myself find quite unconvincing, is that mixing with the rulers was against the spirit of Islam and thus of sufism. I have said, I find this argument unconvincing because it was only the Chishti order which refused to cooperate with the government. There were sufis of other equally high orders who considered it their duty to take active part in the affairs of the government. The Suharwardi sufis, for example, maintained, as a principle, a healthy relationship with the political authorities. There is hardly any evidence available in Chishti literature to suggest that the Suharwardy saints were ever looked down upon by the Chishtis on this very ground. In the time of Baba Farid, the Suharwardis played an important role in north-western India. It should be mentioned here that the Chishtis never tried to penetrate into the Suharwardy area of influence, and left the north-western region completely to them. Had they been of the opinion that cooperation with the government was as such against the teaching of Islam, they should have at least tried to wean the people away from the influence of the Suharwardis.

It is also a fact that the Chishtis in spite of their non-cooperative attitude towards the government never encouraged the people to do away with the system. They did not preach anarchy, since they were not against the state system as such. It was their reading of the situation that had convinced them that they could help people more by keeping a distance from the court than by becoming a part of it. The Suharwardis, on the other hand, held a different view. To them cooperation with the government was the surest way of removing the hardships from the people. Sheikh Ruknuddin, a famous Suharwardy sufi, used to visit frequently the royal court at Delhi. The roof of his palanquin, it is said, used to be loaded with documents of the needy people, whose cases he wanted to recommend for consideration.²⁰ In this way "he was doing in a systematic way what every sufi with any influence had to do."²¹

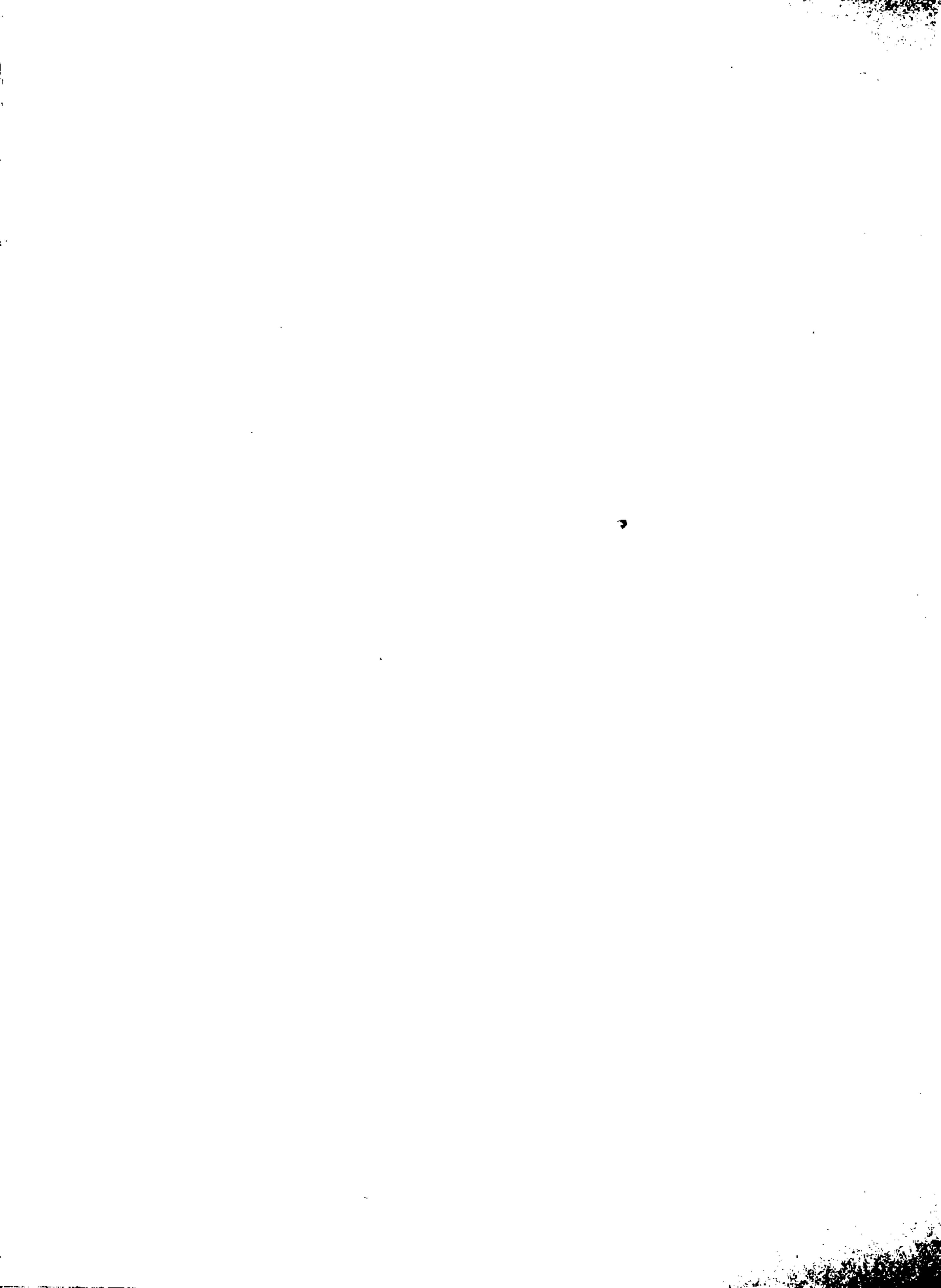
The case of Chishti and Suharwardy orders vis-a-vis the government was somewhat similar to the Indian politics of the early '30s. At that time the Indian National Congress was divided into two groups : the changers and the no-changers. The former, under the influence of people like Motilal Nehru, were pleading for taking part in the government, whereas the latter led by no less a person than Gandhiji were deadly opposed to the very idea of cooperation. Neither of them, however, could be charged with selfish motives for, both of them were trying very sincerely to find the means of helping the people. It was their

understanding of the situation which had put them on different paths. They differed with each other on the means, but never on the end.

Similar was the case of the Chishtis and the Suharwardis. Both were trying to achieve the same end, but in two different ways. Helping the needy people was the mission of the great Chishti saint, Baba Farid, which he thought to achieve by keeping aloof from the state authorities.

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18. *Fawaid...*, p. 226
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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BABA FARID AS A SYMBOL OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

W.H. MCLEOD

Amir Hasan Sijzi records, in the *Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad* an occasion when Baba Farid was offered a pair of scissors. "Give me a needle", said Baba Farid, "I sew: I do not cut."¹ It is an anecdote which effectively expresses the primary significance of the man in whose honour we are gathered here today. Whereas scissors cut and divide, a needle draws together and unites. There are many reasons for the importance of Shaikh Farid, but one of these, I submit, stands out above all others. Shaikh Farid has come to symbolize understanding and tolerance between men of different beliefs and different traditions. It is a symbol which we badly need today and it is the pressure of this contemporary need which above all else justifies a gathering of the kind which has brought us all together at this time. It was, I believe, an admirable decision which led to the organising of this seminar. I should like to add my own word of praise for those who first envisaged it and for those who have in various ways made it possible.

I should also like to add a word of personal thanks to the organisers of the seminar for the gracious invitation which I received to be present at it. In a sense it is an invitation which should properly elicit disapproval, for only the worthy deserve honours of this kind. In another sense, however, it is an invitation which, if one ignores personalities, merits the warmest approval. It was an awareness of this latter aspect which made it possible for me to accept the invitation.

In explaining what I mean by this latter aspect I find myself immediately involved in the first of the two points which I wish to make during the course of this paper. My first point concerns the importance of Baba Farid for areas beyond his own homeland. For too long the message of Farid has been contained within the confines of India and its neighbours to the immediate west. This ought not to be the case and if the present at this seminar of a foreigner serves to represent this need I am only too happy to be present in such a role.

I shall, if I may, speak in somewhat personal terms while dealing with this, the first of my two general points. As some of you may know, I spent nine years in India, living with my family in the Punjab. When the time came for us to leave in 1969, my family shared with me the wrenching experience of departure,

and it was then that we discovered what many others have learnt. India, we now know, is an extremely difficult country to leave. It grips one with bonds of ever-increasing interest, fascination, personal benefit, and affection, and only when the break has to be made does one realise how strong those bonds can be. The sole consideration which reconciled us to the break was an assurance that it would in no sense be permanent. India would be ever with us, and opportunities to return would certainly recur.

Since leaving I have endeavoured to analyse my response on that occasion and a number of conclusions have emerged. Some of these were easily reached. Plainly we were lamenting the loss of places we had come to know and love so well, an autumn climate which so abundantly compensates for anything the summer may inflict, friends who had shown such understanding towards us, and that splendid generosity which no other part of the world can equal. This much was obvious—but there was more. I had been studying and teaching Punjab history during my years in India and I subsequently realised how meaningful this teaching and research had been in terms of my own personal growth in understanding. This may sound trite, After all, if teaching and research are not meaningful, then why pursue them? It is, however, much more than a mere truism. It is more than a trite commonplace because there is, as I see it, something very special in Indian history.

Let us be clear what we mean by history in this context. There are those who maintain that the only valid reason for a study of any history is the interest which it provides. Respectfully I must disagree. History, as I understand it, has a profound meaning and importance for our own contemporary situation. I am certainly not going to suggest that a study of history will provide us with neat models which we simply apply to our contemporary situations, solving thereby present problems with precise prescriptions conveniently served up by the past. What I do suggest is what we can certainly learn from the experience of the past and that the variety of understanding which derives from a study of the past is an essential part of any adequate understanding of the present.

India's history provides us with something special. Because her history is uniquely different, the ideals generated by that history are correspondingly unique. Nowhere else can one find the same range and content. This can, of course, be said of any history, but I persist in my insistence that there is nevertheless something of unique value emerging from the history of this particular part of the world.

The declaration towards which I am so ponderously moving is one which many of us hesitate to make because it must so obviously present a target to the scoffer and the cynic. Nevertheless it must be made. It must be made because ideals are, I believe, essential and because we have before us today, in the person of Baba Farid, a particular ideal which the world badly needs. I refer, as you must all by now realise, to that concept of tolerance which emerges in such prominence from successive periods of the Indian historical experience.

Having said this I immediately expose myself to attack from two directions. First there are those who insist that ideals are all very well but that in practice they are too easily evaded to serve any useful purpose. They serve instead as cloaks

to conceal violence, fraud, and ordinary human weakness. No one doubts that ideals provide convenient garments for hypocrites, but all men are not total hypocrites and human experience plainly demonstrates that many do in fact respond to high ideals. They who protest the futility of ideals may also include such as respect their noble intention but who despair of their fulfilment. To them we must reply that partial fulfilment, however qualified it may be, justifies the existence of an ideal and the efforts which men may make to inculcate it.

The second line of attack will come from those who question the special claims made on behalf of the Indian ideal. After all, tolerance is to be found amongst European ideals and if Europeans have done violence to this particular ideal, so too have the people of India. The answer to the latter accusation has already been indicated in the claim that an ideal retains its value so long as it secures a partial fulfilment. It is the assertion that European history proffers the same notion of tolerance which constitutes the substance of this second objection. The answer is, I believe, that the western theory of toleration tends to be an essentially negative concept, one which generally assumes the rightness of one's own beliefs and behaviour but which perforce lets the other man go his own way because experience shows that the attempt to impose correction will only lead to conflict.

This is distinctively different from what may be called a theory of positive tolerance and it is, I suggest, the positive theory which one finds enshrined in the Indian ideal. This above all else is what I have in mind when I refer to the special quality of Indian history. It may sound old-fashioned and some may brand it naive. I adhere to it nevertheless.

Let us now take the discussion one step further and ask ourselves how such ideals are in fact communicated to successive generations. The answer is, of course, that they are personified. They are communicated through the lives of men and women who can be seen to express particular ideals in their own lives. Many of these exemplars will be one's own contemporaries, but not all. We also need acknowledged exemplars from the past, men and women who serve as symbols of what a society believes to be good and true.

And so we must ask ourselves who are these individuals who symbolise for us the vital concept of positive tolerance? In this respect I have to acknowledge a particular affection for Guru Nanak, but there are others with special claims and amongst these we must certainly include Baba Farid.

It is, I believe, a fact that Guru Nanak is much better known to the world outside India than he was four years ago. The occasion of his birth quincentenary was effectively used to present the Guru and his teachings to a wide audience by means of publications, radio talks, and meetings. It is entirely fitting that the same should now be done in the case of Farid, and that the message of tolerance which comes down to us in the person of Baba Farid should be promulgated as widely and as insistently as possible. As with the message of Guru Nanak, it is something which ought not to be confined to that part of the world in which he actually lived. I do not doubt that the eirenic message personified in Baba Farid, is profoundly relevant to India's own needs and that this alone would justify the

present seminar. It is not, however, my primary concern on this particular occasion. My concern is rather with the universal quality of the message and with the consequent duty to make Baba Farid known beyond the confines of the Indian sub-continent. Many countries suffer the tensions and conflicts which result from mutual misunderstandings between different groups of people. All such countries need the ideal so convincingly expressed in the traditions which cluster around Baba Farid.

I return again to my own personal experience and with this I conclude the first part of this paper. It is my firm conviction that India has a major contribution to make to international and intercultural understanding. This contribution it makes most effectively through those who personify the concept of positive tolerance—Gandhi, Akbar, Nanak—these names are already well-known. To this list the name of Baba Farid assuredly deserves to be added.

* * * * *

I proceed now to the second general point which I wish to make with reference to the significance of Baba Farid as a symbol of human brotherhood. In this paper I have hitherto been stressing the need for high ideals of human brotherhood and the role or function of Baba Farid as an exemplar of these ideals. I also mentioned, in passing, my belief that a sufficient understanding of our present situation necessarily requires a prior understanding of the history which lies behind it. This axiom I now propose to apply to the history behind our present view and estimate of Baba Farid. For a thorough understanding of his contemporary role we need, I submit, an historical perspective. It must be, moreover, an historical perspective of a particular kind.

To some of you these words may sound ominous, coming as they do from one who was the unwitting generator of a recent minor controversy. Let me endeavour, with all speed, to dispel any such fear. It will, I trust, become evident that one result of the controversy has been a much-needed enlarging of my own understanding, a development which relates primarily to the meaning of tradition. Once again I must apologise for resorting to personal experience and my own individual concerns. I do so partly by way of preliminary reassurance to those who read and remember my book on Guru Nanak; and partly in order to thank those of you who, by means of patient, friendly persuasion, succeeded in broadening a somewhat circumscribed point of view.

When my book *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* APPEARED five years ago it was criticised by some for its excessively narrow interpretation of historical significance. Tradition (so it was said) has not been accorded its due weight and importance. The biographical portion of the book was exclusively concerned with the factual accuracy of traditional narratives and the burden of emphasis was laid almost exclusively upon a rigorous definition of what "factual accuracy" means. There is, I still believe, a place for this particular approach and even if *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* served no other purpose it did at least stimulate much valuable comment from those who could perceive its shortcomings. It is, however, a comparatively minor role which it fulfills, one which does little more than prepare the way for studies of greater depth and value. Let us now seek to define

an approach to history and tradition more profound in terms of its understanding of the past and more relevant to our own contemporary situation. And let us do so with special reference to Baba Farid.

You will, of course marvel at the naive optimism with which I so grandly declare the intention of defining in a few short minutes, the meaning of history and tradition. Needless to say, one can hope to do no more than initiate a discussion. This is all I should want to do, for plainly I have neither the time nor the knowledge to provide anything resembling to complete answer to the questions which I pose. For your consideration I shall offer definitions of two closely related aspects of historical interpretation. Both aspects I shall seek to exemplify with reference to Baba Farid.

The first of my two definitions can be covered quickly. It is, in a sense, no more than the statement of the obvious and yet it is one which assuredly needs frequent repetition. The actual pattern of so much historical research and writing makes this abundantly clear. Historical research certainly involves the uncovering of facts about the past, but no event, no episode, no statistic possesses an intrinsic importance. Events are important only in relation to other events. This importance they manifest is the consequence of prior circumstance and the creators of the future. From this axiom many corollaries follow. The one which I am concerned to emphasise at this point is that history always has a future importance. In other words, the significance of a particular event concerns not merely the point in time at which it occurs, but also the future which it affects. It is in this sense that all periods are the products of their past and precisely in this sense that any understanding of our own present circumstances demands a prerequisite knowledge of the past which has produced them.

All that one may say about events in this respect must also be said about historical personages. Whatever interest any particular person may possess when studied within his own period, and however vital this may be for any understanding of that person, his actual importance—his *impact*—is always a future phenomenon. This claim is, I fully recognise, open to both historical and philosophical objections but these can, I believe, be answered.

Baba Farid and our presence here today serve to illustrate my point. Most assuredly an understanding of Baba Farid, involves a careful investigation of the man Shaikh Farid in the twelfth and thirteenth century circumstances of Delhi, Hansi, and Pak Pattan. One must investigate the economic, social and political conditions of northern India during that period; one must acquire as deep a knowledge as possible of the Sufi beliefs and customs of the period; and having sought to authenticate works attributed to Shaikh Farid, one must carefully scrutinize those which survive the process of authentication.

All this is absolutely vital and may the work begun in these areas be pursued with all possible vigour ! It is not, however, the end of the historian's responsibility as far as Baba Farid is concerned. It is merely the beginning. It does no more than provide essential basic knowledge for research of greater significance. What was the impact of Farid upon subsequent generations ? And (most important of all) how are we to interpret his impact upon the present ?

This is the obligation imposed by the first of my two definitions, the claim that historical importance always has a future reference and that in consequence the historian's responsibility always stretches forward to the present.

Many historians dispute this concern with the present, insisting rather that history must be studied "for its own sake" (whatever that means) or simply as a humanitarian discipline. I fully and vigorously support the value of history as a humanitarian discipline, but with equal vigour I should dispute any suggestion that its justification proceeds no further. It has, I maintain, a direct and vital relevance to the present and all competent historians, whether consciously or not, are serving this need. One should add, of course, that those who serve it consciously, normally increase thereby their effectiveness as historians. It is this dual approach which should, I submit, inform the historian's interest in Baba Farid as in other historical personages possessing this future significance. It may be noted at this point that the case of Baba Farid convincingly demolishes the claims of those who maintain, directly or by obvious implication, that the needs of present relevance are sufficiently met by studying only the recent past. Our present situation is not the creation of the past hundred years alone and any decision to concentrate largely upon this period must distort our understanding. To understand the present one must pursue strands which stretch well beyond the last century, and it is one such strand which leads us directly to the person of Baba Farid. A pursuit of this kind can communicate very little if we sever the strand at an arbitrary mark labelled 1850 or 1800. I speak at this point not so much with reference to India as to some other countries where the entirely proper notion of relevance has been misapplied by exponents with little understanding of what history really means.

We come now to the second of the definitions which I wish to offer with regard to historical interpretation in general and Baba Farid in particular. The first definition concerned the future importance of men and events in history. The second concerns the manner in which past events and personages are apprehended by future generations, and the historian's responsibility as an interpreter of this ever-evolving apprehension. The past does not operate mechanically upon its future, at least not in the sense which assumes a progression of simple cause and direct effect. The past is subject to constant evaluation and interpretation by each succeeding period. It is refracted through the understanding of successive generations, and in the process is inevitably distorted by whatever is meant by forty days; whether his performance extended over the complete period or was limited to the hours of darkness; whether it was in fact *namaz-i-makus* lasting six months or even ten years; or whether the story is a pious legend with no factual basis. The debate is legitimate and indeed necessary, but it is not the principal issue of importance. The principal question concerns the belief of subsequent generations. Was this story generally believed or was it consciously circulated by the authors of *Malfuzat* as a known legend? There can be no doubt that many successive generations genuinely believed one or other of the *makus* traditions and that we can in consequence affirm the following important fact: many generations of admirers of Baba Farid believed that he performed the discipline of inverted meditation in an Uch well.

In one sense this statement may possibly incorporate a falsehood. This would be the case if someone could demonstrate that Baba Farid never went near the Uch well. It would not, however, affect either the truth or the importance of the statement itself, and having ascertained its truth we must proceed to elicit its importance. In general terms the importance is, I suggest, the testimony which the tradition bears to the value so insistently attached to ascetic observance. In specific terms it affirms the authority accorded to Farid by future generations as a master of the ascetic discipline.

Because this particular episode commanded such interest it attracted to itself other traditions, an interesting example being the story of how the Bhandari Khattris received their name. According to Lepel Griffin's account a wealthy adventurer visited Pak Pattan to seek from Baba Farid the blessing which would bring him a son. When he arrived there, he found that the Shaikh had been hanging suspended for so long that his followers (who depended upon his miracles for their sustenance) were all starving. Rai Bhag Mal provided both food and housing for a period of nine years until eventually Farid terminated his *namaz-i-makus* and emerged from the well. Because Rai Bhag Mal had proved to be such a devoted provider, the name *bhandari* (steward) was bestowed upon him.³

It makes little difference whether Rai Bhag Mal ever visited Shaikh Farid, and if so, whether the well was in Uch or Pak Pattan. The importance of the tradition lies in the implicit conviction that Baba Farid was a master-ascetic. It is indisputably a fact that this and other allied traditions have been widely believed for many centuries. With equal firmness it can be affirmed that the traditions which concern Farid's ascetic prowess demonstrate widespread popular support for a continuing acceptance of the merit of asceticism. At the same time they serve to sustain that acceptance.

On the basis of the Uch anecdote we may thus affirm a brief series of important facts concerning subsequent generations. Its value as a conveyor of accurate information is not, however, limited to later generations. With due caution it is possible to work back from an anecdote of this kind to an affirmation which concerns the historical Farid rather than his later image. Let us assume what is, I believe, entirely amenable to historical proof, namely that Baba Farid was in fact a true ascetic. This fact has depended for its preservation upon the form in which it has been transmitted. Who can doubt that it would have been forgotten had it been confined to a simple statement, a disembodied affirmation. It has not, however, been transmitted a mere declaration. It descends to us embodied in a cluster of anecdotes.

It was, I suggest, only the anecdotal form which could discharge the essential preservative function for most of those who over so many generations have cherished the name and reputation of Baba Farid. The sophisticated may scoff, but if so, they betray a lamentable want of understanding. The fact must be personified that this function the anecdote form serves with unique success. The actual story need not be historically accurate in order to communicate an authentic fact (in this particular case an affirmation of Baba Farid's ascetic achievement). The form within which it is expressed is at once its vehicle and

its protection. As an anecdote, pithy and memorable, it is afforded a permanence which it would otherwise lack.

Having thus introduced questions of truth as opposed to falsehood, or accuracy as opposed to error, let us return to the question for a second definition. This definition, you will recollect, is to concern the apprehension of information derived from the cause, the manner in which it is perceived and expressed by people as social groups rather than by fastidiously academic historians.

During the last few minutes I have been suggesting, with reference to the Uch anecdote, that truth can be communicated at two different levels regardless of whether or not the story of Baba Farid's inverted sojourn in the well is factually true. It is precisely this kind of claim which can, I believe, be explained and justified by the definition which I am about to offer. Before offering it, however, I must cause yet another brief delay by introducing a key word. The word is one which properly explained and understood can, I believe, greatly aid our grasp of historical meaning. It is, however, a word which runs obvious risks of misunderstanding. For this reason I have hitherto hesitated to use it in anything I have written and for the same reason I preface its introduction with this elaborate warning.

The word is "myth", and having thus introduced it, let me plead with you to suspend, as far as possible, whatever associations it may have evoked. Let me insist at the very outset that I do not use "myth" as a synonym for "legend" nor for anything resembling it. In the usage which I observe they are plainly distinct in nature. The word "legend" designates, as I understand it, a story which is not true. It may be popularly credited with factual truth, but upon examination it turns out never to have happened. Let it be clearly understood that when employing this term "legend" we are concerned with the actual events recorded by the narrative which we label legendary, not with its meaning nor with its function. It is unhistorical narrative as opposed to historical.

"Myth" represents something distinctively different from those two opposites, and it is a declaration of the difference which brings us, at long last, to the definition I have been promising. For historians, I suggest, the term "myth" may properly be used to designate an interpretation of the past based upon the needs and understanding of the present. For its actual content it may draw from either legend or from authentic factual history. Most myths generated within societies which are at least partially literate, partake of the two and offer blends of both the legendary and the factual. There is, however, no reason why a myth should not be wholly based upon fact. It is the interpretation or message which constitutes the myth, and for this purpose the actual components may come from either source. The two essential qualifications are first, that the resultant myth should be functional; and secondly that it should command acceptance. A myth forfeits a significant measure of its strength when it loses its historical credibility. It becomes instead a fable and although fables may be used to communicate important truths they lack the compelling power of the accepted myth. This is particularly the case in literate societies.

The meaning which I here attach to the word "myth" is well exemplified by

the Black Hole of Calcutta. In this famous example we have all the important components of a historical myth. We have a situation which gives rise to the myth; we have the blending of both fact and legend; we have a credibility extending over a period of one hundred years; and we have the eventual lapse of the myth as it loses its function. The situation which gave it birth was not that of the mid-eighteenth century, but rather that which obtained almost a century later. British activities in India had grown from peripheral trade to extensive conquest and as Britain moved into its Victorian period there developed an increasing need to legitimise the British presence in India. Legitimacy could no longer be justified in terms of the essential imposition of order by a civilized nation upon an area which would otherwise be rent by disorder.

It was to this need that the myth of the Black Hole spoke with such insistent relevance. Siraj-ud-daulah represented the forces of barbarism and the episode of June, 1756, exemplified the violence which was its inevitable outcome. Bereft of British authority and administration India would be a prey to disorders of this kind. Englishmen believed this to be a fact because such episodes as the Black Hole seemed to prove it.

Incidents of this kind have occurred hundreds of times without securing more than a footnote in history. The difference is that they did not serve the same compelling need as the Black Hole and in consequence were never elevated to the status of myth. It is highly significant that this particular incident went largely unnoticed for half a century and did not achieve real prominence until another half-century had passed. The later situation produced a particular need and a grossly exaggerated account of a comparatively minor event helped to meet the need. Further assistance was provided by eliciting the same myth from the events of 1857-58. Later still under appropriately altered situations we have the growth of counter-myth in which the roles are reversed. This finds its most convincing expression in the Jallianwala Bagh Episode. The facts may or may not all be true. For the future what really matters is the interpretation, an interpretation which emerges unconsciously.

Let us now return to Baba Farid and see if this model aids our understanding of the Farid of history. I submit that it does. It helps us to see that the future impact of Farid is to be understood in terms of the myth which he has generated. Were this myth to be weak or totally absent it could only mean that this impact had been negligible beyond his own immediate environment and we should not be gathered here today. We know that the myth has been drawn from the authentic life of Farid, and we know also that it incorporates legendary elements. Neither is critical. An excess of legendary content may damage the credibility of the myth, but it does not affect its meaning and it leaves open for each succeeding generation the question of whether that meaning is true or false, relevant or irrelevant. Later generations have remembered Farid not because he worked wonders or because he enjoyed a considerable following during his own day. They have remembered him because the message which he has come to symbolise is one which speaks to the needs of every generation. It is for this reason that it survives today. Far from being the transient interest of a foreign conqueror it is the universal and permanent concern

of all mankind which finds expression in the remembered person of Baba Farid.

Is the myth true ? In an ultimate sense it depends upon the judgement of each man. We know that it has drawn substantially from the authentic life of Shaikh Farid and we know also that it incorporates legendary elements. Together these impart a credibility and a vigour which do much to explain its later impact, but they neither prove nor disprove the ultimate truth. The answer to this question is one which each of us must give within the context of our own contemporary society. Personally I believe that its truth and its continuing relevance is plainly stated in the quotation with which I began and with which I now conclude. 'I sew, I do not cut.' Who can doubt that in a world sundered by distinctions of race, custom, and belief the message of positive tolerance is absolutely vital. Baba Farid embodies that message and it is a message which must be heeded if there is to be healing amongst men.

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BABA FARID GANJ-I-SHAKAR AND HIS MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Dr MOHD. NOOR NABI

A man lean and thin, wearing tattered clothes, living in indigent circumstances, and residing in a thatched roof starts for Juma prayer in the nearby mosque. As he steps out of his house, people eagerly rush towards him, kiss his hands and encircle him. No sooner does he manage to come out of this circle than he finds himself encircled by another group. He gets free of one circle to be enmeshed into another and this process goes on until he reaches the mosque tired and worried.¹ As he finishes his prayer, people kiss his hands in overwhelming numbers.²

This man is Shaikh Farid-ud-din Masaud, popularly known as Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar. He was born in 1175 A.D. at Kahatwal and died in 1265 A.D. at the age of ninety at Ajodhan, in present Pakpattan.³

Baba Farid's, mother. Qarsum Bibi by name was a lady of fervent piety and penitence. It was in the lap of his mother that his education began. She generated that spark of Divine love in him which lasted throughout his life and later on which developed and dominated his entire personality.⁴ From the very beginning of his career in Kahatwal he became well known for his intense devotion and piety. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakriyya, the founder of Suharwardi order in Multan, expressed his desire to see him at that time.⁵

Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi, an eminent disciple of Shaikh Abu Sa'id Tabrizi and a close associate of Shaikh Shihabud-din Suharwardi, on his way to Delhi heard about him and came to Kahatwal to meet him. He offered Baba Farid a piece of pomegranate which he could not eat at that time due to his fast. After the departure of the Shaikh, Baba Farid found a seed of the pomegranate lying nearby. He picked up that seed and ate it at the time of Iftar (breaking the fast). This brought a sudden spiritual illumination in him.⁶

At the age of 18 after finishing his education at Kahatwal, Baba Farid proceeded for Multan for his higher study. There he committed to memory the entire text of the Quran. It was at Multan that he met Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, the Khalifa and successor of Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chishti, popularly known as Khwaja Gharib Nawaz, in a mosque, at whose feet he surrendered for his spiritual discipline. When Shaikh Qutb-ud-din left Multan for Delhi, Baba Farid accompanied him and in Delhi he absorbed himself in prayer and self-mortification. Khwaja Ajmeri happened to visit Delhi; he enquired about Baba Farid and seeing him remarked,

“Baba Bakhtiyar ! You have caught a noble falcon which will not built his nest except on the holy tree of paradise. Farid is a lamp that will illuminate the silsilah of the durveishes.”⁷

Baba Farid enjoyed the unique privilege in the Chishti Order of being initiated both by the director (Pir, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din) and the director of the director (Shaikh Muinuddin Chisti).⁸

Baba Farid led a life of piety and penitence. He was proud of his poverty (Faqr) and observed continuous fast. At Uchh he performed the Chilla Makus by hanging head downwards in a well, suspended from the boughs of a tree.⁹ It is the agreed opinion of the Indian Shaikhs that no saint has excelled Baba Farid in his devotion and penitence.¹⁰ The devotion and penitence of Baba Farid reminds us the devotion and penitence of Shaikh Bayazid Bistami.¹¹

According to Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya it was a pathetic and thrilling scene to see Baba Farid in his prayer. When alone in his room he would lay his head on the ground for hours and recite, (“I die for Thee and I live for Thee).”¹²

Baba Farid was a living embodiment of all the moral virtues which he preached to his disciples and visitors. His excellence was the excellence of his character. There was complete unanimity in his thoughts, words and deeds. He had a lovable and affectionate nature--truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, love and devotion were the hall-marks of his personality. His private life was a perfect mirror of his public life. There was complete absence of hypocrisy. He had a very sympathetic and tender heart. He always tried to console the heart of the aggrieved people. He spent his long life in lifting the humanity from the quagmires of sin and superstition.

Baba Farid's monastery (khanqah) was open to all, irrespective of caste and creed. Rich and poor, officials and non-officials, old and young, Hindus and Muslims, were received in the same way, A stream of visitors flowed to the moastery every day, but Baba Farid never got tired of it. He attended to the problem of every visitor individually and tried his best to remedy his grievance.¹³ He furnished the society of his day with infinite moral force which removed the social, ideological and linguistic barriers between the various cultural groups of India. He, for the first time, sowed the seed of emotional, cultural and linguistic integration which later on flourished and as a final shape we have the Hindustani culture and Hindustani or Urdu language.

Delhi, at the time of Baba Farid, was a great centre of Muslim culture. Many refugees from Central Asia had settled there. They generally aspired for mundane honours and position. Allurements of court life had drawn them to Delhi. Baba Farid too, breathed in that atmosphere for a short time. His fame and popularity spread in Delhi like wild fire. But Baba Farid was not hankering after worldly grandeur and honour. He was in search of truth and solace for the suffering humanity. Therefore, he left Delhi and migrated to Hansi. He used to deliver sermons at Hansi. And very soon he attained popularity there. Then he shifted to Kahatwal and from Kahatwal he came to Ajodhan where he settled down permanently. Very soon, at Ajodhan, the period of self-discipline came to an end and the seclusion (uzlat) was changed into association (suhbat).¹⁴ The door of the khanqah

was opened and everyone was allowed to visit him without any discrimination. Shaikh Fariduddin devoted his long life there to enhance the moral and spiritual culture of the people. His humanity, sublimity of character and spiritual calibre helped in spreading the fame of the Chishti order to distant places.

Baba Farid possessed all those qualities which are needed for the expansion of any silsilah. He made Sufism a mass movement. Sufism took root in the life of the people and became more and more Indianized in its character and expression. There was a vital difference of approach between the orthodox theologians and the sufis. There was no place in the heart of a theologian (Alim-i-Kabir) for a sinner or the misery stricken people. A theologian was just like a lawyer or a judge who was talking in terms of virtues and vices, punishment and reward, Muslims and infidels. But the sufis, on the contrary, took Islam to the masses. In doing so they (the sufis) exclusively emphasized the moral training and building of conduct and character. They dealt with the problems of suffering humanity at the personal level. Whenever any aggrieved person or sinner came to Baba Farid, Baba Farid welcomed him with affection and warmth of emotion. He consoled his tormented heart and tried his best to pacify him. As a new babe gets consolation in the lap of his mother, so the visitor whether suffering from the worldly or spiritual troubles or conflict, used to get solace and peace of mind in the company of Baba Farid. Baba Farid trained a number of disciples and Khalifas who spread the Chishti silsilah in different parts of the country. And it can be rightly said that though Chisti silsiah was founded in India by Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, it was popularized in Delhi by Shaikh Qutb-uddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, but the credit goes to Baba Farid who made it a mass movement and with his effort and with the effort of his illustrious Khalifah and successor, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya it spread in every hook and corner of India and Pakistan.

Writing a paper on Baba Farid is no doubt a tempting task, but the great difficulty is the difficulty of sources of material. Baba Farid himself did not write any book. The statement of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh-i-Delhi clearly prove this point.¹⁵

It is alleged that *Fawaid-us-Salikin* is the collection of the conversations of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhityar Kaki, compiled by Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar and *Rahat-ul-Qulub* is the collection of the conversations of Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar compiled by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. But the above two books are fabrications pure and simple. I have examined the contents of these two books in my book *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, and have shown that the books are fabrications.¹⁶

Thanks to the authors of *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, *Khairul Majalis* and *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, who have recorded the conversations of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and his Khalifah and successor Shaikh Nasir-ud-did Chirag-i-Dehli and their Khalifat, that we come to know the thoughts of Baba Farid.

THE BANI OF BABA FARID INCORPORATED IN ADI GRANTH.

Sometimes in 16th century Guru Nanak met twice Shaikh Ibrahim), the twelfth in line of descendants of Baba Farid. The Guru held spiritual colloquies

with him. The Shaikh presented a collection of shlokas and hymns believed to be composed by Baba Farid in the local dialect. The Guru must have gone through these shlokas very carefully and cautiously. The consolation of the aggrieved heart, fear of the consequences of evil actions, love of God and humanity, transitoriness of worldly riches, grandeur and honour, importance of Death as a deterring factor from oppression, tyranny, sin and pride and cultivation of higher moral values is the theme of these shlokas.¹⁷ This message of Baba Farid is really a universal message above sect, creed, community, colour and race. It has a great moral force which ennobles a man and prepares him for the vision of God. Guru Nanak who was a seeker of truth, must have been attracted with this message and that is why he included these shalokas in the Adi Granth which later on were incorporated in Guru Granth.* It cannot be said conclusively that the words used in the Bani are exactly the words of Baba Farid; but so far the matter is concerned, it is in perfect harmony with the teachings of Baba Farid as we find in *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, *Khairul Majalis* and *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. With this gestalt of Baba Farid, let us now formulate his mystical philosophy.

CONCEPTION OF GOD.

Baba Farid had a unique personality; unique in the sense that he was a profound scholar of theology, a very persuasive speaker and last but not least, a man of great mystic vision and gnosis (*ma' rifat*). Therefore, his conception of God was not merely a scholarly presentation of an outcome of logical reasoning but it was the expression of his deep religious meditation and intuition. God, for him, was a living reality having an all embracing personality present in his intellectual, ethical and mystic experience. It was not the God of Deism who after creation became aloof from the universe and left the universe to go on mechanically, nor was it the God of Pantheism who manifested Himself in the universe and became immanent in it, but it was the God of Theism who was both transcendent and immanent.

Baba Farid felt as though God was always in his presence. While offering prayers, it seemed that he was communicating with Him. Baba Farid's brother, Shaikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil asked him one day, "People say when you pray, you hear God saying, 'I am present, my 'Abd' (Creature). Is it so?" "It would have been pedantic to say 'yes' to this query", replied Baba Farid. Baba Farid did not want to be oblivious of Him even for a single moment. One day he was walking for a little distance with the aid of a stick. All of a sudden he threw away the stick and became restless. When the reason was asked, he replied that he was reprimanded because he was depending on something other than God.¹⁹ God, for Baba Farid, was omnipotent. It was his firm belief that He was the only bestower. Recommending the case of a certain person to Sultan Ghiyathuddin Balban he wrote, "I put his case first before God and then before you. If you

*Adi Granth is in fact Guru Granth Sahib. The *bani* of Shaikh Farid found a place in Adi Granth when it was compiled by Guru Arjan (1604). The Farid *bani* was of course, by then a part of the Sikh tradition (*Editor*).

award him something, you will be thanked for it because you are the agent for this award, but God, in the real sense, is the only bestower, if you refuse it, then you are helpless in this matter, because God is the only refuser."²⁰ He, in the *khilafat-namah* which he gave to Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, says, "God alone deserves all praise. He is the first and the last, the Manifest and the Hidden, whomsoever He elevates none can bring him down and whomsoever He throws down, none can elevate him. None can bring to light what He has concealed and none can conceal whatever He has revealed."²¹

All the above statements of Baba Farid clearly show that God, for him, was a living Reality having an objective existence. He was in personal contact with Him and he had a firm conviction that God was always present to him. This consciousness of the Divine presence was guiding and stimulating force for his practical life which made him a citizen of that universal society in which God is the supreme creator and the entire humanity, nay the entire universe, is His humble creation.

LOVE OF GOD.

The summum bonum of life, in the opinion of Baba Farid, is the attainment or the realization of God, as expressed in the verse :

"In both the worlds Thou alone art the object that I cherish."²²

For the attainment of this cherished end he prescribed the path of love. He attached so much value to love of God that he used to greet his visitors with these words, "My God give you pain (dard) of love."²³ He had great admiration for the individual who was intoxicated with the love of God. He called such a person, a "Faqir" (mystic-durvesh).

The learned theologians (Ulama), according to him, are nobler than the common people, but the faqirs are the noblest of all.²⁴ The faqirs occupy the same position in relation to the learned men which the full moon occupies in the constellation of stars.²⁵

A true devotee, in the opinion of Baba Farid, is one who is a lover of God. He says, "Those alone are true devotees whose heart is sincere in love with God. The ones whose heart is belied by their tongue are false, inconstant. The true devotees soaked in God's love are ever in ecstasy of realization; Those indifferent to Him are a burden on earth. The true devotees are those whom God attaches unto Himself, Blessed is their birth; truly fruitful their life. Lord, I seek shelter in Thee Thou alone the bestower of forgiveness, Grant to Shaikh Farid the charity of Thy devotion."²⁶ The above *Bani* of Baba Farid incorporated in *Adi Granth*, Page 588 truly depicts the attitude of Baba Farid towards God and the importance of love of God and greed cannot go side by side.

"Farid, Love of God and greed go not together;

With greed love is rendered impure :

Such love is frail as leaking straw roof against rain."²⁷ Love of God begets union with God and for the union with God purification of the heart from the evil desires, control of the emotions and passions and the performance of noble

deeds are but indispensable.

Baba Farid says,

“Listen Man, shouldst thou ennoble thy self, then mayst thou have union with the Creator and have true bliss; Whoever is for God, the world will be for him”.²⁸ Baba Farid also emphasised God’s grace. He is but categorical in his statement that it is only through grace of God that Union (with God) is possible.

“To one separated from her Lord, what comfort? Through His grace alone may she find union”.²⁹

He further says,

“God in His grace my join me to holy comapny. As I look around, God alone I find my succourer”.³⁰

BABA FARID AS A HUMANIST

Baba Farid was a great humanist. The entire mission of his life was to remove the pain and misery of suffering humanity and to provide a man with that vigour and energy with which he may face the ordeals of practical life and lead a life of peace, progress and solace in this world and the world beyond.

The humanism of Baba Farid was not in complete tune with the humanism preached by great medieval thinkers such as Anselm (1033-1109 A.D.), Abelard (1079-1142 A.D.), Aquinas (d-1274 A.D.) Duns Sotus (d. 1308) and such others. The humanism of the above-named thinkers was too much other-worldly. “Only as a member of a superhuman and supernatural society, of the kingdom where in God is king, could man hope to attain the full fruition of his rational nature”³¹, was the motto of medieval Humanism. Baba Farid, on the contrary, emphasized the earthly life, the life with the family in society, the goodness of which would make life in the Hereafter comfortable and pleasant.

It was also not in perfect agreement with the views of the prophets of humanism in France both in the age of the Revolution and after, the ideal of Condorcet, the Saint Simonians, Auguste Comte (d. 1789 A.D.) and others. Humanism, in their opinion, was conceived as the “simplest of philosophic standpoints, the aim of which is the perception that the philosophic problem concerns human beings striving to comprehend a world of human experience by the resources of human minds”.³²

Baba Farid, as against the above humanists categorically asserts that the resources of human minds, i.e., the scientific reason are limited in nature. Scientific reason has no access in spiritual realm. The problems of spiritual realm can only be grasped by inspiration (kashf) and gnosis (marifat), i.e. by intuition.

So far as the 20th century movements in Humanism such as Pragmatism, Marxism and Existentialism are concerned, these movements too, basically differ from the ideals of Baba Farid.

Baba Farid does not agree with the basic proposition of the pragmatist that a man is the measure of all the premises.³³ He differs with Marxism on the point that matter is the only reality and there is not place for God in the creation, maintenace and working of the universe.³⁴ He does not conform with the motto

of the existentialists that "There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity". This relation of transcendence as constitutive of man (not in the sense that God is transcendent, but in the sense of self-surpassing) with subjectivity (in such a sense that man is not shut up in himself but for ever present in a human universe) is called existential humanism.³⁵

It is but obvious that Baba Farid does not conceive the transcendence and subjectivity in the sense in which it is conceived by an existentialist. With this brief introduction let us explain the humanism of Baba Farid.

Baba Farid's mission was the peace and progress of humanity at large. To attain this cherished goal he prescribed three paths : (i) the path of knowledge, (ii) the path of self-discipline and (iii) the path of love.

Baba Farid was a great lover of knowledge and scholarship. It was his firm conviction that without knowledge it was very difficult to discipline the self and to traverse the path of love. Knowledge, says Baba Farid, is a divine gift for the individual. A man should make an endeavor to attain it. The mere desire to attain it does not make a man learned. Had it been so, no one in the world would have been illiterate. Therefore a man should make an earnest effort for the attainment of knowledge. He should not mind humiliation and disgrace even in the way of attaining knowledge.³⁶ Religion in the opinion of Baba Farid, can be protected through knowledge. The Prophet used to say, blessed is the man whose knowledge of his own faults and defects prevents him from disclosing the faults of others.³⁷

Baba Farid assigned a respectable position to a learned man in society. He said, "The ulama (learned men) are nobler than the common people and the faqirs (durveishes) are the noblest of all".³⁸

While appointing Shaikh Nizamuddin as his successor, he remarked; "God has bestowed you knowledge, reason and love and one who possesses these three qualities can discharge the duties of the Khilafat of the Shaikhs well".³⁹

Baba Farid vehemently condemned ignorance. He goes to the extreme extent and declares, "Do not regard the ignorant as alive".⁴⁰ He further says, "Give a wide berth to an ignorant man who poses as a learned one".⁴¹

After knowledge we come to the discipline of the soul.

Baba Farid laid excessive importance to the purification of the soul, because for the good of the humanity it is but indispensable that every member of the society must possess a noble and exemplary character. And Baba Farid devoted his long life of ninety years in ennobling the character of the corrupted humanity. He gave the highest position in a society to a faqir and he defines a faqir, "A faqir purifies everything, but nothing can make him dirty".⁴² Thus self purification is the first and foremost ideal which he wants to inculcate in his followers. For self purification he prescribes a number of disciplines.

Baba Farid checks his followers from excessive indulgence in the gross and material things of the world. A man in his opinion, who busies himself exclusively with feeding and clothing himself, is the meanest of all people.⁴³ He further says that misery is the by-product of mundane aspirations. Therefore one should not pay undue attention to the demands of the physical self; the more one satisfies it, the

more it demands.⁴⁴

He forbids his disciples to harbour pride and arrogance. Pride, according to him, turns the whole world into an enemy. Hence, a man should beware of pride. Particularly one should not take pride in committing sin because it makes the heart of a man which is the sheet of love and truth, a play thing of the devil.⁴⁵

Baba Farid always tried to impress by his precept and example, upon the minds of his followers the importance of the consolation and comfort of the human heart,⁴⁶ the good work,⁴⁷ the nobility of character,⁴⁸ the doing of justice,⁴⁹ self dignity,⁵⁰ generosity,⁵¹ showing gratitude, and contentment.⁵ These are the positive qualities which the Shaikh (Baba Farid) wanted to implant in humanity at large.

The virtue of charity was ingrained in the nature of Baba Farid. Whatever unasked gifts (*futuh*) came to his monastery, he at once distributed among his visitors. The same spirit of charity he wanted to inculcate in his disciples.

After self-discipline lastly we come to path of love. Love is the basic teaching of Sufism. This love includes both the love of God and the love of creation. Sufis are unanimous that God cannot be love without loving the creation of God. Through love a sufi wants to create harmony in the discordant elements of society. True to this ideal Baba Farid struggled hard to create the atmosphere of love and goodwill so that a healthy social order free from dissensions, conflicts, discrimination, hatred and jealousy, might come up. To achieve this goal he organised and himself supervised the Jamaat Khana. The Jamaat Khana of the Shaikh was a large room where his disciples and visitors used to sleep, pray and study on the floor. It was run by the inmates themselves. Everyone of them had to do something for the management of the household. There was no discrimination there on any ground, not even on the ground of piety and penitence. Hindus and Muslims, seniors and juniors, old and new, rich and poor, Sultan and beggar, pious and sinner, every one of them was treated on an equal basis.

Baba Farid himself used to preside over the Jamaat Khana. He was a tower of strength for the low born, the down trodden, the humble and the despised people.⁵⁴

In India of the 13th century where the difference between the conqueror and the conquered, rich and poor, high caste and low caste, privileged and down-trodden was at its height,⁵⁵ this Jamaat Khana of Baba Farid served as an oasis in a desert. This was the holy place where personalities like Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Maulana Badr-ud-din Ishaq, Shaikh Jamaluddin Hanswi and others were being shaped. The higher Sufi ideals were actually translated into actions by the followers of the Shaikh. The spiritually-starved people flocked to it from far and near and men of different temperaments and attitudes rubbed their shoulders and learnt to live together.

This humanism of Baba Farid brought about a tremendous change in the land of the Punjab and its neighbourhood in particular and in the Indian sub continent in general. Today Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike have feelings of great reverence for Baba Farid. On his name the Hindu chief, Mokal named a town, Faridkot

(the Fort of Farid) and due to his noble personality Ajodhan itself was changed into Pak-Pattan.

The celebration of the Octocentenary of this great son of the Punjab itself is a noble proof of the living influence of Baba Farid.

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8. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, P. 72.
9. Ibid, PP 68-69
10. *Gulzar-i-Abrar*, M.S. Quoted by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in his book. *Life and Times of Shaikh Farid ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar* (A.M.U. Aligarh, 1955), P. 24.
11. For detail see my article on Shaikh Bayazid Bistami, *Indo Iranica*, Calcutta, March and June, 1969.
12. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, P 302; *Khairul Majalis*, P 224.
13. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, P 63.
14. For detail see my book, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India* (A.M.U. Aligarh, 1962) PP. 129-130.
15. Ibid., PP. 140-146.
16. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Baba Sheikh Farid* (Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973), PP. 36-55.
17. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, P. 121.
18. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. P. 81.
19. Ibid. P. 81.
20. Ibid., PP 117 F
21. Ibid., 123.
22. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, P. 132.
23. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, P. 75.
24. Ibid., P. 76.
25. *Adi Granth*, P. 588, quoted in *Baba Sheikh Farid*, P. 36.

26. Shloka, 18—Ibid., P. 41.
27. Shloka, 95—Ibid., P. 51.
28. *Adi Granth*, P 794.
29. Ibid., P. 38.
30. W. G. De Burgh, *Towards A Religious Philosophy*, (London, 1937), PP. 193-194.
31. Ibid., P. 193.
32. F.C.S. Schiller, *Humanism—Philosophical Essays*, (London, 1912), PP. 228-249.
33. News and Views from the Soviet Union, Vol XXIII, No 60. September, 1964.
34. Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, (London, 1952), PP. 54-56.
35. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*. PP 211-2; 215; 90 etc. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, PP 76, 76
The life and Time of Shaikh Faridud-din Ganj-i-Shakar, PP 87-91.
36. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, P 75.
37. Ibid., PP 75-76.
38. Ibid, P 345.
39. Ibid., P 75-76.
- 40—52. Ibid, P 75, 76
53. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, P 103.
54. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, PP 183, 185, 194.
55. Dia-ud-din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Edited by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, PP 36-37.

BABA FARID AND HIS EFFORTS FOR AMITY AND CONCORD IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

DR MOHAMMAD UMAR

Shaikh Farid-ud-din Masaud Ganj-i-Shakar (1175—1265 AD) was one of the most celebrated and highly revered of Medieval Muslim mystics, who played an important role in creating amity and concord between different social and religious groups in the 13th century. His *Khanqah* at Ajodhan was a sanctuary of pilgrimage for all sorts and creeds. Crowds flocked to it, irrespective of their religious convictions, and found spiritual solace in his company. A calm spiritual atmosphere, lacking all worldly glitters and humdrum, served as a balm to those tormented with unfulfilled worldly ambitions. His personality inspired everyone who visited his *Khanqah*.

The period in which Baba Farid lived forms a very significant period of Indo-Muslim history. Culturally it was a period when the plant of Indo-Muslim Culture was to be planted, which was destined to bear fruits during the Mughal period. It was also a period of feverish political activity. Baba Farid was an eye-witness to the collapse of the Ghaznavide power in Punjab, the invasions of the Ghorides in northern India the liquidation of Rajput supremacy and the ultimate subjugation of northern India by the Turks.

While the storm of conquest was raging, Baba Farid heard the Mongols at the gates of India, and saw the fear and panic which gripped the masses in the course of Mongol invasions. The Muslim governments in Iran and Central Asia were pulled down and the masses and gentry suffered a lot owing to the devastation in life and property, caused by the Mongols. Consequently, streams of Muslim refugees, who had been uprooted from their hearth and homes, and reduced to paupery, flocked to India to hide their heads from the hailstorms of the Mongols. The city of Delhi, thus, rose into a glittering prominence as a centre of Indo-Muslim culture during his life time. Amongst the early Muslim men of erudition and theology who poured into India, the names of Ali bin Usman Al-Hujwari, Khwaja Muin-uddin Chishti, Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi, Siyyad Jalal-uddin Bukhari and Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki deserve special mention.

“These were men of high rank, who worked and laboured in India and through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth of India”.¹

1. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, P, 48.

remarks Tarr Chand after assessing their contribution to the evolution of Indo-Muslim culture.

In short, it was a period of chaos and upheavals in every department of human society. The situation was tense and explosive from the political, religious and economic points of view. When Baba Farid was thirty years of age, Sultan Shihab-ud-din was assassinated at Damyak, and when ninety years, Balban ascended the throne of Delhi. Thus, "his life-story is an important aspect of spiritual history of Medieval India". These years were momentous and significant for revolutionary political activity, as the Muslims had to exert utmost to conquer and reconquer every inch of Indian soil in the face of the bitterest and stiffest opposition. During this period, when the entire northern India was resounding with the clatter of Turkish arms, Baba Farid, undisturbed, was engaged in imparting lessons of human love and amity to the people, irrespective of their colour, creed and caste.

The task of bringing about this amity and concord between different cultural and religious groups was most difficult, if not impossible, at this time. Different cultural and religious groups looked upon each other with suspicion and distrust. The religious classes of each cultural groups stood in the way of cultural concord. The views of Muslim theologians have been clearly expressed by Saiyyed Nur-uddin Mubarak Ghaznavi¹ and in the Mahzar² which the leading Ulema of Delhi presented to the Sultan Iltutmish.

Thus, the Muslim orthodox class did not appreciate the move for socio-religious and cultural amity and concord. They were greedy, and hankered after government jobs. They devoted their energy to amassing wealth and pelf. On the other hand the Chishti saints hated worldliness and the materialist view of life. They shunned the material wealth, lead a life of poverty, like the working classes of Medieval India, yet at the same time they wielded considerable influence over the masses, which forms the very backbone of every human society in every age and in every place, owing to their liberal and egalitarian views. Instead of joining hands with the mystics in bringing about this cultural renaissance, the orthodox theologians and obscurantists, demonstrated negative postures. They defamed them and hurled disgrace on them. For instance, Iltutmish offered Khwaja Qutb-uddin Bakhtiyar Kaki the post of Shaikh-ul-Islam, but, on his refusal, due to the tradition of the silsilah, Shaikh Najmuddin Sughra, a famous *alim* of the age, was appointed to this post. He was a vain and self-conceited man and narrow in his outlook. He could not tolerate the presence of anyone else who enjoyed greater influence than himself at court. So he unscrupulously and maliciously maligned such people. Shaikh Jamal uddin Tabrizi³ was charged with adultery. Similarly, he was equally jealous of Qutb Sahib as he was held in great respect by Sultan Iltutmish.⁴

Maulana Nur Turk did not like the worldliness and materialistic out look of the *Ulama* of the time. He often condemned them for their greed of gold and glory.

1. *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, pp. 41-44.

2. *Medieval Indian Quarterly*, Vol. I, Part III, pp. 100-105.

3. *Siyar-u-Auliya*, p. 167; *Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar*, p. 43

4. *Sival-ul-Auliya*, p. 54.

It was on that account Minhaj-Uddin Siraj has given a gloomy picture of the Maulana, because he could not tolerate such bitter criticism of his.¹

As such, Baba Farid's fame very soon spread far and wide and attracted people from distant lands across the borders. But like Maulana Nur Turk, and Khwaja Qutb-uddin, his master Baba Farid's life at Ajodhan was a hard one. He had to suffer a number of troubles at the hands of the Muslim and local officers, who were also Muslims. The Ulema-i-zahir could not see eye to eye with him. His wide popularity was galling to them. The Qazi of Ajodhan became jealous of him and on his instigations the *jagirdars* and other government officers began to harass his family. Baba Farid bore all these tribulations and trials with remarkable patience. The Qazi went to the extent of engaging an assassin to kill the Sheikh. According to Sheikh Nizam uddin Auliya, who was an eye-witness to the incident, the assassin did come to kill the Sheikh but he dared not do what he intended to do and fled away finding the Sheikh knew everything about him. He was a Turk.² The Qazi began to harass the sons of the Sheikh whom he advised to be patient and soon they would get rid of their enemies and actually this happened. The enemies scattered and those who remained developed faith in him.³

The Qazi, who succeeded the former one, continued the policy of his predecessors. The Qazi and the governor both became hostile to the Sheikh and they spread the hand of persecution towards the sons of the Sheikh who is melancholy told the Shaikh one day. The Shaikh was pained on hearing this and soon after the governor lost his life.

In short, one group of the Muslim Society lacked positive approach towards this amity and concord. Even then they wielded considerable influence over the innocent people but they were left far behind by the Muslim mystics in their efforts to establish love and amity between different socio-religious groups.

HINDU SOCIETY

On the other hand, the Hindu Society was regimented and stratified into social classes based on the religious sanction. The Hindu religion lacked simple formulae of faith, well-defined dogmas and rituals and democratic theories of social organisation as well. "Islam appeared upon the scene with a simple formulae of faith, well-defined dogmas and rites and democratic theories of social organization. It produced a tremendous effect on the religious thought and social organization of Indian people."

On their own part, the Indians more than once made frantic efforts to introduce changes into the religious and social spheres to make both of them progressive and dynamic in the light of the needs of the time. The division of society into castes and fetishism in the religious sphere, made religious practices soulless and meaningless due to predominance of ritualism and ceremonialism. It failed to satisfy the spiritual thirst of the people. Both Buddhism and Jainism appeared upon the scene to

1. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 189-190.

2. For detail See : *Fawa'id-ul-Fuad* : p. 153 *Siyar-ul-Arifin* : p. 34-35; *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, p. 35.

3. *Siyar-ul-Arifin* : p. 34.3 *Khair-ul-Majalis*. 182.

satisfy the spiritual urges of the people by removing those complexities found in the social and religious organisation which divided the people into water-tight compartments, and deprived them equality in social organisation and prevented them religious liberty. But unfortunately Buddhism and Jainism could not survive for long and the people again found themselves throttle shifted by age-old-ritualism and caste-hardships. An inherent desire to liberate themselves from the grip of Vedic religion and social organisation under which they could not satisfy their natural spiritual urges on the one hand and the Hindu religious classes made all possible efforts to keep intact old social and religious orders on which defended their very survival. Then this peaceful pull about was going on under—the surface, Islam appeared upon the Indian scene.¹ A simple faith, without many rituals and dogmas was introduced in this country by those Muslim mystics who had come to India in the wake of Ghaznavide and Ghoride invasions, the names of few of the emigrants have earlier been referred to. "Muslim mysticism," writes Prof. K.A. Nizami, "in its essence, is a message of love. It aims at creating harmony in the discordant elements of society."²

In this paper an attempt has been made to assess the contribution of Baba Farid in creating Hindu-Muslim concord and amity in Medieval India and fostering the growth of an Indo-Muslim culture. the traces of which are still to be found. What is needed is, how to water the roots which have fallen under the weight of the debris of the time. If properly watered, those roots would begin to sprout and in course of time, bloom and, bore fruits of communal harmony which is the prime need of modern India.

Being a true follower of those simple ideas of Islam, referred to earlier, Baba Farid strove day in and day out to create that atmosphere of love and amity, the prime need of the human society, at a time when two radically opposite religions were face to face with each other. The spirit of the age characterised with social dissensions, mutual wrangings, conflicts, discriminations, hatred; distrust, the working classes suffering the most. Baba Farid aimed at creating a social order based upon social unity, mutual trust, love, and amity. He tried to bring men closer through love, and create a congenial atmosphere in which people professing different religious ideologies could live as neighbours with love; tolerating each other's religious views, having sympathies for all, even with the enemy. According to him, even an enemy could be converted to a friend by demonstrating love and toleration for him. Baba Farid explained his views in this regard on an occasion. When a visitor presented to him a pair of scissos, he said, "Do not give me scissos, give me a needle. I sew. I do not cut."

THE VISITORS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

The Khanqah of Baba Farid remained open till midnight.³ People of all classes paid visits to it with different objectives. The Shaikh attended to the indivi-

1. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* : p. 34.

2. *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid Uddin Ganj-i-Shakar*, p. 1

3. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*. P. 74 *Siyar-ul-Auliya* P. 64.

dual problem of every visitor, without showing any discrimination.¹ In short, Baba Farid spent his long life in the service of humanity and helping those whom he found in distress. He consoled them and inspired in them faith in God.²

With his life of poverty, Baba Farid shared the grief of others and suffered for their cause. His sympathetic and kind words provided them solace and in the words of Barani, "he has taken the inhabitants of this region³ under his wings," a real estimate of the Shaikh by a contemporary scholar.

CROWDS FOR TAWIZ

A large number of people assembled everyday on the threshold of the Khanqah for amulets.⁴ Not only in those days, even in our own times the people cherish great faith in the efficacy of amulets.

BABA FARID'S RELATION WITH THE NON-MUSLIMS

The emigrant Muslims came to India to settle here down permanently. Wherever they settled, they were surrounded by the Hindus. After sometimes mutual intercourse and appreciation of each other's cultural values and religious dogmas led to mutual understanding. Many a Hindu who had embraced Islam differed little from those whom they had left. "Thus after the first shock of conquest was over, the Hindus and Muslims prepared to find a *via media* whereby to live as neighbours."⁵ The muslim mystics prepared the ground for this cultural synthesis.

Prof. K. A. Nizami says, "With the settlement of the Musalmans in India, conciliation and concord between the various cultural groups was not only a moral and intellectual demand, but an urgent social necessity. The conquerors had established their political supremacy by virtue of certain moral and physical qualities, but they could not rule while the majority of their subjects differed from them in race, language, religion and culture. The orthodox theologians, conservative and reactionary as they were, rarely appreciated the change in the mood of the time and seldom tried to reconstruct their religious thought according to the needs of the time. The Muslim mystics, however, rose to the occasion and released the syncretic forces which liquidated social, ideological and linguistic barriers between various cultural-groups of India, and helped in the development of a common cultural outlook. As their khanqahs were the only places where people of different shades of opinion, professing different religions and speaking different languages met, these khanqahs became veritable centres of cultural synthesis where ideas were freely exchanged and a common medium for this exchange was evolved."⁶

Baba Farid had contacts with the Hindu religious thinkers and he carried on religious discussions with them. References are available that Hindu Jogis⁷ very

1. Ibid. P. 74 *Siyar-ul-Auliya* P. 67. *Khairul Majalis* PP 236-38.

2. *Hazarat Amir Khusrau*: P. 34

3. *Tr ikkh-i-Firuz Shahi*: P. 112.

4. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*: 200.

5. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* : P. 137.

6. *The Life and Times of Shaikk Farid Uddin* : P-105

7. *Ibbeston : Panjab Castes* : P 228-235

frequently paid visits to his Khanqah and the inmates discussed with them some religious problems. Shaikh Nizam-Uddin Auliya, while staying in the Jama'at Khana of the Shaikh, twice met Hindu Jogis¹ and was very much impressed by the method with which the jogis explained to him the Hindu ideas on the subject—the spiritual and the animal elements.²

The difference in the medium of expression stood as a great barrier. In creating understanding between two major cultural groups—the Hindus and the Muslims—the need of the time was to create a new instrument of self-expression. As such, “a new linguistic synthesis takes place : the Muslim gives up his Turkish and Persian and adopts the speech of the Hindu. He.....thus evolves a new literary medium—Urdu.”³ The Muslim mystics were the first Muslims who came into contact with the lower or working-class groups of Indian society, among whom they were to propagate the teachings of Islam. As such Baba Farid carried on all these conversations in the language which was spoken and understood by the commonly and the entry. We have evidence of the Shaikh speaking in Hindavi⁴, the earliest form of the latter developed form of Urdu, which was in later days used by Hazrat Amir Khusrau for his poetic expression. This paved the way for establishing a more close contact between the Hindus and the Muslims and facilitated to appreciate each others religious views.

INTINERARY :

The mystic movement was essentially a movement to be launched amongst the working classes for whom the Islamic concept of human equality had great attraction. This important section of Indian Society, related to the lower strata in the stratification of the society, yearned earnestly to get the equal status with the other social and cultural groups. It was this desire which led them to adopt Buddhism and Jainism, but after sometimes they again found themselves in the same place where they had been prior to these movements. As such, preaching of fundamental principles of Islam amongst them should have found a ready and positive response. As they were scattered mostly in the rural areas, it became imperative that the mystics should undertake travelling to establish a wider contact with them. Travelling thus, formed the essential part of the mystic discipline in the middle ages, conversely, due to the lack of means of communication, people were unable to reach the threshold of the *Khanqah* despite their desire to do so. It had many advantages. First, it brought the mystics in touch with men of different temperaments, living in different areas, and under different social and cultural orders. By travelling the mystics gained intimate knowledge of human nature and their problems. Second, by abandoning home and going on their travels, elevated they above the regional sympathies and their visions were broadened. The great Chishti saints like Shaikh Usman Harvani, Shaikh Muin

1. *Fawaid-ul-Faud*: pp. 84-85. 245.

2. *Fawaid-ul-Faud*. pp. 84-85.

3. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* : P 189.

4. *Siyar-ul-Auliya* : P 183-185 194.

uddin Chishti, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Baba Farid had travelled extensively.

PLACES WHERE BABA FARID LIVED

Qazi Shuaib, the father of Baba Farid, after leaving his home town, Kabul, came to Lahore, thence he moved to Qasur, and in the end Kahtwal, where he settled down. It was here that Baba Farid was born in 1175 A.D.¹ After his initiation, Baba Farid lived for some time in Delhi with his spiritual guide, Khwaja Qutb-Uddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.² Afterwards he went to Hansi, where he performed his *Chilla-i-Makus*.³

The Shaikh was easily accessible to everyone, poor and rich alike, at Hansi, is amply proved by an accident. Secondly, it also shows that the people of the place were earnestly devoted to him. The question now arises, why was he popular amongst all. It is also a fact that the place where he lived was predominantly inhabited by the Hindus. There could be no other reason but the tolerant and egalitarian outlook of Baba Farid which made him so popular. His company served as a balm to the down-trodden and the aggrieved. The story goes as follows: A man, Sarhanga, by name, originally a Hindu, came to Delhi from Hansi. He tried every day to meet the Shaikh, but he was not allowed by the door-keeper (durban). One day he found an opportunity to meet the Shaikh when he came out. The said man fell at his feet and while tears falling from his eyes he said, "Access to you was easy when you were at Hansi, but it is very difficult here". Baba Farid was deeply touched and he immediately desired to leave for Hansi.⁴

Ajodhan : Like Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, who had selected Ajmer, the capital of a Hindu Raja and the centre of Hindu religion and culture for his spiritual activities, Baba Farid finally settled down at Ajodhan, the modern Pak Pattan.⁵ It was an ancient town which most probably derived its name from the Yandheva tribe, the modern *Johivas*.⁶ Baba Farid selected this spot for his stay because it was inhabited by the low caste Hindu tribes.⁷ Like the rest of the Indian working and low classes, the inhabitants of this place professed degrading beliefs. They were illiterate, bad tempered⁸ and superstitious.⁹

In some *Tazkiras* it is stated that they had no faith in saints, particularly Muslim saints. Thus, the place suited most to the Shaikh for the purpose of

1. *Siyar-ul-Auliya* P. 91; *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* P. 53.

2. *Siyar-ul-Arifin* P. 36.

3. *Ibid* P. 70.

4. *Siyar-ul-Auliya* : P. 73

5. Pak Pattan derives its name from the saint Farid Uddin, one of the famous saints of northern India, who was instrumental in the conversion of the Southern Punjab to the faith of Islam.

Cunningham : *Ancient Geography of India* : 250-251

6. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (ed-1908) XIX. 332-33

7. *Siyar-ul-Aqtab*: P-163

8. *Ibid*. P 168

9. *Siyar-ul-Arifin* : P 33; *Khair-ul-Majalis*. P. 188

disseminating the teachings of Islam amongst the most backward human beings, who would have welcomed the opportunity to raise their moral standard by getting training in spiritual life. Though clear evidences are not available in contemporary literature, yet it may be presumed that they must have thronged at the threshold of Baba Farid's abode. Like Khwaja Muin-uddin Chishti, Baba Farid spread his mat (boriya) under a cluster of trees outside the town.¹ After some time he threw open the doors of his house to everyone, irrespective of caste and creed, as is evident from this statement of the Shaikh, "come to me one by one so that I may attend to you immediately."² This strengthens our presumption that people in great numbers began to assemble at his place. Had this not been the situation, the Shaikh might have not felt the need to tell his visitors to meet him one by one.

ROUTINE OF-THE SHAIKH

Despite this that the Shaikh had to attend a large number of people everyday, he followed his daily routine which indirectly impressed the people. He devoted most of his time in offering prayers and in meditation. After the *Zuhr* prayer he received his visitors.³ It was after attending to the problem of every visitor that he retired to his cell (*Hujra*) He used to say, "There can be no pleasure in devotions so long as there remains a single needy person at the door." This action of the Shaikh was in persuance of the principle that the service of human beings is the service of God.

DAYS OF EXTREME DISTRESS

The Muslim mystics practised extreme poverty and suffered great hardships not because of their paupery but to exhibit their indifference to affluence and pelf which marred the spiritual development and made them worldly. In the form of money and articles, the Shaikh received *futuh*, which he distributed amongst the needy and indigents. As such the Shaikh had to pass his last days in extreme poverty. Even during the month of *Ramdan* his household got very little at the time of *iftar*. While staying with Baba Farid at Ajodhan, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya never got a square meal even during the days of *Ram dan*.

BABA FARID AND CONVERSION OF HINDUS TO ISLAM

Prof. Mohammad Habib rightly observes that "converting non-Muslim to Islam was no part of the mission of Chishti saints." As such, the attitude of the Muslim mystics towards the Hindus and their religion was one of sympathetic understanding and adjustments. They never condemned any religion, but looked upon all religions as different ways leading to the same goal. They did not approve

1. *Khair-ul-Majalis* : P. 89; *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, P. 33

2. *Fawaid:ul-Fuad*, P. 68; *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, P. 34

3. *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, P. 442.

4. *Ibid* : P 66

5. *Islamic culture*, April 1946 P 1940.

6. *Some aspects of Religion and Politics during the 13th Century*, P. 318

any discrimination or distinction in human society, which, according to them, was one organism. They freely mixed with the Hindus and thereby tried to understand their approach to the basic problems of religion and human values.¹

Though no positive information about the deliberate attempt to the conversion of the Hindus to Islam during this period is available in contemporary literature, yet traditions attribute the conversion of a large number of Hindus to the missionary activities of the Muslim mystics.²

There are many tribes found in Punjab claiming that their ancestors were converted to Islam by the Muslim mystics. Hindu tribes such as Sial, Serhangwallian, Bahliyan, Adhoka, Jahakariralian, Bakkan, Hakan, Sian, Khokharan, Dhudhiyal, Tabiyans were converted to Islam by Baba Farid. The respect and reverence which these tribes show to his shrine at the time of *urs* gives credence to their claim. It also shows that their conversions to Islam were the results of their teachings rather than use of any force or offering them material gains. Had force been used or material gains were the reasons behind their embracing Islam, they would have gone back to their original faith when they failed to get those gains. But there is not a single example in history to show that any non-Muslim after embracing Islam ever went back to his original faith after the passage of time. Even today, we find large numbers of non-Muslims in other countries embracing Islam due to its practical egalitarian and democratic view-point in every sphere of human life.

BABA FARID AND THE GURU GRANTH

Guru Nanak was impressed to a great extent by Islam and Muslim mysticism, specially the principles of universal toleration and human brotherhood enshrined in the teachings of the Prophet. He learnt much about the fundamental of Islam through the teachings of the mystics; therefore, it was natural that he would appreciate those teaching. When Guru Granth was compiled in 1604 A. D. a chapter entitled "Salok Shaikh Farid Ke" was included in it. It contains 112 shlokas. This shows the extent to which Baba Farid was popular and held in esteem by the Sikh Gurus.

By organising a seminar in commemoration of Baba Farid, the Sikhs have not only demonstrated their devotion to the Shaikh. But all the same it is a befitting appreciation of his services to humanity. In fact, Baba Farid rendered invaluable service to human society by creating a milieu wherein the people of different cultural and religious groups could live together and work shoulder to shoulder for the creation of Indo-Muslim Culture.

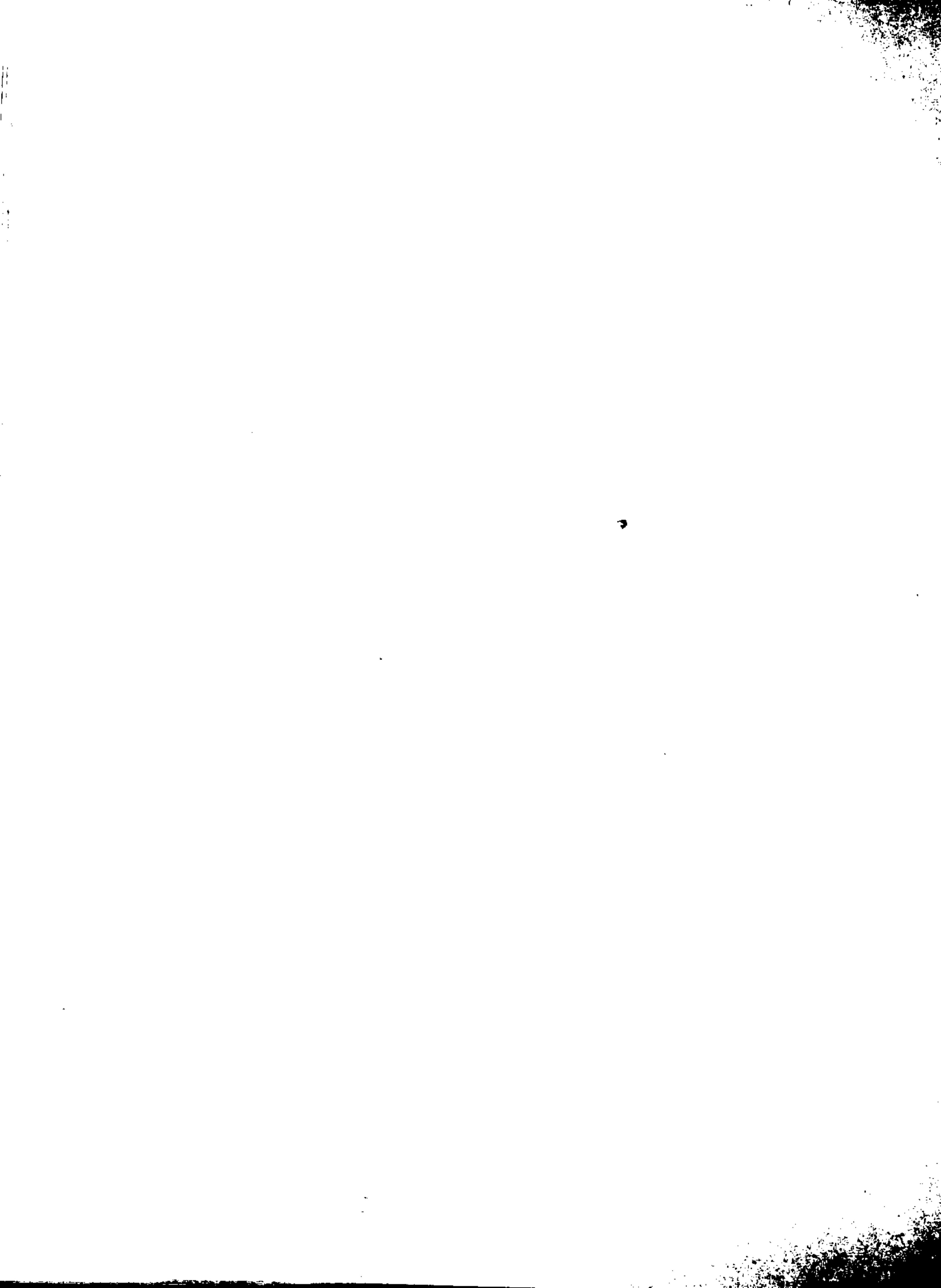
1. *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*. PP. 84-85, 238-245

2. *Preaching of Islam* : P. 274 et seq.

3. *Jawahir-i-Faridi*, PP 396-98

4. For a detailed discussion of this topic, see :

The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariid Uddn Ganj-i-Shakr : PP. 121-122.



FARID SPEAKS THE HUMAN TRUTH

B. R. GROVER

Sheikh Fariduddin Masaud Ganj-i-Shakar, popularly known as Baba Farid, the great Chishti Sufi has left a great impact on the cultural life of medieval Panjab. Undeniably Farid occupies an esteemed position in the Chishtia *Silsilah* which during the medieval age claimed popularity and institutional organisation in most of the regions in India. Farid ranks with Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, the great luminaries who have moulded the character of the medieval Indian culture. However, on regional basis, the cultural heritage of the Panjab owes much to Farid. Farid speaks of the fundamental truth of human life irrespective of the division of the social structure on the religious basis.

Farid was a noble product of Sufism which made an appeal to the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* in its exploration of the spiritual world and man's place in society. The Quran and the *Sunnah* cover not only the spiritual aspects of the man's life but comprise the totality of man in respect of his social behaviour.¹ The Prophet Muhammad had aimed at a cultural revolution of the entire social order in respect of religion, socio-economic relations and political set-up. Submission to God and the ideal of ultimate union of man with Him demanded perfection in the personality of man (*tazkiya*). For its achievement, not only piety and virtue but confirmity to an agalitarian order based on justice and equity were essential prerequisites.

Sufism² had no dogma. Even though all Sufis searched for the truth, in the soul's eternal yearning to have direct experience of the Ultimate Reality, one Sufi may differ from another in thought and action. The *tariqah* covered a wide range of thought and feeling and emphasis on its one aspect or another depended upon the comprehension of the Sufi. The importance of prayer and fasting varied in degree with an individual Sufi. The canvass of the sufi thought is very large. It dealt as much with metaphysical speculation and the philosophic idea as with the social concept. The ideas of Sufism were equally influenced by the contemporary socio-economic order and political set-up.

In its early stages, the Sufi mind rebelled against the formalism, hair-splitting of Islamic theology, the rigidity of the interpretation of the Muslim jurisprudence. A Sufi had a passion for direct experience with the Supreme Being and the religious truth. Above all this Sufi conscience rebelled against the injustices of the social order which accepted the difference between the theory and practice of the Islamic ideas and principles. It is this trait of Sufism which is essentially coeval with 'social concern' which needs emphasis. It originated at an early stage of the development

of Islam, more especially after the establishment of the Omayyad empire.³ The political structure of Islam underwent a revolutionary change and led to the separation of religion and politics. Service of the state was distinct from the service of religion. This undermined the erstwhile welfare concept of the Muslim state. The territorial wars and the expansion of his empire led to atrocities and resulted in a marked cleavage in the governing classes and the 'ruled'. The socio-political order governed by sheer mundane motives was a clear deviation from the original Islamic principles of the social order. The early Sufi emphasis on 'fear from God' and penance was a 'quiet way' of resentment against 'un Islamic' cleavage in the social order.

The resentment against the social structure based on a marked division between the 'privileged' governing classes and the poor people becomes more pronounced and a marked feature of Sufism from the 11th-12th centuries onwards. The view expressed hitherto that the political conquest of Islam brought in its wake an egalitarian concept of socio-economic order in the conquered territories cannot be accepted on the basis of the available contemporary evidence. In the seventh century A.D., Persia⁴, the cradle of Sufism, became a part of the Muslim world and a new theory of state common to the other Muslim territories was evolved. Islam was a unifying force for a new civilisation of the Muslim world. Islam offered the mass of people release from conditions of social inferiority. If Islam offered to influence the social and economic institutions, in its own turn the Islamic theory was modified by the prevalent pre-Islamic social concept and customs of the conquered territories. The pre-Islamic Persian social order under the Sassanian dynasty attached sanctity to family ties, private property and landed estates. There was a marked distinction between the different classes of society. Each class had its own assigned place in the social order. Islam itself recognised the concept of private property and materially affected the development of landed property and land tenure. In practice the pre-Islamic landed hierarchy was maintained. The social class division was not only recognised but further accentuated by the taxation and administrative policy of the Seljuks. In the commercial sphere trade and commercial taxes were continued to be levied on the pre-Islamic Sassanian pattern and excepting the privileged, all paid *pell-tav* in accordance with an income oriented slab. The same is true of the society in Afghanistan. Even though the administrative concept evolved by the Turkish elite in South Asian Muslim countries left a large measure of autonomy in law and custom, in the economically productive sections of the population, the concept of ownership of land subject to the payment of *Kharaj*, the land owning class constituting the *rais*, the *iqta* and the *muqta* system for the collection of revenues created marked cleavage in the social classes in respect of privilege and financial mainstay⁵.

The political conquests of Sind (8th century) by the Arabs and Panjab (11th century) and the whole of North India (12th-13th centuries) by the Turks did not materially affect the Hindu agrarian structure based on hierarchical pattern of landed intermediaries. Except for the imposition of *Jizya* upon the non-Muslims, it is very doubtful if the Turkish rule brought about any fundamental changes in the existing pre-muslim agrarian administration. In the initial stages, the Muslim *emigres* to

India largely belonged to the professional classes and did not involve any economic and social displacement of the agrarian population. The caste distinction was applicable as much to the Hindu as to the converted Muslim society. So the social class division was confirmed by the Turkish Government.

The Sufi mind resented such a character and development of the Islamic culture which to its view was not in consonance with the original concept of *Shariat* and the *Sunnah*. It revolted against the prevalent social disparities in the life of man and essentially viewed the poorer sections of society with sympathy and consideration. In the early 13th century, another factor accentuated the depth of the Sufi thought. This was the Mongol deluge which completely devastated the muslim cultural life in South—West Asia and the Western Panjab. The sufi mind took up the challenge and questions the very basic and purpose of human life and culture.

Farid belonged to the Chistia *Silsilah* of sufism founded in India by Sheikh Hazrat Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya in Ajmer⁶. Farid was the representative (*Khalifa*) of Khwaja Qutb-uddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the founder of the *Silsilah* in Delhi. Through the Chishtia *Silsilah* was essentially Indian in character, it was significantly identical with the contemporary Sufism in Persia. Farid being a product of his age assimilated in himself the highest qualities of Persian and Indian Sufism. Many of his ideas are identical with Khwaja Fariduddin Attar and Maulana Jalal-uddin Rumi (ob. 1273), the great Sufi poets of the age. With them the Centre of thought remains man as a social being and love of God. The concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud meant that everything was God and of the same essence. When God was omnipresent, there was God in man himself. Submission to God and love for Him could be realised only through love for man. How was it possible to realise this if man were to suffer at the hands of man? Attar speaks in the name of humanity.

چیت انسانی پیدن درم ہمایگان
خوردین خویش را از خواری انسانی جنس

(What is humanity? It is to suffer pain at the distress of our neighbours; and to feel humiliated at the humiliation of the human race). Attar also speaks of one God who is not in the hands of any single section of the people. He is within the reach of every person.

خدا را جز خدا یک دوست کس نیست
کہ در خور و خدا ہم اوست کس نیست

There is one God and is not confined in the hands of a single person (or a single section of people). Only He is capable of being God and none other.

When Nizamuddin Auliya saw the Hindu praying and taking a dip in Jamuna river, he uttered the same truth:

ہر قوم راست را ہی دینی و قبلہ گاہی

(Every community has its own path of religion and place of worship).
Attar says that man is not separate from God Himself as God Himself is present in man.

تو از دریا جدائی وین مجب ہیں
ز تو یک لحظہ ایر، دریا جدا نیست

You are not separate from the ocean (of divinity). It is no surprise as you are not separated from this ocean for a moment.

Farid also expresses the same idea when he says :

'Farid, why wanderest thou from forest to forest, breaking down the thorns of the trees ?'

The Lord abides in the heart; why seekest thou Him in the forest ?

Maulana Rumi says that the virtue of real *Kaaba* and *haj* lies in helping the poor and sympathising with him. For his going to *Kaaba* is not as great a virtue as pleasing and helping a poor man.

کعبہ بنگاہ خلیل آذر است
دل بدست آوردن حج ابراست

(Thousands of Kaabas are not equal to pleasing one soul. You please another man and this is the greatest haj). Maulana Rumi equally speaks of the presence of God in a pure human heart.

خوش را صافی کن از اوصاف خود
تا بینی ذات پاک صاف خود

(You should purify yourself with your own good acts and character so that you may see your own pure self).

آئینہ دل چون شود صافی و پاک
نقش باہمی بروں از آب و خاک

(Only when the mirror of the heart becomes clean and pure, you may see forms that never were on land or sea).

Farid's contribution to the Sufi thought and movement in India is remarkable. His love for man and God and egalitarian concept gave a new lease of life to sufism in the medieval Indian society. Unlike Attar and Rumi, Farid has not left behind much of the poetical Sufi thought unless we were to accept the view that Farid was the author of the *Slokas* entitled '*Salok Baba Farid Ke*' incorporated in the *Adi Granth*. It has also been suggested that probably Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim), a descendant of Farid and a contemporary of Guru Nanak was the author of these

*Slokas*¹⁴. The collection of the *Slokas* composed in the local Punjabi dialect (Multani) was presented by Sheikh Ibrahim to Guru Nanak who also hold spiritual dialogues with him. There is no denying the fact that Guru Nanak was in close touch with the Farid School of thought. Notwithstanding the controversy about the composition, what really important is substance of the *Slokas* as representing Farid's ideas accepted by his followers. Guru Nanak carefully scrutinised and accepted the *Slokas* which fell in line with his own ideas. To Guru Nanak they represented Farid's thought and reflections on human truth. He attached the highest importance to Farid's concept of human life love of God and humanity, the pity on man's waste of short span of life in frivolous pursuits of worldly wealth, sympathy for man's suffering due to injustice, man's forgetfulness of the inevitability of death, consequences of evil deeds of life, forgiveness, charity, honesty and a search for higher value and meaningful way of life.¹⁴ Nanak the seeker of truth accepted Farid's *bani* as his. This is the highest tribute that Guru Nanak could pay to Farid, the exponent of human truth. Even though Farid was a great scholar and valued knowledge, he did not write any book. However, the Sufi literature comprising *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, *Siyar-ul-Auliya* and *Khairul Majalis* goes in complete harmony with the above mentioned *Slokas* incorporated in the *Adi Granth*. Taking all these sources in coordination, one could draw an authentic picture of Farid's ideas and thought.

Farid's view of *tariqat* (true path of life) lies in the inner qualities of man, prayers, patience, charity, love of man and God.¹⁵ But this is not mere spiritualism. In his concept of Sufism, Farid shows serious concern with the contemporary society. Though he talks in the Islamic idiom, his social concern is universal which cuts across caste, communal and religious barriers. In his *Jamaat Khana* no discrimination is made between man and man on any ground whatsoever, as in his eyes all human beings are equal¹⁶. The *Jamaat Khana* and the *Khanqah* life is free from all social complexes, caste and creed imhibitions. The rich and the poor, old and young, the officials and the non-officials, the Muslims and the non-Muslims, the faqirs and the jogis, the foreigners and the natives find equal treatment in every respect, viz., food, accommodation and dignity. Every person being a creature of God has his own worth and dignity which must be respected on an equal basis. This way of life in the *Jamaat Khana* is a pointer to Farid's concept of the social order he would like to be established. He denounces the society which had contempt for the low-born persons even within the Muslim community. He indicts the socio-political order based on sharp disparity and injustice. He deals with the problems of suffering humanity. Farid is a humanist, but his humanism is not for supernatural society but for this very earthly world. He wants to relieve the suffering man of the pain, to infuse him with energy so that he may face the hazards of this life and live in peace. Farid is not an escapist. He clearly identifies himself with the poor and the weaker sections of society. His sympathy for the poor and the needy persons is not merely out of his noble nature. It is born out of consciousness of the suffering of poor and their helplessness at the hands of a perverted social order which is 'un-Islamic' in character. Farid points out the disparity between the rich and the poor classes, warns the former about the ultimate fate in

religious terms.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਆਟਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਲੋਣੁ ॥
ਅਗੇ ਗਏ ਸਿਵਾਪਸਨਿ ਚੋਟਾ ਖਾਸੀ ਕਉਣੁ ॥44॥

(Farid, some have a good deal of flour and some have not even salt; when they both go into the yond it shall be known who shall suffer the strokes ?)

Farid's conception of God¹⁸ is based on personal experience, meditation and institution. Self-purification is essential for the realisation of God. Fasting is a means to freedom from such physical needs which may otherwise lead to greed and vice. Through meditation one can realise his identity and pave the way for love for God. His God is both transcendent and immanent. It is equally omnipotent. Prayers means communication with the Eternal. As God is a living reality, through prayers, Farid feels His presence within him. A devoted person is one who loves God.

For Farid, the real aim of life is love of man and God. The love of man is possible only if one loves God in the true sense. Greed, avarice the amassing of wealth and riches detract the man from the path of love of God and union with Him. Love of God and greed cannot go together.¹⁹ Farid distinguishes between the right path of life with honest and moderate means and the riches acquired through greed. The former is a legitimate way of life while the latter is morally and socially wrong, for through greed one man may gather wealth only at cost of another starving man. Riches collected through greed are like sugar-coated poison. Farid compares such riches to poisonous vegetable coated with sugar.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਏ ਵਿਸੁ ਗੰਧਲਾ ਧਰੀਆਂ ਖੰਡੁ ਲਿਵਾੜਿ ॥
ਇਕ ਰਾਹੇਦੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਇਕਿ ਰਾਧੀ ਗਏ ਉਜਾੜਿ ॥ 37 ॥

Farid says that with greed, the love for God remains false.

Farid when there is avarice what love can there be then ?

If there is avarice, then false is the love.²¹

When the Lord's fear enters into the body it grows lean and the blood of avarice departs from within.

ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਸਭੋ ਰਤੁ ਹੈ ਰਤ ਬਿਨੁ ਤੰਨੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਜੋ ਸਹ ਰਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਤਿਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਲੋਭੁ ਰਤੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਭੈ ਪਇਐ ਤਨੁ ਖੀਣੁ ਹੋਇ ਲੋਭੁ ਰਤੁ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਬੇਸੰਤਰਿ ਧਾਤੁ ਸੁਧੁ ਹੋਇ ਤਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਦਰਮਤਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਜਨ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਜਿ ਰਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਇ ॥ 52 ॥

(Everybody has blood and there is nobody without blood; only those who love God do not have the blood of greed in their body).

Thus to Farid honest and moderate living free from avarice gives real contentment in life. Farid's concept of contentment is not denial of necessary means of living. It is the elimination of great avarice and lust for wealth. A contented man would not cast an eye on the ill-gotten wealth of the other avaricious persons who have gone astray from the right path. Farid sums up this concept of contentment by comparing the food of a righteous and contented person to the 'bread of wood' and the ill-gotten prosperity to 'battered bread'.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਾਠ ਦੀ ਲਾਵਣੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਭੁਖ ॥
ਜਿਨਾ ਖਾਧੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਘਣੇ ਸਹਨਿਗੇ ਦੁਖ ॥27 ॥

Farid, my bread is made of wood and hunger is my cooked vegetable.
They who eat buttered bread shall suffer great pain.
Eat thou the hard dry bread and drink the cold water.
Farid seeing another's buttered bread let not they mind long for it.
If a person follows a right path, he is entitled to wealth after union with God and that is the real wealth.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਬ ਖਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਪਕੀਆਂ ਮਾਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਵਾਹਿਨਿ ॥
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਵੰਞੈ ਡੀਹੜਾ ਸੋ ਉਮਰ ਹਥ ਪਵੰਨਿ ॥ 44 ॥

Farid equally ridicules the inhibitions in the mind because of caste complexes. He advocates a casteless social order.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਮਨੁ ਮੈਦਾਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਟੋਏ ਟਿਬੇ ਲਾਹਿ ॥
ਅਗੇ ਮੁਲਿ ਨ ਆਵਸੀ ਦੋਜਕ ਸੰਦੀ ਭਾਹਿ ॥ 74 ॥

As a Chishti Sufi, Farid has an implicit faith in the relationship between the *Sheikh* and the *murid*. The *Sheikh* has an exalted status whose command is like a command of the Prophet. Farid says that it is only through the guidance of the *Fir* that a *murid* can obtain union with God. Here Rumi and Farid speak the same language.

Rumi says :

مگر نباید سایه پیرا نصول
بس ترا مرشته دارد بانگ غول

(If you do not have the shadow of a Pir, you are likely (to be led astray).

Farid says :

There is only one God. By the true Guru's grace, He is obtained.²⁷

The persons who are blessed by the Guru, they suffer not even a scratch.²⁸

Farid's greatest contribution to the sufi life lies in the fact that with strict self-discipline he practiced what he preached. There was complete unanimity between his thought and deeds. He stood as a symbol of harmony among the discordant elements in society. He was essentially a man of the masses and carried the message of Sufism to them. He rendered invaluable service to the consolidation of the institutional set-up of the Chishtia order which is essentially Indian in character and development. His thought has left a permanent impression on the cultural history of the Panjab. He spoke the human truth which was well recognised by Nanak and has left an important legacy to the people of the Panjab and India as a whole.

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 19. See f. n. 21.
 20. Salok Baba Farid Ke vide f. n. 17, Salok No. 37.
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BABA FARID—HIS LIFE, WORKS AND TEACHINGS

S. M. R. JALALI NAINI

Islamic culture and civilization spread into the Indian sub-continent through the gateway of Punjab. It was here that the two supreme cultures of the world— Islamic and Indian—came into contact with each other and, during the course of time, assimilated and mingled together. The process of cultural assimilation continued for centuries and resulted in the best flowering of human thought. The most commendable specimen of such assimilation is the Adi Granth wherein the great Guru Nanak has epitomised all that is supreme in human thinking. He generously absorbed the great ideas of saints and Sufis like Baba Farid and enriched them with his own divine revelation.

It is now an established fact that Muslim saint and Sufis, most of whom belonged to Iran, were the torch-bearers of Islam into the Indian sub-continent, and what they preached was nothing but love and humanity, affection and fraternity. They were, as a matter of fact, the down-trodden people and the suppressed human beings. In a society that was torn by caste and colour, prejudices and fanaticism, the pioneer Muslim Sufis such as Data Ganj Baksh, Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Baba Fariduddin, Nizamuddin Aullia, et al., came with the message of universal peace and love, equality and brotherhood. They embraced the people who were rejected by society, and caressed the sick and suffering. Their monasteries were the most ideal centres of humanity where all the visitors—king and beggars—sat on the same rough rug and shared the same humble meal. Here none was superior and nobody inferior. For these Sufis and their disciples, the pomp and glory of the world was immaterial; they lived in the world of divine simplicity. They rejected the material world of struggle and strife as they had their own world of peace and serenity, love and affection. Sufis like Baba Farid, Chisti, Kaki and Nizamuddin Aulia transformed humanity and revolutionised the world :

ما قصه سکر و دارا خوانده ایم
از ما بجز حکایت مهر و وفا پس

The great spiritual master Baba Fariduddin Mas'ud was a *descendant* of Omar the second Caliph. Among his ancestors we come across the names of such persons as Ibrahim Bin Adham, the prince-sufi and Farrukh Shah, the king of Kabul. Jamaluddin Sulaiman, the father of Baba Farid, migrated from Kabul to Lahore.

He was offered the post of Qazi and he settled at Multan. Baba Farid was born in the town of Khatwal near Multan and was brought up in the latter city. It was in this city that the young Farid—a student of theology—had his first encounter with *Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki*. The young student was over-awed by the spiritual aura of the great master. He wanted to give up his studies and follow the Master to Delhi. But he persuaded him to continue his studies. The ardent Mas'ud submitted to his master's wish and for five years or so he busied himself in the study of theology and allied subjects. Then he joined *Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki* at Delhi. Here he was subjected to rigorous spiritual training. The young disciple dedicated himself entirely to the task of self-effacement and spiritual purification. This unusual devotion and dedication invited the attention of his master and he was *ultimately* elevated to the post of *Khalifa* (spiritual successor).

In the life of Sheikh Farid we notice a remarkable characteristic, that he always avoided name and fame. Probably it hampered his spiritual progress and contemplation or, perhaps, he was afraid that the flocking of people around him might feed his ego and result in arrogance, both of which were so fatal for a spiritualist. So, Baba Farid asked his master to allow him to move to Hansi. He was permitted to go, but hardly had he settled there that he heard the sad news of his master's demise. He rushed to Delhi, where he was offered the seat of the deceased master. Baba Farid resumed the seat of the deceased master. Baba Farid resumed the spiritual mission, but soon he realised that in a crowded city like Delhi and as the head of the Chishtiya order, much of his time was wasted in ceremonial functions. Moreover, the people of Hansi earnestly needed his guidance. So, he moved to Hansi. But, now he was a well-known figure and people of all sort, many of whom wanted simply the fulfilment of their material desires, flocked around him. Baba Farid, therefore, decided to move again to Ajodhan in Punjab.

Why Baba Farid chose the particular place in Panjab is a matter of conjecture by historians and biographers. The most acceptable reason seems that Baba Farid wanted to keep himself far from the crowd of rulers, officials and the so called *Ulema*. The Delhi court was not free from intrigues and machinations and each faction endeavoured to enjoy the blessings of the saint. Ajodhan was far from Delhi. The local people had hardly seen the light of virtue and piety. They were rough and ignorant. They required the kindly light that could lead them through the darkness of infidelity and ignorance.

Baba Farid settled at Ajodhan and remained there for well over a quarter of a century. His spiritual magnetism soon attracted people from areas far and wide—people who came there to quench the thirst of their soul and returned with a serene mind and contented spirit. His personality was like a fountain-head from which all drank the water of life. His *Khanqah* was an abode of the humble and low, and even a visiting king, prince or official was accorded the same humble reception. The Shaikh never hesitated to correct a visitor and to guide him to the path of righteousness. Once Ghiasuddin Balban, before acquiring the throne of Delhi, paid a visit to the Shaikh. Apparently he wanted to win the blessing of the Shaikh for his future plans. The Shaikh knew the mind of Balban and recited the following

verses from the *Shahnama* :

فریدون فرخ فرشته نبود
ز مشک و ز عنبر شسته نبود
ز داد و درپش یافت آن نیکوئی
نوداد و درپش کن فریدون توئی

'Faridun was neither an angel nor made of musk and roses; He owed his good name to kindness and generosity; Be generous and kind and enjoy fame like Faridun.'

The Shaikh always resisted the offers of wealthy people. He never accepted a grant of land or stipends from the government. That would deprive him of the complete freedom he and his disciples enjoyed. In the words of Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, he was like an eagle who would sit only on the highest point of the heavenly tree—*Tuba*. Yet in his spiritual ascent Baba Farid never forget the poor and the down-trodden. Occasionally he recommended them to an official or a ruler. But he never begged or entreated. It was a plain request to help a human being on human grounds. The following letter he wrote recommending a poor fellow is a clear indicator of the Shaikh's attitude :--

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ أَمَّا إِلَيْكَ إِنِ اعْطَيْتَهُ : الْمَعْطَى صَوَالَهُ وَأَنْتَ الْمَشْكُورُ
وَأَنْ لَمْ تَعْطِهِ فَأَمَّا سَأَلْتَهُ صَوَالَهُ وَالْمَتَّ الْمَعْذُورُ

"To God and then to you.

"If you give him something, the real motivator is God and you are thanked. But if you refuse, the refusal is from God and you are helpless."

In this way Baba Farid carried on his spiritual mission at Ajodhan for more than a quarter of a century, passing away on 5th Muharram, 664 A.H. (17th October, 1265 A.D.). His mission was continued by his disciples who, according to *Jawahiri-e-Faridi*, numbered 50,842. It shows the extraordinary influence that Baba Farid wielded over the people. It might be the result of his wide travels in India and abroad. There are several places in Arabia, Jerusalem, Palestine, Burma, Bengal etc., which are venerated on account of their association with Baba Farid. At the top of these disciples stood Nizamuddin Aulia who not only fulfilled the spiritual mission of his master but also made Islamic mysticism an everlasting force in the Indian sub-continent by virtue of his spiritual and divine knowledge.

Fortunately, the writings and sayings of Baba Farid were recorded for posterity.

He is said to have composed the following works :

- (1) *Fawaid-us-Salikin* : The sayings of Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki, the spiritual guide of Baba Farid.
- (2) *Asar-ul-Auliye* : The saying of Baba Farid himself, collected by one of his disciples, Badr Ishaque. It is divided into 22 sections and deals with almost all aspects of Sufism.

- (3) *Wujudiva* : A short treatise on mystic psychology, preserved in a collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Curzon) under the number 460.
- (4) *Tuhfa* : Another sufistic treatise preserved in the same collection under the number 468.
- (5) Panjabi couplets.
- (6) Persian, Arabic and Urdu verses.
- (7) A commentary on *Awariful-Ma'arif*. (*Nuzhat-al-Khawatir*, Vol. I, p. 232).

Scholars have expressed doubts whether they all are the genuine works of Baba Farid. Of these works *Asrar-ai-Auliva*, collected by Badr Ishaque, contains the sayings of the Shaikh. These sayings indicate how deeply the Shaikh delved into the mysteries of divinity and the nature of humanity. He dived deep into the ocean of gnosis to bring out the essential gems. They constitute the cardinal rules of human behaviour and divine attainment. "The fire of divine love kindles in the heart of a dervish only."

آتش عشق آتشی است که جز در درویش قرار نگیرد
(ص ۱۰)

"The heart of a believer is like a rich land. If you sow the seed of love, it will bear very good fruit and people will enjoy it."

دلہائی مومنان زمین پاکیزہ را مانند پس اگر تخم می
دراں بکاری از ہزاران نعمت از آن تخم محبت بردہد پس توانی
از آن نعمت بہر کس نصیب کند (ص ۱۲)

"If salvation lay in putting on the *Kherqua*, the entire world would have done it."

اگر از خرقہ پوشیدن خلاصہ فایم شدی ہمہ خلق خرقہ پوشیدی
(ص ۱۶)

"Knowledge gives life, gnosis, peace;
Love begets passion and recitation (of God's name) real taste."

اگر حیات است در علم است و اگر راحت است در معرفت و اگر
شوق است در محبت است و اگر ذوق است در ذکر است
(ص ۵۶)

"A wise man is one who depends entirely on God and not on anybody else."

عاقل کس است کہ در ہمہ کار با توکل او بنجد البود از ہیکس توقع
نکند (ص ۶۱)

“The heart of those who have forgotten
God is dead and not living.”

کسانیکہ ہمیشہ از یاد حق غافل اند مردہ اند زنده نیستند
(ص ۸۵)

Other sayings of Baba Farid have been quoted by Mohammad Bin Mubarak Kirmani, known as Amir Khurd, in his *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. Below we give a few quotations from there :

Do not eat everybody's bread, but give bread to people (freely).

Do not boast of having committed a sin.

Keep your internal self better than the external self.

Do not lower yourself in an attempt to secure a high position.

Aspire for new (spiritual) attainments every day.

Poetry is probably the most natural outlet for a mystic. The great *Mathnawi* of Jalaluddin Rumi, and the ghazals of Iraqi and Khusrau are the finest specimens of Sufistic literature in Persian. Those who did not write poetry, like Khwaja Abdullah Ansari and Data Ganj Bakhsh, wrote in prose that was as rhythmic and musical as poetry. Many of us have studied the *Munajat* of Khwaja Ansari and have wondered at the sweet melody of his prose. A Sufi writes when he is deeply stirred by a spiritual urge or he expresses himself in a state of trance when the physical and mortal obstacles are shed away.

Baba Farid is said to have composed some verses in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, whereas 166 Panjabi *dohas* have been ascribed to him and of which 134 were included by Guru Nanak in the holy *Adi Granth*. Modern scholars hold conflicting views about the authenticity of these compositions. Some of them completely deny them while others accept them entirely. The Arabic and Persian verses of Baba Farid have been recorded by quite old sources such as *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, *Tarikh-e-Firishta*, etc. This fact, supplemented by long traditions, oral narratives and the inclusion of the *dohas* by Guru Nanak in *Adi Granth*, leads us to believe that they are the genuine productions of Baba Farid.

The following Persian *rubais* have been ascribed to the Shaikh :

گرم که به شب نماز بسیار کنی
در روز دوائی شخص بیمار کنی
تا دل نکنی ز عصب و کینه تنی
صدغ من دل بر سر یک خال کنی

“I accept that you pray throughout the night,
And attend to the sick throughout the day,

But unless your heart is pure malice and anger,
All your efforts are wasted in vain."

برمگر که بردت سری زلم
بر طریق دوستان دری زلم
بچو مرغ نیم بسمل پیش تو
در میان خاک و خون پر ی زلم

"At dawn I call at you and knock at your Door like a true lover.
And, like a half-killed bird I lie before your eyes, fluttering in blood and dust."

شب نیت که خون دل زناک نریخت
روزی نه که آبروی تن پاک نریخت
یک شربت آب خوش نخورم همه عمر
تا باز ز راه دیده بر خاک نریخت

"Every night my afflicted heart bleeds
And every day I am put to disgrace.
Whenever I have a sip of sweet water,
It gushes out in the form of bitter tears."

Baba Farid is one of pioneers of Panjabi poetry. His hundred and odd dohas constitute the masterpieces of Panjabi poetry. Scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of these dohas but there is a strong point which goes in favour of Baba Farid, and that is the remarkable similarity between his discourses preserved in *Asrar-ul-Auliya* and the Punjabi dohas. We learn from the latter source that the Shaikh used to supplement his conversation with mystical quotations and sufistic Persian verses. It is evident that like most of the Sufis of his age, the Shaikh was also endowed with a fervent poetic urge.

Despite the wide travels of the Shaikh in Iran and the Arab countries, we do not know for certain if he met Jalaluddin Rumi or Fakhruddin Iraqi, his famous contemporary Sufi poets. But, he shares similar ideas with Rumi. For the sake of elucidation, we quote below from both of them. We know the unique opening of Rumi's *Mathnawi*, in which the human soul, symbolised by a reed-pipe, bewails its separation from the Divine Beloved :

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند
 وز جدائی با شکایت می کند
 کز نیستان تا مرا بریده اند
 از نفیسم مردوزن نالیده اند
 سینه دارم شرح شرح از فراق
 تا بگویم شرح درد اشتیاق
 من بهر جمعیتم نالان شدم
 بخت خوشحالاں و بدحالاں شدم
 هر کسی از من خود شد یار من
 در درونم که نجست اسرار من

"Hearken to the reed when it bewails of separation.
 It says, "Since I have been separated from
 The reed-bed, my lamentations have moved the
 People to tears."

My bosom is afflicted and I long to tell
 The agony of love and separation.
 In every assembly I cry and bewail.
 To the fortunate and the miserable.
 Every one assumes that he is my friend
 But none of them shares my spiritual pangs."

Now be turn to Baba Farid to find that he also bewails the separation of the
 human soul from the fountain-head of Divinity :

"On account of the severe *burning* of high fever
 Induced by separation from God,
 I wring my hands.
 I have grown crazy longing for my Spouse.
 Thou, O Spouse, wast angry with me in Thy heart.
 It was through my demerits, and not through
 My Spouse's fault.
 My Lord, I did not know Thy worth :
 I have lost my youth add repent too late.
 My way is thoroughly tedious;
 It is sharper than a two-edged and very narrow;
 Over that is my passage;
 Shaikh Farid, prepare thyself betimes
 For that road."

The Panjabi dohas of Baba Farid are the best manifestations of an ardent
 soul, confined in the shackles of mortal limitations and pining an separation of the
 Divine Beloved. Here are the actual experiences of a Sufi—the experiences of

mortality leading to immortality. Whatever we observe in these dohas is *hall* and not mere *qal*, and that is why the reader is immensely moved by them.

The recurring themes of these dohas are the transitoriness of life, the ravages of death, the griefs and sorrows of man. The Shaikh is always frank and outspoken in his expression. He speaks straight and direct. He is never involved and philosophical. His diction is simple and sure, succinct and terse. His observation is keen and his analysis is calculated.

Baba Farid picks up his similes and metaphors from the simple life and its common environment and thus brings home his point. Note the following dohas :

“Life is the wife and death her husband.
Husband takes his wife away.
After ‘yes’ to his proposal,
How can she hold back the day ?”

As stated above, death is recurring theme in the dohas of Baba Farid. In the capacity of a spiritual guide, the Shaikh had to correct his disciples and guide them along the right path, warn them of the seductive charms of the temporary life and remind them of death, the final blow of worldly glamour and glory :

“Farid ! The time for good deeds
You spent in colourful youth
Far more, Death the soul loves,
Boat of soul, Death rows off.
As soon as it is full,
With the destined breaths.”

Shaikh Farid himself led a pretty long life. He lived for more than ninety years. His age was charged with wars revolutions. The Mongol ravages had shaken the whole world. They had also attacked the Indian soil and threatened the Delhi throne. Shaikh Farid was a witness to all this killing and bloodshed—man killing man for no reason. His heart was deeply grieved and his soul was subjected to torments. And so, he yearned for peace, not only physical but also spiritual :

“Old age has befallen you,
Your body wholly shakes.
Even if you a century live,
Body will reduce to dust.”

—
“In broad daylight Death raided
The fortress of a chief
It razed the walls and sacked the heart.
Extinguished both lamps.”

Life being so frail and transitory, Baba Farid asked his disciples and the humanity at large to love each other and to help each other. Man must shed away his conceit and false prestige, be humble and self-effaced and start respecting his fellow beings. Mutual respect and affection is the cure for all human ailments :

“Underrate not dust, Farid,
Like of it is none.

While you live, it licks your feet,
And when you die, it licks your head."

Even the ultimate goal of man—union with God—is achieved only by humility and humbleness :

"And if, Farid; you seek the Lord,
Be the humblest grass.
Cut and peeled and drenched and trampled,
Softened into mass and woven
Into prayer mats,
Only then it gains admission
Into the House of the Lord."

Such was Baba Farid, a Sufi, a humanist, a dervish and a seeker of truth. He led a hard life, toiling and struggling under odd circumstances. But, he was always steadfast to truth and the Lord. His personality was like a beacon of light that guided those who had wandered astray.

Throughout his life, he caressed the sick and suffering, rescued the low and down-trodden. He was much above the petty divisions of caste and creed. His family was the family of man and his home was the entire world. For a world that is torn by distress and dissension, the teachings of Baba Farid can still provide the best remedy.

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BABA FARID AND THE SIKH RELIGION

ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE

Macauliffe's life sketch of Baba Farid, whom he calls 'the original Sheikh Farid', was based on four (three Persian and one Urdu) manuscripts which in his days were 'preserved at the shrine of Pak Pattan.' He seems to have depended primarily on Ali Asghar's *Jawahir-i-Faridi* which was completed in A.D. 1623, more than 350 years after the great saint's death. He also utilised *Rahat-ul-Qulub* which was said to be 'a diary of Farid's acts and instructions compiled by Nizam-ul-Din Auliya.'¹ In recent years Professor K.A. Nizami has written a comprehensive monograph on Shaikh Farid² which is based primarily on more authentic sources, including Amir Hasan Sijzi's *Fawid-ul-Fuad* (a near-contemporary work by a distinguished disciple of Sheikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya), Hamid Qalandar's *Khair-ul-Kajalis*, and Amir Khurd's *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. Of the two leading historians of the period, *Minhaj-ud-din* does not mention the great saint at all, and Barani makes only a casual reference. But the external details of Baba Farid's life, covering his long earthly career of 90 years (A.D. 1175-1265) are now fairly well-known.

Although born in an immigrant family, Baba Farid passed his life in the Punjab and belonged to that province, so far as a saint of his stature could belong to any particular region. He was born at Kahtwal, a town in the district of Multan, where he completed his early education. The next stage in his educational and spiritual development was marked by his residence at Multan. According to some early authorities he went to Qandahar—and even to Seistan—for higher studies. Then he accompanied his master, Khwaja Qutb-u-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, to Delhi. The next stage was his residence at Hansi, an ancient town in the Hissar district in the Punjab, from where he returned for a time to Kahtwal. He finally shifted to Ajodhan, not very far from Kahtwal, where he continued to live till his death. Ajodhan derived a new name, Pak Pattan, 'Ferry of the Pure', from Baba Farid. The story of his tours outside India,—as far as Baghdad, Bukhara and Badakhshan,—contained in later *Malfuz* literature, has been rejected on very plausible grounds.³

A Punjabi by birth and life-long residence, it may be presumed that Farid spoke the regional language and used it as his normal medium of communication with those who came to see him in *Khanqah* and *Jama' at Khana*. He had acquired profound scholarship in the two classical languages of Islam, *i.e.* Arabic and Persian; long study and meditation and given him unique understanding of the

Holy Quran. He was thoroughly familiar with the extensive literature on Islamic mysticism. But he never used his learning either for self-glorification or for barren theological controversy. The knowledge of religious law, he said, was intended to be acted upon, and not be used for harassment of people.⁴ For him learning was not an embellishment but a part of life. Although there is a reference to a commentary on Shaikh Shibah-ud-din Suhrawardi's *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* composed by Baba Farid, it is pretty certain that he did not expound his own teachings in any written work.⁵ It is probable that he composed verses in Arabic, Persian and some local dialects; but few, if any authentic specimens of his writing are available. His views on religious and spiritual problems are to be collected from his sayings. Here, again, we have a difficulty: no comprehensive collection of his sayings is available. We have to fall back upon the incomplete selection of his sayings in Amir Khurd's work.⁶ But this Persian record should not be taken to imply that Baba Farid spoke in Persian to those who sought blessing and spiritual consolation from him.

There was large-scale immigration of Persians, Turks and Afghans into the Punjab during the long period of Ghaznavid rule in that province during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The language which they adopted was 'naturally that current in the Punjab.'⁷ This language, again, was carried to Ghazni by the Hindu officials and soldiers—such as Sundar, Tilak and others—who served the Sultanate. "It seems that some Punjabi (Hindi) words had obtained currency even outside the limits of India. For instance, several Persian poets of the Ghaznavid period have employed Punjabi words in their poetry."⁸ After the occupation of Delhi by Muhammad Ghori the Ghaznavid officials of foreign and indigenous origin, who were well versed in the Persian language as also in the Turkish system of administration, found an extended sphere of activity in the new and expanding Sultanate. It is not unreasonable to assume that their influence affected the *Khari boli* or the Hindi spoken in Delhi and its neighbourhood. From its old position as a comparatively unimportant town in the Chauhan dominions Delhi was suddenly lifted to the position of the capital of a big empire. Although the political link between Delhi and Ghazni was severed soon afterwards, Delhi became and remained a part of the vast Muslim world beyond the geographical boundaries of India. A mixed language developed here, known to contemporaries as *Hindawi* or *Dehlavi*, as Amir Khusrau informs us. The name *Dehlavi* survived till the days of Abul Fazl.

Linguistic studies on the origin of Urdu have shown how difficult it is to trace the development of a language which is affected by political and social changes of the type experienced by north-western India in the age of Turkish conquest and consolidation. Foreign influence was generally far more direct and pervasive in important political and commercial centres, such as Delhi, Lahore and Multan; it was normally less effective in small towns and rural areas where indigenous forces were stronger because the people were rooted to the soil and far more loyal to age-old traditions than the urban population. Baba Farid passed the greater part of his life at Kahtwal, Hansi and Ajodhan. His stay at Multan and Delhi was comparatively short; he was mentally repelled by the noisy life and stormy politics

which distinguished the big urban centers. It may be inferred that he preferred the spoken language of the rural areas—simple, direct, less open to external influences—to the artificial combination known as *Hindawi* or *Dehlavi*. In other words, he used the old Punjabi language in his oral teaching as also in such compositions as he chose to put in a local garb. To be sure, this language was also changing under the impact of the new forces; but the change was slow, and the distinctive character of the old language was not swept away. It may be noted that Baba Farid's grandfather came to India in the fifties or sixties of the twelfth century and settled at Kahtwal, and that the saint was born about 17 years before Muhammad Ghor's victory at the second battle of Tarain. He passed the impressionable years of his early youth at Khatwal; it was the dialect of that area which he imbibed with his mother's milk.

If this speculative reconstruction of Baba Farid's spoken language is correct, it would be necessary to assess his role in the development of the Punjabi language. Like the other early Chishti mystics he imparted instruction in practical mysticism; the instrument he used was oral teaching. His appeal was directed to the common people; he avoided intercourse with the rulers and the nobility. Barani represents him as saying: "Every *durwesh*, who makes friends with kings and nobles, will end badly." Although Balban had great respect for him, the saint wrote only one letter of recommendation to the Sultan and never asked for or accepted anything for himself.⁹ This was in conformity with the general aversion of the Chistis to acceptance of administrative posts and accumulation of wealth. When Baba Farid left Delhi he was the head of the Chishti *Silsilah* as the nominated successor of Sheikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki. His departure from the capital was probably due to his extreme reluctance to be involved in political affairs. It is possible that the contemporary historian Minhaj-ud-din ignores him because he scrupulously kept himself aloof from the political intrigues and rivalries of the times on which the historian's interest was concentrated.

As we have no comprehensive collection of Baba Farid's sayings in their original form it is not possible to examine them closely from the linguistic point of view. In this connection a very important question comes up for careful consideration. Did Baba Farid himself compose the hymns and slokas bearing the name of Shaikh Farid which Guru Arjan incorporated in the Granth Sahib? Macauliffe, who echoed the Sikh tradition of his day, gave an emphatically negative answer. He wrote, "It is certain that it was Shaikh Brahm who composed the slokas and hymns bearing the name of Farid in the Granth Sahib, though he used the name of the founder of his spiritual line as his poetical *nom de plume*."¹⁰ Some modern Sikh writers ascribe these compositions generally to Baba Farid. However, the possibility that some of them represented Shaikh Brahm's work is recognised, and it is pointed out, "besides Farid Shakarganj and Shaikh Brahm, even other Farids might have contributed their verses under the common name, like the Sikh Gurus."¹¹ This later possibility arises because some sloka, which are attributed to Shaikh Brahm in the *Janamsakhis*, occur among those bearing the name of Farid in the Granth Sahib. But the evidence of the *Janamsakhis*, if acceptable, cannot be taken to imply the authorship of more than two Farids, i.e. Baba Farid (whom

Macauliffe calls 'the original Shaikh Farid' and Shaikh Brahm (whom Macauliffe calls 'Farid Sani').

It is not altogether unlikely that the compositions of the two Farids were mixed up in the sloks included in the Granth Sahib.¹² The contemporary works dealing with the life of Baba Farid do not represent him as the composer of a large number of slokas; but this is a piece of negative evidence to which we are not required to attach much importance. Again, it has been pointed out that the *nom de plume* used in the slokas in the Granth Sahib is 'Farid' but Baba Farid used to refer to himself as 'Masud'. This change, however, might have been brought about by later scribes to whom the name 'Farid' was probably more familiar. It may be noted that Shaikh Niam-ud-din Auliya, Shaikh-Ala-ud-din Ajodhani and the historian Firishtah mentioned the saint as 'Farid.'

The clue to the authorship of the slokas lies in careful linguistic analysis. Professor Nizami points out that the sloks are in the Multani language, but they contain a number of Arabic and Persian words. In view of Baba Farid's life-long association with Kahatwal, Multan and Ajodhan it is but natural that he should have used the Multani dialect of the Punjabi language. As he was well versed in Arabic and Persian, and as the subject-matter of the slokas was the literary expression of Islamic mysticism, the use of Arabic and Persian words was quite natural too. These two points, however, do not necessarily mean that Baba Farid was the composer of the sloks. Farid Sani was a resident of Ajodhan (Pak Pattan); he had 'a spiritual reign of forty-two years.'¹³ There would be nothing unusual in his use of the Multani dialect of the Punjabi language, enriched by importation of Arabic and Persian words.

Professor Nizami strengthens his argument against the authorship of Baba Farid by saying that the sloks 'contain idioms and expressions of a much later date'. but he cites no instances. This is a point for close linguistic investigation, and students of history must be prepared to accept expert opinion. There is, however, some scope for urging the need for caution. We do not know whether these slokas were put in writing at the time of the compilation of the Holy Granth. Baba Farid died in A. D. 1265; Farid Sani was a contemporary of Guru Nanak. Whoever might have been the composer of the slokas, it is quite likely that oral transmission or imperfect writing provided enough scope for unintended or deliberate alteration, addition and interpolation. This was a common practice in respect of medieval literary compositions, specially in the case of saintly sayings and religious verses. It would, therefore, be too much to expect that the literary compositions of Baba Farid would remain altogether immune for more than three centuries after his death, from the intrusion of 'idioms and expressions of a much later date'.

The Granth Sahib contains hymns and slokas attributed to 13 pre-Nanak saints. How Guru Arjan collected this material we do not know. The two hymns attributed to Jaidev, a Bengali poet of the twelfth century, are put in a dialect which is foreign to the Bengali language of those days. Macauliffe's statement that these are written in the popular language of his time.¹⁴ is not correct if it means 'the popular language' of the region to which he belonged. Nor are they written in Sanskrit, the language which Jaidev used in composing his well-known work, *Gita-*

Govinda. According to Kielborn, he have in his hymn in Raga Gujari'a queer mixture of Sanskrit and the vulgar tongue'.¹⁶ The word 'Purkha', which is neither Sanskrit nor Bengali, would never be used by a Bengali. It is practically certain that the composition attributed to Jaidev were not included in the Granth Sahib in their original form. This might have happened in the cases of some other Bhagats too, including Baba Farid. The existing linguistic form of the hymns and slokas of any Bhagat should not be taken as decisive evidence of the actual date of composition unless confirmation is available from some different kind of evidence.

It appears that the linguistic data-which have not yet been studied exhaustively do not provide crucial evidence on the authorship of the compositions bearing the name of Shaikh Farid. They might have been the work of Baba Farid, or of Farid Sani; it is also possible that the compositions of the two Farids were mixed up by the time the Granth Sahib was compiled. Another possibility—suggested by Professor Nizami—is that Farid Sani 'expressed in his own words some of the sayings of his great master'. In that case the real authorship should be attributed to the master, and not to the disciple.

It may be of some interest to note that some of the slokas contain references to Baba Farid's personal penances which would be entirely out of place in compositions of Farid Sani. For instance :

"Farid, my bread is made of wood, hunger is my condiment..."¹⁶

(Here, Macauliff tells us, we have 'a reference to the wooden cake Farid I wore on his stomach to satisfy the cravings of hunger'.)

"Eat hard dry bread and drink cold water..."¹⁷

"Farid, tear thy coat into tatters and wear a blanket instead..."¹⁸

Fasting had top priority among Baba Farid's penances. One-third of a bowl of *sherbet*, a few dried grapes and half a piece of bread was all that he took in 24 hours when he was at Adjodhan and occupied the exalted position of the head of the Chishti *Silsilah*.¹⁹ He was at the lowest depth of poverty when he was at the height of his fame, but his loyalty to the highest ideals of austerity which marked Chisti order remained unshakable.

"Farid, attach not thy heart to houses, mansions, and lofty places..."²⁰.

The slokas, read as a whole, reveal the composer's ardent love and adoration of God as also his constant anxiety to throw away the 'bundle of worldliness'²¹.

As Guru Nanak was born two centuries after the death of Baba Farid, there cannot be any direct link between the Sikh religion and the great Sufi saint's teachings. But the inclusion in the Granth Sahib of hymns and slokas bearing the name of Shaikh Farid brings the message of the Chishti order of Sufis directly within the purview of every student of Sikh history. The only other Muslim Bhagat whose compositions were accepted by Guru Arjan was Bhikan who also was a Sufi. According to Macauliffe; he 'resembled Shaikh Farid II': he might have been a follower of Kabir as well. It is hardly likely that he belonged to the Chishti order, for Badauni tells us: "He would not listen to singing, and outwardly reprobated it."²² It is well known that the Suhrawardi sect rejected music even though it was an integral part of Chishti discipline. In any case the importance assigned by Guru Arjan to the compositions bearing the name of Shaikh Farid is a clear testimony to

his preference for the Chishti interpretation of Sufism. The great compiler of the Granth Sahib, chose only those hymns which echoed sentiments he wanted to include in his own community."

Sir Hamilton Gibb rightly calls Baba Farid, 'a seminal personality in the development of the Islamic mystical movement in India.' Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti, the founder of the Chishti *Silsilah* in India, came to this country towards the close of the twelfth century (probably in A.D. 1190), spent some years at Lahore and Delhi, and then settled at Ajmer, where he died probably in A.D. 1236. Delhi and its neighbourhood formed the centre of activities of Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, the eminent disciple of Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti. It was at the feet of the latter mystic that Baba Farid received his spiritual training. Before his death the master nominated the disciple as his successor, thus elevating him to the headship of the Chishti *Silsilah*. Baba Farid's mantle fell upon his great disciple, Nizam-ud-din Auliya, who died in A.D. 1325. But Pak Pattan remained a celebrated Sufi centre, and there Guru Nanak found Shaikh Brahm (Ibrahim) as 'the incumbent of the Shrine.'⁵

Owing to the geographical proximity of the Punjab to the Islamic countries which were the homeland of Sufism, this province became the chief centre of the several Sufi orders in India. After its migration to this country Sufism could not long remain free from environmental influence. Vedanta and the survivals of Buddhism in Afghanistan and north-western India had some ideas to offer to the Sufis. The philosophy and practices of the Jogis affected the Sufis, particularly the Chishtis at Pak Pattan.²⁶ Jogis used to visit Baba Farid's *Jama'at Khanqah*, and there were Jogi families at Pak Pattan when the *Punjab District Gazetteers* were compiled.²⁷

The early phase of Sufism, represented by Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti, Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Farid, and Baha-ud-din Zakariya of the Suhrawardi order, anticipated some interesting developments which received institutional forms under the aegis of the Sikh Gurus. One of these was the adoption of the regional language for purpose of oral communication with the local people. Professor Nizami holds the view that Baba Farid's conversations with the Hindu jogis 'must have been carried on in the earliest form of Urdu, i.e. Hindiwi' and adds: In fact the *Khanqah* of Baba Farid was one of the earliest cradles of the Urdu language.²⁸ As pointed out above, we would prefer to call it the old Punjabi language rather than 'the earliest form of Urdu.' This language he must have used also in his conversations with those Hindus who came to see him and some of whom he is said to have converted to Islam.²⁹

Baba Farid was no innovator so far as the use of the regional language was concerned. Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chisti settled at Ajmer during the reign of Prithviraj Chauhan. We find in *Siyar-ul-Auliya* that his influence on the lower classes of the local people provoked a priestly demand for his expulsion. Persian could not have been the medium of his contact with the people of Ajmer. "From the every beginning," says Professor Yusuf Husain, "it was a definite policy of the Sufis to employ the Hindawi language for preaching their message of love and equality of men in the sight of God. They had realized that they could not reach

the people through Persian, the official language of the Muslim rulers. They found Hindawi to be most suitable medium for conveying their message to the masses."³⁰ Baba Farid, representing the third generation of Sufi saints in India, continued and consolidated this tradition.

It is tempting to assume that this Sufi practice provided a working precedent for Guru Nanak's adoption of the Punjabi language as the sole medium of his communication with the people. There were other precedents too. The early Vaishnavas of South India had used Tamil as their medium for expression of religious ecstasy. It was really a necessary consequence of the popularisation of religion aimed at by the expounders of the Bhakti cult. Reformers like Ramananda, Kabir and Namdev had used the people's language for developing and propagating a people's religion. Even in Bangal, where Sanskrit was not dislodged from its old position by the Vaishnavas, religious and semi-religious peoptical works were composed in the Bengali language. Indeed, all over India *loka-bhasa* was replacing *deva-bhasa* so as to bring religion to the heart of the masses. Religion ceased to be mystery behind a linguistic curtain; it became a part of life, a matter of daily experience. In this general movement the practice of the Sufi saints had a special relevance to Guru Nanak's choice of language; he introduced his teaching to the people of the Punjab to whom the Sufi saints had been speaking in their own language; he introduced his teaching to the people of the Punjab to whom the Sufi saints had been speaking in their own tongue for about five centuries. The compilation of the Granth Sahib marked the final stage in the emergence of the 'vernacular' as the language of the sacred scripture.

The Sufi institution of *Khanqah* invites comparison with the Sikh institution of *Langer*. Both provided sustenance—material and spiritual—for people who felt spiritually starved. The Suhrawardi *Khanqah* at Multan was a rich and aristocratic establishment, reflecting the wealth and political influence of that Sufi order. But Farid's *Khanqah* at Ajodhan suffered from paucity of material resources, true to the Chishti ideal of austerity and aloofness from the pomp and splendour of Authority. The management of the *Khanqah* was in charge of inmates.³¹ They had to collect wood, fetch water and wash the utensils. There was no exemption for any one; one occasion Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya was assigned the duty of cooking. The details collected from *Siyar-ul-Auliya* and other works about the daily life of the inmates of Baba Farid's *Khanqah* remind us of the services which Angad and Amar Das performed in their Gurus' houses before their own elevation to Guruship.³² The expenses of Baba Farid's *Khanqah* were met from Futuh, i.e. 'gifts and presents which people brought to his house unasked.' Then this source dried up the inmates—including the saint and his children—suffered. Yet an open kitchen was maintained and every one who happened to be there was offered a share of such food as was available. We have no record of such distress in the Sikh *Langar*, and it performed important functions such as removal of caste prejudices and consolidation of the new community. But the *Khanqah* and the *Langar* belonged to a common pattern, and the development in Sikh society of an institution unknown in Hindu society might not have been quite accidental.

Another point which demands some consideration is the system of nomination

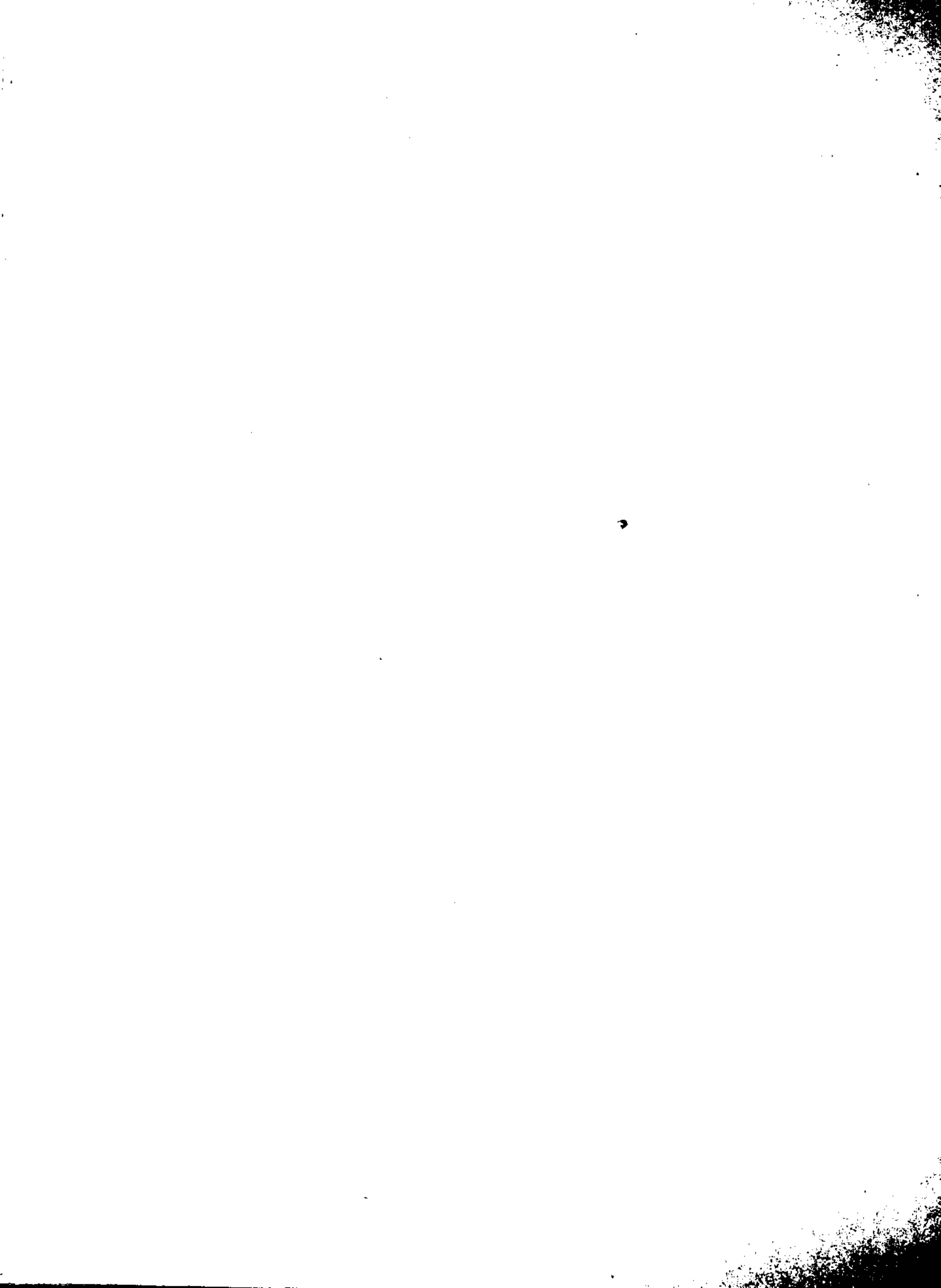
of a successor which was introduced by Guru Nanak long after it had been introduced among the Sufis. In the case of the Chishtis we have a clear line of succession : Khawaja Muin-ud-din, Khawaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki, Baba Farid, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Of course, Baba Farid had *Khalifahs* other than Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, but the latter was accepted as spiritual leader by Baba Farid's descendants as also by almost all the descendants of his disciples. However, despite Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya's prominence, a rival order (Sabiriyya) was founded by Shaikh Ala-ud-din Ali Ahmad Sabir of Piran Kaliyar.⁸³ This split was due to doctrinal differences: while the former upheld the *Jamali* (Beauteous) attributes of God, the latter emphasized His *Jalali* (majestic) attributes. The separation of the Udasis from the Sikhs may be cited as an analogy. It may be noted that the founder of Sabiriyya order was a recluse like the founder of the Udasi sect.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that the influence of Sufi ideas and practices on Sikhism, with special emphasis on the life and teachings of Baba Farid would be a fascinating study. It would broaden and deepen our understanding of medieval Indian culture which was a continuous synthesis of diverse forces released by history. It would clarify the impact of ideas on the making of the Indian mind; it would show how visionaries ignored by historical chroniclers contributed to the development of an integrated nationality drawing sustenance from many sources,

NOTES

1. *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI. P 358.
2. *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar* (Aligarh, 1955)
3. *Ibid*, PP. 30-31.
4. *Ibid*, P. 81.
5. *Asrar-ul-Auliya* and *Ibid*, PP. 118-120
6. *Asrar-ul-Auliya* and *Rahat-ul-Qulub* were 'definitely fabrications of a later late.' (*Ibid*, P. 87)
7. S.K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, P. 167.
8. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, (Bombay, 1957), P. 98.
9. Nizami, *op. cit.*, PP. 101-103. The story of Baba Farid's marriage with a daughter of Balban—whom Macauliffe replaced by Nasir-ud-din (Vol. VI PP. 373-375)—is unacceptable.
10. *The Sikh Religion*, Vol VI P. 357.
11. For instance, S.S. Kohli, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth* (New Delhi, 1961), PP. 2-3
12. Nizami *op. cit.*, PP. 121-122.
13. Macauliffe, *op. Cit.*, Vol. VI, P 358.
14. *Ibid*, P 15.
15. *A Grammar of the Sanskrit language*, quoted in S.S. Kohli *op. cit.* P 29
16. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, P. 388; Vol. I, P 92 See *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1837, P 192. Professor Nizami (*op. cit.*; P. 24) seems to take this story (which is based on Jawahar-i-Faridi) as 'full of exaggerations' place if the slok related to Farid Sani.

17. Macauliffe, *op. cit.* P. 298.
18. Ibid, P. 410.
19. Nizami, *op. cit.*; P. 42.
20. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*; P 403.
21. Ibid, P 394.
22. Idid, PP 415-416.
23. Khushwant Singh, *A Hisiory of the Sikhs*, Vol. I P 309.
24. *Foreward* to Nizami, *op. cit.*; P viii
25. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*; Vol. I, PP 84-92.
26. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, PP. 3-4.
27. Nizami, *op. cit.*; P 104, *Punjab District Gasetteers*, Vol. XVIII B, P xxix.
28. Nizami, *op. cit.*; P 106.
29. Nizami, *op. cit.*, PP 107-109, Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol VI P. 387. The question of conversion is controversial. See Rizvi, *op. cit.*, PP 13, 16, 18, 20—
30. Yusuf Hussain, *op. cit.*, P. 105.
31. Nizami, *op. cit.*, PP 46-55.
32. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol II, PP 4-12, 35.
33. Near Rookee, Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh.



SHEIKH FARID AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECLUSION

Prof. NASSERUDDIN SHAH-HOSSEINI

I start my talk about Sheikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar or Shakarganj with his following couplets :

You offer so much prayer at night, I admit,
And throughout the day you attend to the sick and suffering.
But unless your heart is pure of malice and grudge,
All your efforts are wasted in vain.

Maulana Sheikh Fariduddin Masaud entitled Shakarganj or Ganj-i-Shakar was the son of Sulaiman and one of the most illustrious sufis and mystics of the seventh/thirteenth century whose spiritual influence transformed the humanity in India and the adjoining countries of the day. Sheikh Farid was the disciple of Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki who was himself trained in spiritualism by Sheikh Muinuddin Sajzi Ajmeri, the man who is regarded truly as the fountainhead of mysticism in the subcontinent of India.

Sheikh Farid lived in an age that was full of mystic enlightenment. His great contemporary Maulana Jalaluddin Balakhi Rumi lived in Turkey and guided the people in the walk of life and righteousness.

Sheikh Farid, according to most of his biographers, was born in 584 A.H. = 1188 A.D. some biographers record the date of his birth in the year 569 A.H. = 1173 A.D. Khotwal a small town in Multan is said to be the birth-place of the Sheikh. For several years he lived in Delhi under the supervision of Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki and underwent all sort of spiritual penances to attain divine knowledge and enlightenment. But Sheikh Farid soon realised that in the midst of the multitude of Delhi he will not be able to perfect his mystic knowledge. So he took the permission of his master to migrate to Hansi. There he passed a few quiet years when his master passed away and Sheikh Farid was recalled to Delhi to take the place of the master and guide the people on the path of spiritualism. Now he was flocked by the men and women of all walks of life. Some of them were the humble ones who came there simply to quench the thirst of their soul. But others were the men of position, ministers, government officials and princes. They sought the help of the Sheikh mainly to achieve their material ends. The Sheikh found himself in a fix. He realised with a heavy heart that he could not carry out his spiritual mission in such circumstances and therefore he decided *finally* to move to Ajodhan in Punjab. Sheikh Farid passed the rest of his life in that town and died there in the month of

Muharram 680 A.H. = 1281 A.D. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya was nominated as the spiritual successor of the deceased Sheikhj.

What has been said above is a very brief life-sketch of Baba Farid. The sanctity of his mission and the deep wide influence that the Sheikh cast on his contemporaries and the following generations, demand that a very comprehensive work should be prepared about the life and teachings of the Sheikh and the scholars of India and Iran can join together to compile such an urgently required work. Incidentally most of the biographies of the saints and sufis have recorded the life of the Sheikh. And as late works a *Nuzhat al-Khawahir* of Maulana Abdul Hai bin Fakhruddin Hasani and the *Majma-al-Fusaha* and *Riyaz-al-Arifin* by Riza Quli Hidayat Khan have recorded with all reverence the life and works of Sheikh Farid. It is to be noticed that Sheikh Farid is probably the only Muslim saint who has bequeathed to posterity such a rich treasure of Punjabi poetry.

The main point that I would like to emphasize about Sheikh Farid is his philosophy of isolation, seclusion and retirement into a solitary life. If we study the life of his great contemporary Jalauddin Rumi we see that the latter was always in the thick of the people. As against him Sheikh Farid was one of the Sufis who believed that seeker of divine truth must retire into secluded life in order to achieve complete spiritual purification. Since such seclusion was impossible in the midst of the society these mystics ordered their disciples to undertake long and arduous journeys or to dwell in jungles and caves in order to concentrate their entire attention on the purification of soul. Jalaluddin Rumi on the other hand in conformity with Shams Tabrizi believed that isolation and seclusion was not essential for the perfection of the inner self. The *salik* or the seeker of truth should no doubt live in the society but must keep himself away from all material attachment and should be strictly supervised by the perfect man—the spiritual guide. Rumi holds the opinion that the seeker of truth must keep on his search for the men of God. According to him these holy men alone can deliver a man from the darkness of self and guide him to the ultimate goal of divinity :

Go and seek the man of God,
Because then alone you shall receive the favour of God.
Those who concentrate on seclusion.
Have actually learnt it from the Beloved.
One should seek seclusion from others and not from the Beloved,
The fur-coat is meant for winter and not for autumn.
When a wise man is associated with another wiseman,
The light of wisdom becomes abundant and the goal so clear.

The above verses have been quoted from the Part II of the Mathnawi. Rumi repeats the same point in Part IV and some other places.

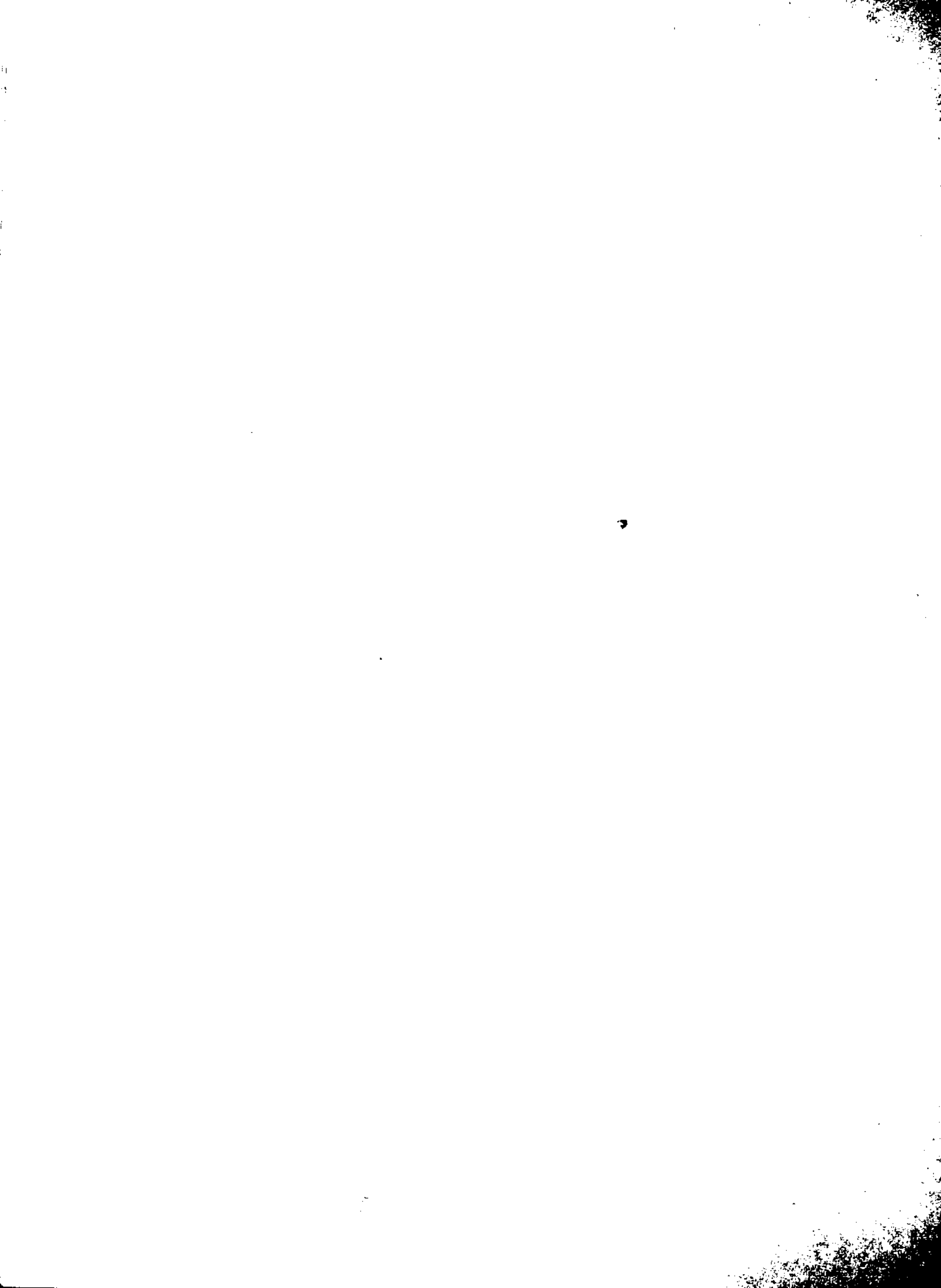
Each group of the sufis favouring seclusion or not, have come forward with their own arguments. Mohammad Ghazzali in his great work *Ihya-ul-Ulum* has made an elaborate discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of seclusion in mysticism. Those interested are referred to pp. 221 and 243 of Part II of his work. Other mystical works dealing with the subject are *Awarif-ul-Ma'arif* of Suhrawardi and *Misbah-ul-Hidayah* and such other works. It is rather difficult of this writer

to make a judgement in this critical point in sufism. It is evident that the advocates of each school have their own ground to stand on, and both isolation from the society and association with it have their own merits and demerits considering the special circumstances in which the seeker of truth is placed.

Every human being is endowed with a different nature. When he sets on the path of divine attainment his capacity for receiving the heavenly knowledge is not always the same. For many seekers of truth it becomes obligatory to retire into a solitary life in order to achieve perfection. Many great Sufis have dedicated a considerable part of their life to seclusion performing the prescribed perances. The prophet of Islam, before he received the revelation used to retire into the *Hira* cave and pass there hours and hours in concentration and contemplations. However in some cases association and society plays a very vital role in shaping a man to perfection. It may be said that these two aspects of sufism react differently to different people. While seclusion whets the appetite of some seekers for divine nourishment, in certain other cases it dampens the urge for truth. It is reported from Junaid Baghdadi that if the seeker lives amongst ignorant people who are stranger to basic ethics and morals, he must retire seclusion in order to save his faith and to keep his soul in tranquility. Another Sufi named Abu Yaqub Susi, a contemporary of Junaid, is reported to have said :

“Seclusion and isolation is meant for a particular class of the sufis who are endowed with the power of soul and will, and the perfection of self, and who receive obligation from no body. But for us who are week and poor, association and mixing with the people is more advisable.”

It has been a tradition among the sufis to divide the seekers of truth into three classes. The first class consisted of the fresh recruits who had recently entered the fold of the seekers of truth. The second class was comprised of those.



SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF INDIAN SUFISM

DR S. ALAM KHUNDMIRI

The aim of this paper is to make a brief study of the distinctive features of Indian Sufism. The application of the adjective 'Indian' does not mean that the international and the universal aspects of Sufism which, according to Massignon, are its distinctive contribution to Islam are being ignored. The universal character of the Sufi movement does not lie in its supposedly uniform teachings, but in the manner in which these universal teachings were presented to the different races in their languages and through the media of their cultures, and practised in a way that these new races and people were drawn towards them. As Schuon has pointed out, there exists a certain connection between the Revelation and the ethnic genius which is its vehicle.¹ If the term 'revelation' is not used in its more formal sense, the authentic Sufi experience also deserves to be called revelation; rather it is the constant revelation which mankind gets from God. Such an experience has no value if Reality does not reveal itself through it, and in case it does not reveal itself the experience is no more than an illusion. Perhaps the authenticity of the experience can be judged by its effects on humanity to which the true Sufi addresses himself. To quote Massignon, "... the social importance of Islamic mysticism comes from its supposed remedial value.....the value and effectiveness of their rule of life as a cure for the ills of society—the lasting force of Islamic mysticism lay in the superhuman desire of sacrifice for one's fellows, in the transcendent ecstasy of the martyr, expressed by Hallaj, "Forgive them, but do not forgive me."² Perhaps Hallaj was a better Mumin than his critics in his act of forgiveness, as the Quran says : "Those who spend (freely)

Whether in prosperity,

Or in adversity;

Who restrain anger;

And pardon (all) men;

Fear God loves those who do good; (S. III, 134).³

It is precisely this supreme sacrifice of the Sufi which redeems the rigorous legalistic and formal aspect of Islam as it has been practised by the 'People of the world' (*Ahl-al-Zahir*) among the believers. Islam without its Sufism is a legal code, theory of the state, and a moral discipline, matters for which only those souls who have not attained at spiritual maturity depend on divine guidance. The fact that the legal and the political doctrines and practice of Islam, i.e. Islam as an 'ideology',

broke done under the stresses and strains of history does not need an extensive historical research. Even the moral principles enunciated in the Quran and practised by the Prophet had lost their relevance in the realm of politics and law, and their essence was preserved only by the Sufis in their theory and practice.⁴ The schools of law (*Fiqh*) had a remarkable success in obliterating the distinction between crime and sin. Islam had maintained delicate balance between the demands of the worldly life and the far more essential needs of the Spirit by belittling the value of the former in the eyes of the believer, but unfortunately the *fuqaha* got so much absorbed in the secular sphere that the mystically inclined theologian and moralist al-Ghazali had to warn, "In what do discussions on divorce and buying and selling prepare the believer for the beyond?"⁵ It is not an accident of history that the growth of Sufism and the consolidation of the legal schools were running parallel; this phenomenon does not represent the parallel growth of two independent systems but the actualisation of two opposite tendencies inherent in Islam itself. It was an unfortunate event of Islamic history that only the latter was called a heresy and the former assumed the title of orthodoxy. It is however, a fact that the trans-historical vision of the Prophet, a recurrent theme of the Quran, was being preserved by the so-called heresy. This trans-historical vision was being subjected to the demands of the contingent life which had lost its contact with the vision. It is not intended to suggest that the Shariah or the law does not form part of the Islamic structure; on the contrary, it gives to Islam its distinctive historical shape. But what had been forgotten by the post-prophetic generation of Muslims was of immense value to spiritual life, that Shariah is intended to provide an 'environment' to the religious life and could not be considered the ultimate end of spirituality. It is one of the illusions of some of the modernist movements in Islam that the ultimate aim of Islam is to establish the sovereignty of God in political terms. If history is a guide, sooner or later the Islamic world might witness a tension between the outward and the inward spirit of religion. The early age of the Sufi movement represents this tension in its most intense form, a tension which is unparalleled in the history of world religions on this scale and in this magnitude. The martyrdom of al-Hallaj created a traumatic effect on the Islamic world. It gave an occasion to orthodoxy to realize that the Sufi experience fulfils the deeper needs of religious life and that the might of the temporal authority is not equal to the intensity and the depth of the Sufi experience. It also provided an introspective occasion to the Sufi to revise his attitude towards the Shariah because it represents 'space' for his spiritual experience. Sufism and Shariah can also be viewed not as mutually opposite extremes, but as two polar entities representing Eternity and Time.⁶ Eternity is a blank if it does not establish contact with Time and the latter becomes a structureless flux, and hence a terrifying principle for spirit, if it loses touch with Eternity. This relationship between Tasawwuf as Eternity and Shariah as historical Time is expressed in the esoteric principle that "Sainthood is superior to and has priority over prophecy" (*Al-Vilayatu Afzalu minal-Nabuwwa*). The controversy regarding this doctrine in the Islamic world was the result of a confusion, which was itself a product of history, that the Prophet himself had a saintly aspect, expressed in the famous Hadith "I have a time with God" (*Li ma' Allah-is*

Waqtun). The Prophet in his world-oriented life when he was grappling with history was a legislator, 'Shāri', but he had his constant gaze at the Absolute, the source of Revelation. It is only in the latest historical religion, Sikhism, that the Saint, Guru Nanak, has chronological and spiritual priority over its law-giver or 'Shari', the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The prophetic performance of Guru Gobind Singh proves our point that authentic spiritual experience needs an outward environment and 'space' of its own to give it a historic uniqueness and to make it a distinct moment of human history. Spirituality loses itself in the distinctionless ocean of eternity if it does not strive to create for itself a distinct environment or space of its own. Whether Sikhism is a syncretic religion is an irrelevant issue; it could only be a pastime of historical researchers. The more important point is that spirituality to become a force in history does not merely need a Way, *Tariqat* but also a way of life, *Shariah*.

The distinctive character of Indian Sufism lies in its success in resolving the tension between the polar realities of the inward mystic experience, or eternity, and the Shariah or history. Indian Sufism is heir to the martyrdom of al-Hallaj, the sober spirituality of al-Junaid, the ecstatic vision of Bayazid, the orthodoxy-oriented mystical life of al-Ghazali, the Illuminationistic gnosis of the Ishraqiun, the Theophanist monism of Ibn Arabi, and the spiritual flights of Vedantic monism. The influence of Islam on the Bhakti movement has been successfully, though with some exaggeration, traced by the authors on Indian medieval religious life but the role of the Vedantic thought, in particular, and the Indian spirituality, in general, has not been properly examined. It is not a question of tracing the origin of a few terms, like Fana or Wasl, it involves a deeper problem.

Indian spirituality was to become the real, and in some cases a challenging, environment for the Indian Sufi, as the Indian people were his real addressees, Shariah, or the legal and the ethical discipline, which was described earlier as the environment of Sufism, had become for Indian sufis their cultural or historical *a priori*, their necessary perspective, and, in a higher sense, their limiting or conditioning factor. By the time Sufism had reached India it had practically resolved the conflict between the transcendental and the immanentist tendencies, which are not two mutually opposite tendencies, but two necessary moments of religious experience⁸, in a more or less decisive manner in the pantheistic direction, which was never a total pantheism. It was of a distinctive character, expressed in the Theophanist theosophical terminology of Ibn Arabi and the Ishraqiyya metaphor of light⁹. Further development of this pantheistic attitude was controlled and inhibited by the limiting factor of the Shariah, and it was precisely in this sense that Shariah served as a limiting factor for Indian Sufism. A corollary to this tension is the conflict between the external rituals, the system of observances, and the inward spirit, sincerity (*Ikhlas*) or the demands of *Haqiqat*. The writings and the utterances of the early sufis exhibit a heightened level of tension. As it has been pointed out earlier, this tension was resolved by incorporating Shariah in the scheme of Sufism itself.¹⁰ In this regard a useful comparison can be made between the rebellious attitude of the earlier Sufis, for instance the poetry of Abu Said Ibn Abil Khayr, towards the laws of Shariah and the sober attitude of indifference or

regard due to Shariah by the Indian Sufis. They were more interested in assigning to it a proper place rather than rejecting it or ridiculing the *Fuqaha*. It had become a settled fact with them that Shariah is a way to *Ma'rifa* and not an end in itself. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti put it thus : "By attaining perfection in the observance of Shariah through pious conduct, one reaches the stage of *Tariqat* and onward he passes to *Ma'rifa* and lastly to *Haqiqat*.¹¹ "There developed unanimity among all the leading Salasil on this point.¹² Earlier a doctrine had evolved among the Sufis that knowledge of three kinds : Knowledge from God, Knowledge with God, and Knowledge of God; the first being Shariah, the second the knowledge of 'stations' or *Tariqa*, the third being *Marifa* or gnosis. In this scheme knowledge of law is Islam, knowledge of stations is Iman, and knowledge proper or *Ma'rifa* is Ihsan. This attitude of reverence for the law on the part of the Indian Sufis did not, however, result in the change of heart of the legalists, *Fuqaha*. The *Fuqaha* continued to call the Sufis heretics and their system heresy. Two important reasons for this continued hostility may be mentioned here; one was psychological and the other theological or metaphysical. Tasawwuf like Shariah had developed its own distinct ethos, the main attributes of which were: reverence for the people of other faiths an attitude of humility towards the creatures of God (*Khalq*), cultivation of an attitude of detachment from the world and worldly goods, belief that the source of true knowledge of Reality is direct personal experience (*Nazar*) and consequently an attitude of irrelevance to the legal hair-splitting of the *Fuqaha*. On account of the historical situation in India, i.e. India being a country inhabited by the people of another faith, this ethos could flourish here better than in the countries of the origin of Tasawwuf. In those countries the spiritual position of the people of other faiths was largely an academic and a theoretical question. The *Fuqaha* on account of their association with the ruling class had made Islam the ideology of this class, and hence the importance of the legal, and the political categories of Islam. The Sufis seldom used the term *Kafir* for the people of other faiths and when they employed this term it was quite often in a different connotation. Khwaja Bande Nawaz defines Iman as love of God.¹³ Sheikh Farid Shakar-Gunj through his poetry which is full of pathos and a tragic sense of life teaches his audience that salvation depends on personal effort and the grace of God and not on belonging to a certain faith.¹⁴ This stress on personal responsibility was contrary to the belief of the scholastic legalist, the '*faqih*' one of his job being the determination of 'belief' (*Iman*) and unbelief (*Kufr*) This forgotten lesson of personal responsibility is still relevant in a society which is plural and still wants to remain religious. The other element of the Sufi ethos, the preference for 'sight' (*Nazar*) over speculation (*Khabar*) came into direct clash with the worldoutlook of the *Ulama* and the *Fuqaha*, who thought that communal solidarity, so important for a ruling elite, could only be made possible through the transmission of uniform knowledge made available at the Madrssa. *Ijma* or consensus of the learned (*Ulama*) could not have any relevance in the *Khanqah* (monastery) of the Sufi, where everyone is anxious to have the sight or the direct experience of Reality. This point makes it clear that the Sufi's reconciliation with Shariah was only derived from his 'sincerity' (*Ikhlas*) and was

not intended to get any concession from the ruling elite.

The metaphysical reason for the continued hostility of the *Ulama* and the *Fuqaha* consisted in the general Sufi belief that 'vision', or direct experience of Reality, is possible and even desirable in this world and during lifetime. The *Fuqaha* derived their argument against the possibility of the direct vision of God from the Quranic verse that "eyes cannot perceive Him (God)", and the Sufis argued on the basis of the Quranic verse:

"So let him, who hopes for the encounter with his Lord, work righteousness, and not associate with his Lord's service any one." (18/110),¹⁵ which means that it is not impossible to have His vision. The *Fuqaha* interpreted this verse either in a metaphorical sense or understood it as a possibility on the Day of Judgement. The Sufi's longing for the vision created a barrier between him and the *Faqih*, as the latter considered it a compromise with the transcendence of God. Islamic theology had developed an uncompromising attitude to this problem of transcendence. This longing for the vision very soon developed into the desire for a union with God, an idea which could never be appreciated by the theologian. Union is the central point of all the Chishti saints, rather a distinctive feature of this order. The great Chishti saint, Khwaja Bande Nawaz, in one of his writings making a reference to one of the theologians who denied the possibility of vision in this world, either real or symbolic, says that he has seen people of God who did not live without. His Vision even for for a moment. One of the reasons for this hostility of the *Ulama* to this doctrine of Union might be the ideological character of Islam. As Islam had reached the stage of decadence, at least in a political sense, in the Middle East, and as the political power was shifting towards Turkey, as the seat of the Ottoman Empire and towards India, it was in these places that the ideological character of Islam was becoming more conspicuous. It is one of the characteristics of ideology that it tends to be exclusive and does not tolerate dissent. The *Ulama* had accepted the institution of the Sultan and the doctrine of his absolute power with this qualification that their word would be final in matters of dogma. This division of powers was one of the essential features of the medieval Islamic ideology. The Sufi, with his doctrine of the 'union' and with his liberal ethos, could not be compatible with this ideological scheme.

The third tension which Indian Sufism had resolved was between asceticism and devotion, one of the features of the early Sufism. The ascetic spirit manifested itself not only in the other worldly spirit of the Sufi, but also in his indifference to the other world with its heaven and hell (*Uqba*). Renunciation of the world (*tark-e-Dunya*) and renuciation of the other world (*Uqba*) had become constant themes of the Sufi literature since its beginning.¹⁶ The theme of devotion, as against asceticism, was taken up by the 'emanationist's Sufi poets like Rumi and Hafiz. For the Sufi poet it was the excess of love and devotion which made him indifferent to the world and even the hereafter. Both these themes are found among the Indian Sufis, not as two different themes but in a manner which makes them complementary. It was a result of this reconciliation that the Indian Sufi,

while renouncing the world and living a life of detachment did not become indifferent to his fellow human beings, and his passionate love for God did not make him feel alienated from the creation of God. The greatest sorrow for him was man's alienation from God and he called on humanity to return to its source of being. In this regard he made a difference between those who had deliberately chosen a style of life which enhances their distance from God and those who were the victims of oppression and tyranny of the former. For the first category he had nothing but indifference while for the second category of human beings he had abundant love and compassion. His love for God included in its scheme love and charity for mankind. It was in this sense that he had transcended the principle of asceticism. This humanistic sentiment of the Indian Sufi was not the abstract humanism of the modern type which rejects the transcendental principle altogether, but the source of this sentiment was a deep and passionate love of God, the source of all being. A study of the writings of the earlier Sufis creates an impression that the Sufi's highest concern was his own salvation and he had lost all hope in the rest of the mankind, and it was precisely in this sense that the earlier Sufism had a strong tendency towards asceticism. The case of the Indian Sufi, and particularly the Chishti Shiyukh, was different. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti advised his disciple in the following manner :

“A sin committed does not harm an individual as much as looking down with contempt upon one's own fellow beings.”

“Of all the worships, the worship that pleases the Almighty God most is the grant of relief to the humble and the oppressed..”

“The best way of evading the fire of hell lies in feeding the hungry, providing water to the thirsty, removing the wants of the needy and befriending the miserable.”

There are no rituals nor ceremonies to be performed in Sufism, nor are there academic dissertations which may be easily acquired by reading, but according to men who are lovers of God and the Sheikhs of *Tariqat*, Sufism means scrupulously maintained moral behaviour which one must observe towards all the creatures of God.”¹⁷

In the poetic work of Sheikh Farid, preserved in the *Adi Granth*, the themes of the renunciation of the world and the insignificance of the worldly life are dominant and yet one finds the sentiment of devotion of God so strong that the remedial concern for the misery of man becomes ultimately prominent. Constant remembrance of death in his poetry highlights the tragic sense of life, while love for God creates an element of hope so far as the ultimate destiny of man is concerned. The former represents the theme of renunciation and the latter of love. This renunciation is not an abstract and empty one; it is meant to remind the seeker that involvement in the world along with the forgetfulness of God leads to the stage of fallenness, where man loses his concern for his own ultimate destiny. But what was more important for the Sufi Sheikh was the style of life rather than philosophizing about life and death. *Ikhlas* or sincerity being their cardinal principle, a synthesis of these two elements, renunciation and devotion, had become their mission. Translated into an institution, this synthesis expressed itself in their

Khanqah (monastery), in which withdrawal from the world (*u'zlat anil khalq*), the ascetic principle, and the companionship of the truthful and the sincere, the principle of association with humanity (*suhbat-e-sadiquin*), were both practised for the ultimate vision, the ideal of Divine Love.¹³ Love had been accepted as a higher ideal even by the theologian but the important point to be remembered is that absolute love for God could not be compatible with extraneous factors, like desire for paradise and fear of hell, and also with narrowing of the heart and mind to the extent that people of other faiths are excluded from the scheme of salvation. To this extent the position of the orthodox theologian was untenable, if not logically at least morally, it does not mean that no distinction can be made between belief and unbelief, but it does mean that these terms are not identified with an acceptance of a mere intellectual system, or an organisation of rituals. They must be referred to a belief in a higher order of reality, to which man has to reach.¹⁹ The greatest contribution of Indian Sufism, so far as its glorious period is concerned which can be identified till the emergence of the counter-Sufi movement—that of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi—lies in this fact that they practiced *Iman* for the sake of God and showed the highest concern for the moral and spiritual uplift of man. It is true that Sufism as an institution continued to exist for a longer time and, in a sense still continues to exist, but it ceased to exist as a moral force the moment its ideals were identified with the ideals of the decadent Islamic theocracy in India. The greatest disservice was done to the Sufi movement by the theological ideology of Sirhindi. Indian Sufism is undoubtedly a glorious chapter of Indian Islam, but still it is a chapter, and that too which is closed.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

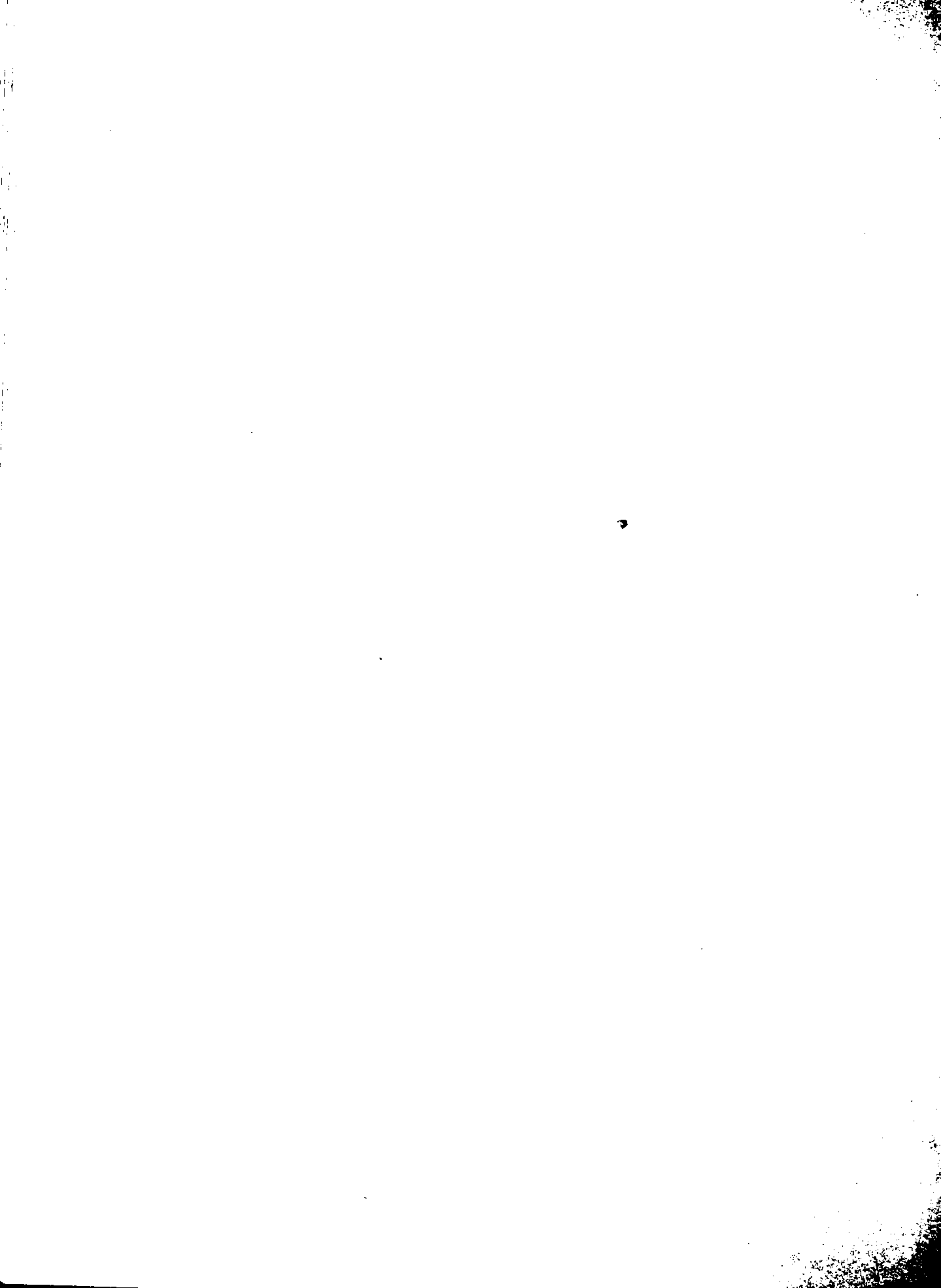
1. Frithjof Schuen: *Dimensions of Islam*, p. 36 : London, George Allen and Unwin 1969.
2. Quoted, *The Sufi Path of Love*, Margaret Smith, p. 20 : Luzac & Co., London, 1959.
3. Translation of the Holy Quran : Abdullah Yusuf Ali.
4. The fact that ethics as a discipline was introduced into the Islamic world by gnostic Hukama, Ah-al-Batin (esoterics), and the mystically inclined thinkers, e.g. al-Farabi, Ibn Maskuihwa, al-Ghazali, Sa'di, and Dawwani, proves our point.
5. It is not a strange phenomenon, it is rather a consequence, that those modernist movements and leaders of opinion in Islam, particularly in the Indian sub-continent, who preach the doctrine of the unity of religion and politics and attribute it to Islam are at the same time bitter critics of Tasawwuf, e.g., Maulana Abul A'la Maududi, Ghulam Ahmad Praviz, in Pakistan and Jamaat-i-Islami writers in India.
6. The famous Chishti Saint, Khwaja Bande Nawaz writes, quoting Qushayri, "Shariat is that which permits abrogation while Haqiqat is that which does not permit abrogation. Commenting upon it Khwaja Sahib writes : 'It is true that abrogation is not possible in Haqiqat, it is eternal, unchanging and

timeless". Commentary on *Risala-i-Qushayria*; Persian publishing Gulbarga. p.362.

Fa al-shariato ma yajuzo alaihe al naskho wa al-haqiqato ma la yajuzo alaihi naskho. Wa haqiqat anast ki naskh barai ou rava naist. Wa ou azali wa abadi wa daimast wa bayak sifat ast. La yataghiyyaro wa la yatahawwalo.

7. As explained by its most authentic spokesman, Ibn-i-Arabi, this doctrine only means that the saintly aspect of Prophet Muhammad has priority and is supreme to his own prophetic aspect. It is not a mere semantic discussion, however, as it involves a complete change of perspective in devotion to Muhammad.
8. This paradoxical situation is also to be found in the mystico-religious vision of the Sikh Gurus, particularly in the utterances of Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun Dev. It proves a point that this tension is unavoidable whenever the Godhead is taken seriously.
9. Among the medieval Indian writers on Sufism, Khwaja Bande Nawaz wrote a commentary on Ibn Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam* and he generally approves Ibn Arabi's position. Bande Nawaz was a near contemporary of the Persian mystic poet Jami, who influenced the later Indian Sufis. In his *Lawaih* he employs the theosophical terminology of Ibn Arabi freely. The following verse of Jami reminds one of Ibn-Arabi's attitude of acceptance of the perceptible reality is belonging to the order of Being :
The Sophist is devoid of reason
who says that the world is mere dream, a passing phase,
Indeed the world is an image, but
it manifests the Reality which is inseparable from it.
Sofistai ke az khirad be khaibar ast; Goyed aalam khiale andar guzar ast.
Are aalam hama khial ast wale-; piawasta daru haqiqate jalwagar ast.
10. Ghazali had completed the reconciliation which became the official attitude of the later Tasawwuf. In Ali Hujwiri's *Kashf ul-Mahjub* we do not find any trace of such tension. Curiously, Hallaj's ecstatic monism and Ghazali's reverence for Shariah became complementary attitudes. It was a near miracle that the Sufi, in spite of these two opposite principles, did not suffer from a 'bad conscience'.
11. Quoted : *The Holy Biography of Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti*; Ajmer, by Mirza Wahidullah Beg. p. 113.
12. Hujwiri categorically estates : "Ma'rifa is unsound without acceptance of the Law and the Law is not practiced rightly unless the 'stations' are manifested."
Kashf al-Mahjub : tr. Nicholson, p. 16.
—Khwaja Bande Nawaz writes in his *Adabul Muridin* (p. 24) The Murid ought to believe that Haqiqat and Tariqat are not opposed to Shariah.
Murid ba tahqiq aqida darad ke Tariqat khilaf wa zidde shariat na danad. In the same treatise he warns the Murid that in case the Pir asks him to act against the Shariah, the Murid must leave the Pir in an amicable manner.
13. *Adabul Muridin* p. 32.
Har kira ke ishq nest Iman nest—Muhabbat be roit wa marifat wajud nadarad.

14. **Baba Sheikh Farid : *His life and Teachings*, Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala.**
15. **Holy Quran. Translation Abdullah Yusu Ali. Also Quranic Verse : 'Beatitude from God is greater than Paradise' I. 72.**
16. **Students of the Sufi literature are familiar with the famous story of the only woman mystic of Islam, Rabia, who carried a glass of water in one hand and a burning torch in the other to destroy heaven and hell/both. Ibrahim Bin Adham, another ascetic mystic of the early age, is reported to have said that if man wants to be friend God and he His friend, he must renounce the world and the hereafter, should not feel inclined towards them, empty his heart of them and turn his fate to God. (Quoted Massignon : *Recueil de Textes Inedits concernant L'Histoire de la Mystique* : 1929 p. 22)**
In kunta tuhibbo an takunallah waliyan wa howa laka muhibban fadaa al dunia wal akhria wa la targhabanna fhima wa farragh nafsaka anhuma wa aqbil bawajhika Allah.
Bayazid is reported to have said : Heaven is the prison-house of the Arif as the world is the prison-house for Mumin : al-Jannato sijnul aarifina kama inna dunia sijan Momanin. Junaid says : We have not derived Tasawwuf from hearsay, but from hunger, renunciation of the world, by the act of detachment from the objects of love, by cutting ourselves off from our friends, and by being indifferent to knowledge and ignorance :
Ma akhazna-at-Ta Sawwf anil qila wa qala lakin anil jue wa tarkiddunia wa qata il malufate wal mustahsinate wal khuriy minal autane wa qatal khallane wa tark ma ilmojihl.
17. **Op. Cit., p. 15.**
18. **This synthesis is also found in an institutional form in the Sikh religion. It is noteworthy that the movement initiated by Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur, a near contemporary of Guru Nanak, institutionalised the Daira (Circle). Syed Muhammad, who claimed to be the promised Mehdi, made it obligatory upon all to seek the vision of God (to see Him with the 'eyes of the head'), and equated this 'seeking' with *Iman*. According to him, this 'seeking of the vision' is obligatory on every man and woman, it is the mark of *Iman*. The highest stage of *Iman*, according to him, is 'becoming La ilah', whereas the lower stage is tasting the Kalima, the lowest is verbal utterance.**
Talabe didar-i-khuda, La Ilah guftan, la Ilah chashidan, la Ilah shuddn.
He regards it obligatory upon every seeker to withdraw from the world, to seek the company of the 'true', to have complete trust in God, and to migrate from his place of birth without settling down at one place. Daira was meant to be an institution where the entire life style conforms to these ideals. What is important in this movement, for the purpose of the present discussion, is that Syed Muhammad changed the entire semantics of Islam. *Iman* and *Kufr* do not remain any more theological terms, they assume existential status.
19. **It will be interesting to quote Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur who declared that "Faith is the Being of God" *Iman Zate Khuda ast*. See *Insaf Nama* : Collection of his Sayings; Persian, Hyderabad, 1947.**



SHEIKH FARID—HIS RELEVANCE TO THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

AVTAR SINGH

Sheikh Farid is a Muslim *Darvesh* or saint of the twelfth century who lived at Ajodhan, a place near the city of Multan in the Punjab. He is separated by nearly three hundred years from Guru Nanak, the first founder of the Sikh tradition. He has also preceded by about four centuries and a quarter the editing of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sacred Book of Sikhs, which was proclaimed to be the last and perennial Guru or preceptor by the Sikhs. The very inclusion and the presence of the hymns of a Muslim saint, such as Sheikh Farid, in such a Sacred Book, is a matter of great curiosity and interest for the students of Comparative Religion. This scripture for the Sikhs provides the physical contact with the Sacred and is the fountainhead of all living spirituality in the past and the present-day Sikh religious experience. For them its very presence converts the profane and the secular into the sacred and spiritual. The humns of the Gurus in the *Guru Granth Sahib* are regarded as the revelation and communication of the Lord as well as devotional expressions directed towards Him. This enigmatic and unique phenomenon relating to the presence of the Sheikh's hymns in the *Granth Sahib* makes the great Sheikh very relevant in terms of the study of Comparative Religion. We may, however, add that such a fruitful area of research, along with possible pragmatic application of the knowledge based thereon, has not as yet received the attention of the students of the discipline of Comparative Religion. As it ought to, we will endeavour to do this here and explicate materials that are of interest from the prespective of Comparative Religion. We will attempt to suggest some basic statements initially which may also be analysed in terms of Comparative Religion.

First, it should be emphasised that Sheikh Farid was a good model of authentic Muslim piety and an ardent follower of the Islamic religious tradition. In his Slokas in the *Guru Granth Sahib* we find the Sheikh stressing the duty to repeat the five prayers (*namaz*), perform *wazu* before prayer and to go to the mosque (*maseet* in Punjabi). He uses the harsh word 'dog' for those who do not perform the *namaz* and bow their head before God.¹ This may be seen to be in line with the Sufi tradition after Al-Ghazali who is credited to have made Sufism acceptable to the orthodox circles who were formerly unfriendly to mysticism in Islam. About the inclusion of the hymns of Sheikh Farid in the Sacred Book of

1. Sheikh Farid, Slokas 70 and 71.

the Sikhs, various traditions in Sikhism point out that Guru Nanak, visited Pak Pattan (Ajodhan) and met Sheikh Ibrahim, a successor to Sheikh Farid's spiritual throne and tradition. The Guru expressed the desire to hear the Kalām, (utterances or hymns), of Sheikh Farid. He appears to have noted down the *Kalām* of the Sheikh. Guru Nanak is also known to have been writing down his own hymns as and when he verbalised them. The hymns of Sheikh Farid together with the *bani* (syings or utterances) of Guru Nanak was later passed on to the fifth Guru. An interesting event took place in connection with the Slokas of the Sheikh. The Gurus not only preserved the Slokas in the form made available to them but also added some verses on those themes in their own names. These additions numbering eighteen out of a total of one hundred and thirty Slokas—and not interpolation—have been variously described as clarifications of the intended meanings or correctives against any possible misunderstanding of the desired meanings. The addition of the word, 'na' meaning *no* and carrying the sense of "don't" in some of the parallel Slokas written by the Gurus, on a superficial reading, may give the impression that the Gurus are contradicting the Sheikh. One may, however, argue against such a view with a fair degree of cogency that the very fact the Slokas of the Sheikh have been collected by the first Guru and handed down by the succeeding Gurus to the fifth Guru—the one who compiled and edited the first recension of the Sacred Book—is indicative of their deep regard for this, Muslim Saint. They would not have sought to preserve and communicate these to others if they were considered by them to be contradictory to their own spiritual teaching and social ideals. It is, however, possible that the Gurus sought to give new meanings to the ideal and practice of self-surrender, emphasised by Sheikh Farid in these slokas, for the benefit of their own followers and readers.

There is one interesting aspect in terms of understanding other religious traditions that emerges in the light of the visit of Guru Nanak to the spiritual seat of Sheikh Farid's tradition. It brings to our attention the great need for personal encounter and some kind of direct experience in understanding another man's tradition. It is only such experience and a related dialogue which could shed light on the relation between two religious traditions which would essentially be built on the relation between religious men belonging to two different traditions. The experience of Guru Nanak and the subsequent Gurus shows that some differences between religious traditions—only partial and perhaps not vital could easily be appropriated in the context of another tradition. What is needed therefore, is a personal encounter with men of other religions—which could initiate the process of understandings and appropriation. A Professor of Comparative Religion has rightly lamented that "persons of different faiths either have not talked together at all, or have talked not with each other so much as past each other."¹ The very fact of the inclusion of the Sheikh's Slokas in the

1. Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, "Some Similarities and Differences Between Christianity and Islam ; And Essay in Comparative Religion, *The World of Islam*" (Studies in Honour of Philip K. Hitti, Edited by J. Kritzech and R.B. Winder (London : Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1960), P. 48.

Guru Granth Sahib, shows, therefore, that the two traditions, manifestly different, are yet comparable and compatible.

Before we proceed further we may add another thing which will undoubtedly be of very great assistance in understanding the comparability of the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu religious concepts. There are three very crucial texts which can be enormously helpful in this context. Two of these, namely Siddha Gost¹ and the hymns and Slokas of Sheikh Farid² are included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The third is an independent composition addressed by Guru Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb, in the form of an epistle in Persian poetry.³ Its twelve opening couplets devoted to the praise of God are of great comparative value. Its author, Guru Gobind Singh, was familiar with the Slokas of Sheikh Farid as part of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and must have studied the Islamic religion fairly well, as is indicated by these twelve couplets. It, therefore, can become an interesting study for those looking for an authentic use of comparable religious concepts. The translations of this text from Persian language into Punjabi, and commentaries thereon, will be a matter of added interest in this field. The ease with which they may render *Shariat prasat* into *dharam rakhik* can be highly informative and suggestive.

We may now direct our attention to another important point in the study of Comparative Religion. This comes to our notice when we read the hymns and Slokas of Sheikh Farid as they are in the Sacred Book of the Sikhs. In almost the very first stanza we come across a reference to *Pul Sirat* by Sheikh Farid.⁴ And in this context he seems to refer to the difficulties which the soul may have to face while crossing this bridge. He mentions the deafening noise of the condemned and seeks to use this as a deterrent to those who have strayed away from the path of God or those who have slackened their pace. We are aware that the belief in such a bridge is Zoroastrian in origin in its known and systematised form. It is an integral part of its eschatological doctrine. It has often been suggested and agreed upon by many scholars that in Judaism it came to replace its earlier doctrine regarding events which take place after the death of a person. Its reflection in Christianity and its very significant adoption in Islam are known and accepted facts of the History of Religions. In Islam it becomes an important element in its after-life belief. The Zoroastrian Chinvet bridge and the Islamic *Pul Sirat* portray the same eschatological acceptance. The occurrence of this concept in the Slokas of Sheikh Farid, which have found a respectful acceptance in the Supreme Scripture of the Sikhs, raises some interesting questions. It is possible that all the adherents or followers of Sikhism might not have understood the meaning of this word. And, therefore, the commentators and the people discoursing on the Scripture must have been required to explain the origin and meaning of this concept. Two important questions may arise here. First, did this signify that belief in *Pul Sirat* either became

1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, Pp 938-946.

2. *Ibid.*, P. 588, 794 and 1377 to 1384.

3. Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafarnama*.

4. Sheikh Farid, Sloka, 1

or was understood to be a part of the after-life belief of the Sikhs? The second question may be, how did the listeners take it? We will attempt to examine the first question only. It is known to the students of Sikhism that any influence which the concept of *Pul-Sirat* may have in this regard is only symbolic. It signifies the great difficulties on the path of realization. It picturizes the torments and doom of the wicked and the unbelievers. The hazards on the way are linked to the sharp breadth of a hair and the edge of a dagger. But a belief in this matter does not appear to go beyond this point. We may now suggest a hypothesis in the light of this knowledge. It is possible, we may say, that a central concept of any one creed may find a place of respect and acceptance in another man's scripture. But the mere existence of such a concept in two different religions need not be a sufficient ground for suggesting any parallelism or syncretism. This may, therefore, serve as a caution against hasty conclusions. All theories concerning continuity or discontinuity among religious concepts and precepts require a comprehensive and contextual study of the doctrinal structure as well as the entire tradition. On the other hand, attempts to view the origin of religion or any one particular religion as a phenomenon in a vacuum and therefore unique and discontinuous may not also bear a scholarly scrutiny. The preference for such kind of "separation" seems to be largely due to subjective and historical factors and as such is not "objective" enough.

Another factor that strikes us here is that the prophets and founders of religions exhibit little inhibition in learning from other religions, and even in accepting transplanting the truth that they may find in other religions and towards cross-fertilization of ideas. Such catholicism and irresistible urge for truth and devotion, regardless of the fact of its association or being a part of another religion, tends however, to diminish after the death of the prophet or prophets in question. The urge to consolidate may sometimes overcome the urge for universal love, truth and good through fruitful encounter with others—which may also signify openness. Now all attempts to understand and appreciate truths outside one's faith-by-birth may be rejected in the name of 'purity of religion'. Then possibly another Man of God should come in order to bring back the spirit of the prophets after which, however, there may be a lapse into stagnancy and conservatism.

At an earlier stage in this paper we had occasion to mention that the Slokas of Sheikh Farid were collected by Guru Nanak and came to be passed on to Guru Arjan, the fifth among the ten founding Gurus of Sikhism. Guru Arjan consolidated all the spiritual experiences—or may we say, inspirations and revelations—of the preceding Gurus including those of his own in the *Book*. He also included in this *Book* the devotional hymns of the Saints from different parts of India including the Slokas of Sheikh Farid. This *Book* also includes some poetical expressions of great reverence for the spiritual mission, inspiration and revelation 'of' and 'to' the Gurus themselves. It was then installed as the 'Supreme Scripture' or the 'Sacred Book' and became the object of great reverence and devotion. It also came to be known as 'The Word' or 'the Revelation'. The tenth Guru, also included the hymns of the Ninth Guru in the Sacred Book finally and formally installed the Sacred Book and the last Guru, It thus assumed the final form of the scripture which

enshrined the guidance and light for those seeking the revelation or Word of God. It came to be called the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This made the Sikhs Ahl-i-Kitab, the People of the Book. The inclusion of the devotional or spiritual guidance given by Sheikh Farid in his *Kalam* or the path pointed out by him, called by us here Shari 'a¹—in its non-technical sense—might have called to the minds of some Muslims the Islamic use of the word Ahl-i-Kitab. At this point we may deliberately overlook the attitude of the followers of any one of these traditions towards the others in the past and address ourselves afresh to a brief exploration of the possibility that this Book could be considered a revealed one. This may help us in correctly understanding the desired attitude of the men of one faith towards the scriptures of other faiths, particularly the one which believes in *tawhid* or unicity of God. The fact that God revealed the Book to the Apostles and Prophets before its revelation to the Prophet Muhammad is generally granted on the testimony of the Prophet himself. We are here engaged in an attempt to find out whether God could have revealed the "Mother of Books" to the bearers of his message after Prophet Muhammed. The arguments in favour of such an inquiry could be in terms of popular interest or a philosophical speculation actuated in the mind of a student of Comparative Religion. As the present paper is not exclusively concerned with this question, our treatment is bound to be brief examination could rightly be accused as tending to obscure almost as such as it seeks to portray. Its chief merit, however, may lie in its suggestion of the problem which may be examined afresh by some student of religion. Its pragmatic value may lie in seeing the unity uniting the seers.

According to the *Qur'ān*, God tells us, "Yet no apostle has produced any miracle except by God's permission. For every age there is a book. God abrogates and confirms whatever he wishes, and he has with him the Mother of Books", (13 : 38-39)¹ The message that every age has a book and omnipotence of God of abrogating and confirming whatever. He therefore, technically at least, cannot deny the possibility that He may abrogate His earlier will not to reveal after a certain revelation. Such a developmental view of God and religion may be in a better position to accommodate and accept the expanding frontiers of human knowledge in sciences, arts, and religion itself. This may also help in a proper understanding of the other scriptures. Two objections may be possibly raised against even this brief submission. First, it may be said that this discussion sought to be raised here is not relevant to our topic. Second, it may be argued by some that this paper seems to overlook the whole history of opinions of the subject of *Qur'ānic* view² of revelation and also its attitude towards other scriptures.

In reply it may be submitted that the objections at this stage are rather premature. We are not over with our loud thinking as yet. Secondly, as pointed out earlier, we have deliberately overlooked the historical discussion of this question in order to suggest a possibility of some fresh reconstructions on the subject. When

1. H.A-R. Gibbs and J.H. Kramers, "Sharia", *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, "Leiden E.J. Brill, 1953), P. 524.

2. A James Powell, "The Quranic View of other Scriptures", *The Muslim World*, April 1969, f.n. 7.

we hinted at the possibility of God's power to abrogate and confirm whatever He wishes, we were merely seeking a power for god which would be very readily granted by theists believing in His omnipotence. If this is granted, then we may also submit that revelation could be of the Book itself or it could also be as *inspiration* in terms of the Book. It is only in this sense that the devotional utterances or directions to obey God could be considered as revelation in the revealed Books. It is in this sense that the Slokas of Sheikh Farid and saints could be considered as revelation through inspiration.¹ The devotional as well as the directional could be regarded as elements of this process. Even a little analysis will show it to be not only in conformity with the grace-theologies but also an essential part of their premises and conclusions.

Sheikh Farid is generally described as a Sufi mystic. We may, therefore, now look at him from this perspective, on the basis of his Slokas and hymns in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Three questions may be raised in this connection: What are the Sufi terms and symbols most used by him; and the important mystic stages indicated by him. This will, it is hoped, tell us whether his way was in conformity with or opposed to the general contemplative approach of the Sikh Gurus. Thirdly, does Sheikh Farid show any influence of the Indian Bhakati movement in his Sufi mystical approach?

Before we may seek to answer the first question raised above, it may be interesting to point out that Sheikh Farid has not made any abundant use of the word "Sufi" in his Slokas. In fact he has used it only once and that too in his criticism against those who wear *Sūf* but are hypocrites. This may perhaps indicate that even during the life-time of the great Sheikh there were persons who called themselves *Sufies* but did not live upto the moral and spiritual ideals indicated by this term. His disapproval for them is indicated in the Slokas.

We may now take up our first question; namely, the Sufi terms and symbols used by Sheikh Farid in his Slokas in the *Guru Granth Sahib* together with the important mystic stages indicated by him. In reply it may be submitted that the task is fairly difficult and calls for an exhaustive comparative study of the terminology used by the Sheikh. A study of the Sufi *Istilahāt*² as compiled by Iraqi in his *Kulliyat*, together with similar other compositions, shows great ingenuity of the Sufi mystics in using words of the ordinary speech in profound symbolic meanings. The word *Sar* (head) for the divine intentions, *alaf* (in Urdu—*chara*—green fodder) for worship and contemplation are only a few such examples. There are some Slokas which seem to suggest more profound meanings than the ones now found in various translations and commentaries. This may show an area of study for the students of Comparative Religion. It may be added here that *Awraf-ul-Maarif*, the text of the Suhrawardy School of the Sufis, which was

1. Cf. "Henceforward the Sufis are definitely within the fold of Islam; for, according to Ghazali and the majority of Muslims after him, the revelations bestowed on the saints supplement those of the prophets as the source and basis of all real knowledge". Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) p. 222.

2. Sloka, 50

3. Iraqi, *Kulliyat* (chapter on Sufi Istilahāt)

also used by the Chishtia Order at Pak Pattan, may be helpful in this direction. A complete answer to the first part of the question, obviously, calls for more exhaustive study than what may be possible in this short paper. We may, however, take notice of an important aspect of mysticism and symbolism in the Slokas and hymns of Sheikh Farid. It may help us in a comparative understanding and evaluation of the influence of the Indian Bhakti movement on the mystic symbolism of Sheikh Farid. A study in this area may show him to be one of the pioneers, if not the earliest, Muslim mystic in India to adopt the symbolism of the bridegroom and bride to express the craving of heart for heart of the soul for its perfect mate which appears as lover to him. The portrayal of the mystic fulfilment as the consummation of love may not be in itself, a novel expression for the mystics. We are familiar with such symbolism among the mystic saints of the Bhakti movement in India and the Christian mystics in the West. *The Song of Songs* in the New Testament has been immensely popular among the Christian mystics. We find that "for St. Bernard, throughout his deeply mystical sermons on the Song of Songs, the Divine Word is the Bridegroom, the human soul is the Bride".¹ He tells us that "Nor are there found any expressions equally sweet to signify the mutual affection between the Word of God and the soul, as those of Bridegroom and of Bride; inasmuch as between individuals who stand in such relation to each other all things are in common, and they possess nothing separate or divided... ." St. Theresa, the Christian woman mystic, is of a similar view when she says, "He has thus designed to unite Himself to His creature : He has bound Himself to her as firmly as two human beings are joined in wedlock and will never separate Himself from her".³ There are other Christian mystics also who have expressed themselves in identical symbolism, though such love-feelings and expressions are denied about some Christian mystics.⁴

Sheikh Farid expresses his anguish over unfulfilment in the symbolism of a lover and the beloved⁵ in the following words. He says, "This night I couched not with my Lord; My limbs are all in torture with unfulfilment : I ask the woman cast off, In what agony must thy nights be passed". In *Guru Granth Sahib* identical symbolism has been used sometimes to express the craving of the self for God. Therefore, Sheikh Farid's use of the symbols of the Beloved and Lover are found to be in general harmony with the devotional mysticism in Sikhism, though this is not its major characteristic.⁶

1. Evelyn Underhill. "Mysticism and Symbolism." *Mysticism*, (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd; 1960) p. 137.

2. Ibid., p. 138.

3. Ibid., p. 139.

4. Cf. "We spoke of the voluntarist mysticism of the Middle Ages and its parallel, the mystic Bhakti of the East, as a mysticism of exaggerated emotion where the "I" and the "Thou" flow together in a unity of intoxicated feeling. Eckhart (Christian mystic-Author) knows nothing of such emotional orgies. . . ." Rudolph Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, (New York. N. Y. : Collier Books, 1962), P. 231.

5. Sheikh Farid, Sloka, 30.

6. In *Sikhism* God has also been addressed as, 'True Lord' and 'Our Father.

The second important mystical symbolism used by Sheikh Farid is that of the 'Journey.'¹ Two types of journeys are visualised. The first marks the path from birth to death. He says, "Farid, this bird of life is a passing guest; The world is a lovely garden : Hear the drum of departure beaten since dawn; Get ready for the journey hence."² This theme is repeated by him many times. The second journey is the mystic's progress towards his goal.

The inevitability of the human journey from life to death is stressed by Sheikh Farid to prepare the seeker for his detachment from worldly things and sentiments.³ It is to make the traveller conscious of what he must surrender before he may qualify for the second pilgrimage. The surrender of the external subservience should be accompanied by internal purifications which are both psychological as well as spiritually-oriented.

Before we proceed to state and examine the mystic journey, it may be necessary to point out that Sheikh Farid does not use the usual technical terminology of the Sufi mystics such as Wara, Tawba, Twakkul, Zuhd, Khauf, Huzn, Marifa and Fana etc. although terms such as Sabr and Raza are found in his compositions in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The absence of the technical terms, however, does not mean an absence of the indication of the path and its requirements. It is possible that Sheikh Farid was seeking to popularise the way by de-technicalising the spiritual goal and mystical path. This has often been the general approach of the Sikh Gurus themselves. It may, perhaps, also be a case where the knowledge of the actual mystical stages and path is made a part of esoteric initiation.

Whatever might be the reasons for the absence of a mention of technical terms—and we cannot rule out the possibility of both the above-mentioned factors acting together as a cause—the cultivation of the principal ethico-mystical virtues or states seems to be the actual path for the seeker. The first, namely detachment, is mentioned and stressed by Sheikh Farid so often that it almost appears to be a case of over-emphasis. It begins with an expression of dissatisfaction with the subservient attachment to the objects of senses. Sheikh Farid tells us that these objects are really poisonous even though coated with sugar.⁴ There is no place for greed in this scheme of progress.⁵ This detachment is accompanied by increasing renunciation.⁶ The Sheikh continuously tells us of impending old age⁷ and the inevitability of death.⁸ One is almost reminded of the Buddhist practice of meditation on death requiring the seeker to go to the cremation grounds and remain there to experience and cultivate a sense of disgust for the transient world

1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, Rag Asa (3-2) and Rag Suhi (4-1).

2. Sloka 79.

3. Sloka 2, 18 and 29.

4. Sheikh Farid, Sloka, 37.

5. Ibid; 2. 18 and 29.

6. Ibid., 27, 28, 46 and 51.

7. Ibid., 11, 14, 41 and 48.

8. Ibid., 8 and 9.

and objects of the senses¹

One, however, cannot miss to notice that this distraction from the world is being gradually replaced by attraction towards God. In this both the seeker and God are attracted towards each other.² This reciprocity of this attraction by God is indicated by His grace in saving the Seeker from the hidden fire clouding thought and vision.³ His external dependence is replaced by his trust in God.⁴

The second important and comprehensive virtue is charity. It requires of you to overlook the faults of others.⁵ There is no place for revengefulness or an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.⁶ On the other hand, you are advised to go and kiss the foot which has kicked you. The seeker is required to do good even towards those who are themselves bad.⁷ One is spontaneously reminded of the Sikh ethics according to which "one who is good only when good is done to him and in adversity becomes adverse : Call him not a lover for he trades in love."⁸ This virtue may be seen to combine the negative renunciation as well as the positive love for one's fellow beings.

The previous two virtues, namely detachment and charity, primarily determine our attitude towards the world of objects and behaviour towards other persons. The third ideal quality or virtue mostly relates to the purification of the self. One has to cleanse one's self of the supreme impurity of pride and cultivate humility. As God is innocence incarnate, it does not behove the seeker to be proud.⁹ In the words of Sheikh Farid, "Become you the dust of the footpath if you seek a vision of God everywhere."¹⁰ We are further told by the Sheikh that this humility is not indicative of ignorance but is based on the real knowledge. Its perfect realisation marks the state when one knows and yet he is humble and innocent.¹¹ Humility is, therefore, one aspect of devotion towards God.¹²

The ideal cultivation of these virtues accompanied by progress in mystical experience leads to a stoppage of wandering. One puts an end to a recourse to waste places as one realises that God is in the heart. It is, what the *Qur'an* tells us, 'closer than one's jugular vein'. This state marks an end to the quest in the outward and directs itself to the inner ecstasy. This experience of bliss is the state of freedom of the narrow self, called the individual.

1. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, (The Path of Purification) tr. by Bhiku Nyanamote, (Colombo : M.D. Gunasena and Co., Ltd., 1964), P. 247 ff-

2. Sheikh Farid, *Asa* (Z-1—).

3. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 3.

4. *Ibid.*, 10.

5. *Ibid.*, 6.

6. *Ibid.*, 7.

7. *Ibid.*, 78.

8. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, (Patiala : Punjabi University, 1970), P. 192.

9. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 4.

10. *Ibid.*, 16 Cf. Bhai Gurdas, *Vars*, Stanza 16, Var 18. "Jivan mukta has reduced himself to the dust of others and has died in life."

11. Sheikh Farid, *Sloka*, 128. Cf. also Bhai Gurdas, *Vars* stanza 17, Var 4.

12. *Ibid.*, 19. Cf. Guru Nanak, *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru M. 1 (7-2-19), P. 1040. "Realises in his self All going and coming ceases."

The state of ecstasy also appears to be a transitional state. The highest state of the mystic's realisation seems to be, what Sheikh Farid calls, *sabr*,¹ usually translatable as patience. However, it may perhaps be more appropriate if we call the state of *sabr* as equipoise-in-fulfilment. No one can miss mystic experience of God if "*sabr* is the bow, *sabr* is the bow-string and *sabr* is the arrow."² The use of *sabr* three times in one Sloka is more meaningful than so far noticed by the students of Sheikh Farid. The next Sloka is still more telling in its import of *sabr*. The Sheikh tells us that "*Sabri* are in *sabr*, this is their sustenance (or sustaining fuel and energy). They are the nearest to God. They do not divulge their secret."³ Sheikh Farid then makes the profoundest as well as unequivocal statement of his mystic journey. He whispers into the ears of the seeker, "*Sabr* is the goal of the journey: If thou hold on to it steadfastly, you will expand into the mighty flow of the river and never then shrink into a small stream."⁴ This is elevation of the self. The frail little limited stream joins the ocean. It is the highest fulfilment. One cannot miss to experience the profound meanings of this symbolism, which are equally difficult, is not impossible to convey in the known vocabulary of human language. A student of Comparative Religion may find that almost all the religions, at this point, forsake the ordinary language of communication and take recourse to symbols, and expression becomes more poetic than intellectual. It is what the Sikh Gurus call, *Sehaj awastha*,⁵ in a deeper sense than hitherto realized, and with some difference 'Samadhi'⁶ in the Hindu context.

However, paradoxical as it may seem, some mystics continue to talk of the (inexpressible) and share the same with the fellow seekers. To this group of mystics, Sheikh Farid pre-eminently belongs. This is the ethico-mystical approach to the experience and expression of the highest reality. It does not allure the person away from his social context. In fact it not only confirms him in his work of social redemption, but also give it new depth and meaning. We are, therefore, familiar with the phenomenon where the mystics have laid firm foundations of some institutions and traditions. To conclude : The discussion so far has been with the main objective of stressing the great importance of Sheikh Farid for the

1. It appears that Sheikh Farid uses this word in a technical sense and a cue to the understanding of its meaning may have to be sought only in the Slokas themselves.

2. Sheikh Farid, Sloka, 115.

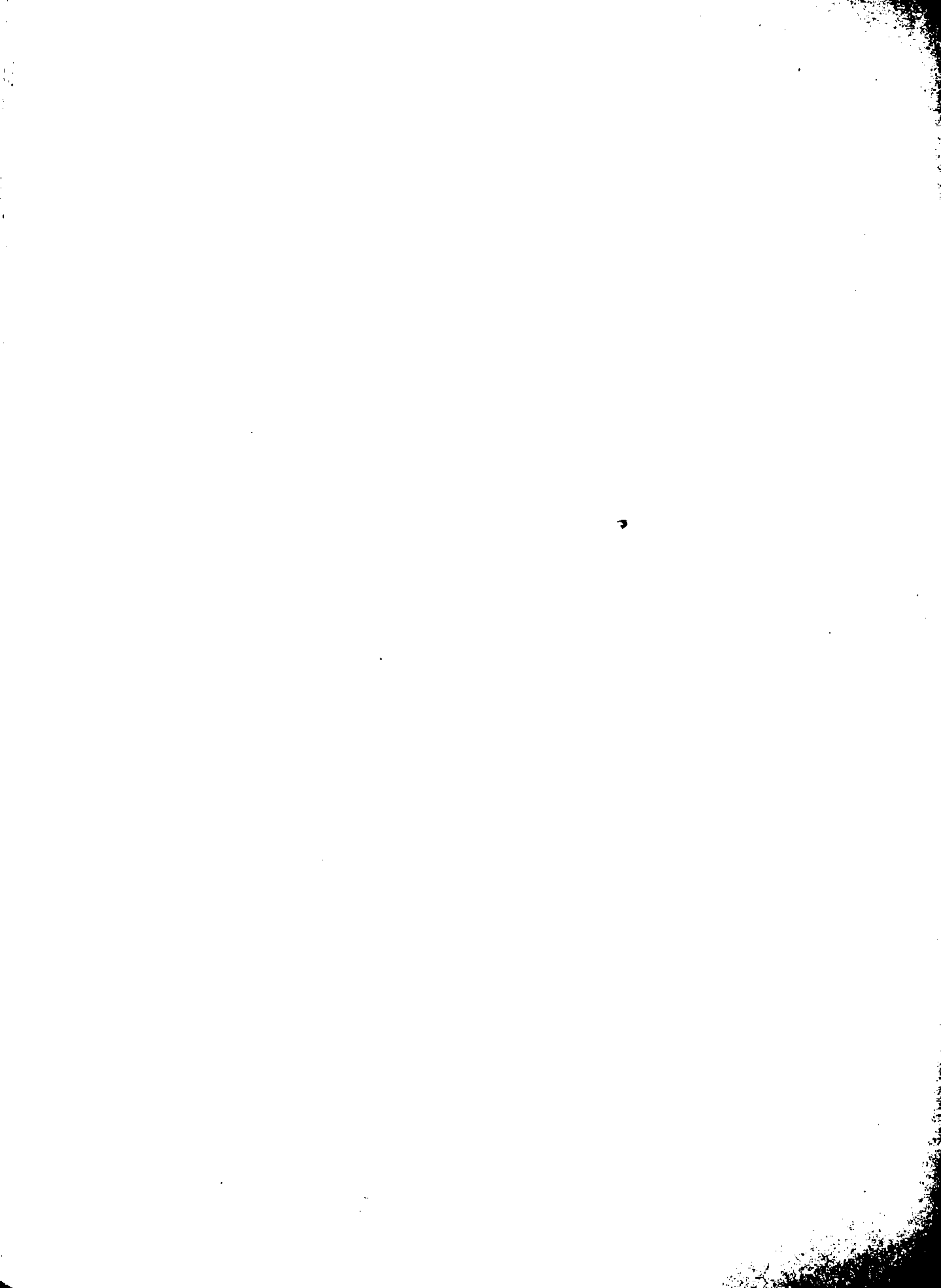
3. Ibid., 116 Cf. also, "Having become Haqq it was necessary to conceal himself; i.e. to behave like God and not show himself for God Himself has called Himself the Coverer Professor. A. Schemimmel, The Martyr-Mystic Hallaj, NUMEN, Nov. 1962.

4. Ibid., 117. It may interest us to know that *Subur* is one of the ninety nine most "beautiful names of Allah" in the *Our'an*.

5. Avtar Singh, *Op. cit.*, P. 204. We may here also recall the treatment of the *sabr* in the fourth part of *Ihya*, which describes the virtues that make blessed.

6. "The Yogi, or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed Samadhi," comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know." William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (New York, New American Library, 1958). P. 307.

students of Comparative Religion. He may thus be seen as a lighthouse preserved with affection and devotion in the *Guru Granth Sahib* for nearly four hundred years. His light may not only illumine the path of the student, but may also remove the darkness of separative human passions. The unflinching regard for the teaching of a saint of one religious tradition revered by the prophets and followers of another religious tradition, unaffected by the socio-religious or religio-political conflicts in the life-history of their communities, may not only be highly suggestive for the students of religion, but also be a testimony to the pragmatic possibility of an ideal for behevans in religion. This may thus become the major premise of the upward moving human dialectic.



SUFI DERVESH BABA FARID AND THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

JAI BHAGWAN GOYAL

India is predominantly a spiritual country. Ever since the Vedic age, the stream of Bhakti has been flowing here and the holy waters of this sacred stream have continued to water the entire expanse of this vast land. In the South, the Bhakti tradition was developing, nourished by Tamil Culture. The Bhakti of the Vaishnav Bhaktas (Tirumals) of the south had great ardour and sincerity. Subsequently, the Alvar Bhakta poets employed their melodious medium to propagate it. Their period extends from 5th to 9th Century A.D.

In the North, Bhakti was emerging under the influence of the Upanishads. The passion of Bhakti can be seen in 'Mahabharata' and the 'Bhagavat' as well. The doctrine of incarnation enshrined in the 'Puranas' gave it an additional impetus. Thus in Northern India also, by the 7th or 8th Century. A.D. Bhakti had become sufficiently popular. Later, the Nirguna Saints and the Sagun Bhaktas of the medieval age, with their melodious songs transformed it into a movement.

As described in 'Narada Bhakti Sutra', 'Shandilya Bhakti Sutra' and other Bhakti shastras, the underlying impulse in Bhakti is the 'love of God'. The Bhakti of the Alvar poets like Andal was also 'Love-oriented' and had a lot of affinity with the mystical love of the Sufis. In fact 'Love' is the basic element in Bhakti, which is the fundamental common ingredient among the Sufis and the Bhaktas. That is the reason why when the Sufis came to India, their doctrine found no opposition. In fact the Sufis made a significant contribution in strengthening the 'Nirguna Bhakti Movement' in Northern India. Farid may be regarded as one of the earliest Sufi poets, who played a dominant role in shaping the 'Nirguna' Bhakti tradition in Punjab.

Although some Sufi saints had come to India during the 8th Century too, the proper propagation of Sufism started with the arrival of the distinguished Sufi 'AL HUJVERI' at Lahore in the 12th Century. Farid was another famous Sufi saint of the 12th and 13th Centuries.

Initially, the advent and the development of Sufism took place within the framework of Islam. To begin with, the Sufis had faith in the Islamic Law, but as time passed, the Sufis became increasingly independent in their thinking and deviated from the Islamic doctrine and also showed evidence of drifting away from the 'Islamic Law'. There was a school comprising Sufis like Juned and Al-Ghazali

who aimed at the reconciliation of the two sections. Farid also belonged to this set of 'Ba-Share' Sufis.

Farid was born in 1173 A.D. at Khatwal (Multan). His father Sheikh Jamaludin Suleman was descended from the royal family of Kabul, but Farid was a humble and contented faquir (Dervesh), living a life of 'poverty' and austerity. His mother Bibi Kursum came from the family of 'HAZARAT ALI' and it was through her that Islamic tradition and law made a powerful impact upon Farid. But Farid was not a narrow-minded, bigoted Muslim of the old stamp; His spiritual discipline was basically 'Love-oriented' like that of the Sufis. He received his religious instructions from a learned Sufi of his time, 'Khawaja' Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, who strengthened his belief.

Unlike Al-Ghazali, Farid was not, in the proper sense of the word, philosophical. He was more of a mystic and in his mystical experience he appears to have been greatly influenced by the Indian spiritual discipline, particularly the Bhakti. In fact, his poetry come to us as a natural fusion of Islam, Sufism and Bhakti. He was primarily a 'Love-oriented' Sufi, but we find in his poetical compositions almost all the main elements of Bhakti. In his Punjabi verses he did not even make a mention of the 'Quran', the 'Prophet' and the 'Kalima' which any staunch Muslim would have done.

Love towards God, as the Sufis conceive it, may have three forms :

1. Homosexual Love (male)
2. Love with God and the Beloved and the devotee as the lover.
3. Love with God as the Lover and the devotee as the beloved (woman).

Some Persian poets did give expression to the first form of mystical love, but this form of worship is not to be found in the Sufi poets of Hindi and Punjabi. The Punjabi Sufi poets have generally represented God as the lover and the devotee as the beloved; whereas in the Hindi Sufi poets God is conceived as the beautiful, Beloved, while the devotee is his female lover. Farid was the first Sufi poet of Punjabi language. He has portrayed God as husband-lover and himself as His beloved. All the Panjabi Sufi poets who came after him followed the same pattern. For the Sufis earthly love of man and woman paves the way for the higher relationship between man and God. Consequently, sometimes their descriptions take a sensuous form. Even a Hindi Sufi poet of eminence, Jayasi, portrays the consummation of the love between Padmavati and Ratansain, who represent, respectively, the Deity and the devotee in utterly physical terms, employing gross sensual imagery, which clearly shows that even at the stage of such an experience of ecstasy and mystical union with the Divine, the poet has not risen above his physical nature and hence has fallen short of the sublime experience. In Farid we find a complete absence of such a sensuous tendency. In fact, Farid's mystical experience is completely detached from the physical and worldly allurements. The emphasis that Farid has laid on the illusory and transitory character of the human body and the vanity, mutability and the evanescent nature of the earthly world also endorses the theory that the ascetic element in Farid had become sufficiently pronounced. Describing the ultimate vain and of all the worldly beauty Farid has :

“FARIDA JIN LOIN JAGU MOHIYA SE LOIN MAI DITHU
KAJAL REKH NE SEHDIYA SE PANKHI SUI BAHITHU (19)

“Look, the skull that held the eyes that were so delicate that they could not bear the weight of collyrium in them, has been turned into a nest for the birds to hatch their eggs in.”

According to Farid all physical charm and beauty is useless if through it the love of the Lord is not cherished. Farid describes the futility of luxuries of the world thus :—

“PASS DAMAME CHHATU SIRI BHERI SAO RAD
JAYI SUTE JIRANI MAHI THIYE ATIMAGA
FARIDA KOTHE MANDAP MARIYE USAREDE ---BHI GAYE

KURA SAUDA KARE GAYE GORI AYE PAYE”*

(45—46)

(“They who dwelt in the mansions yesterday and whose arrivals and departures were announced by the bent of drums, now lie unattended in the graves like orphans”).

The ultimate end of all human beings is Death. According to Farid the day of death for all is pre-determined. He believes, the day a man is born, the day of his death is inscribed on his forehead. This writing cannot be effaced. The marriage with the God of death must come on the appointed day; entreaties are of no avail. The path by which the soul has to pass is subtler than the thickness of a hair.”

Keeping in view Farid’s description of the horrors of death and hell some critics maintain that Farid was a pessimist. But this conclusion does not seem to be correct. The pessimist gives way to despair and frustration and, consequently, turns away from action. He may even think of suicide as a means of escape from his predicament, but Farid’s reaction was quite different. He persistently counsels good and noble deeds and himself practised is he preached. His is an ascetic approach and not pessimism, continuous pondering over the sinlessness and truthfulness; austerity and contentment; simplicity and renunciation. The gospel of ascetism and renunciation is complementary to the passion of Bhakti. According to the Sufis also ‘Love of world and Love of God cannot dwell together at one place. Whoso states the contrary is a liar.’

The goal of the Sufi mystic is to attain complete union (oneness) with the deity. This stage of mystical experience is missing in Farid. Of course, he has the urge to attain this felicity. We do find in him the stage of ‘wasal’, but the stages of ‘Hal’ ‘Fana’ and ‘Baqā’ are absent in his poetry. He does not also have that stage of ‘Anālhaq’ which was attained by the famous Sufi Hussain Bin Mansur.

Farid’s passion for the Divine Lover has steadfastness, purity and strength. Displaying his love for God Farid says :—

“The love for the lover should brook no obstruction; what matters if you have only one garment, and the path that lead to him be muddy and even if it be raining heavily. Decide to go to meet thy beloved preceptor. Never allow any gift to be caused between you and Him on any account whatsoever. He glorifies silent suffering. The pangs of separation and a restless yearning for meeting the

lover are also there; but his love lacks the vehemence, wildness, frenzy and ferocity of the other Sufi mystics of his class. Farid's love is extraordinarily calm, serene and gentle, which is very close to the love in India Bhakti tradition. Farid narrates the agony of his love :

“Make thy mind the bed and agony of separation the bed-sheet. Thus should you live the painful life of agony: suffering for the Beloved, telling your tale of woe to Him alone. Everybody has praised the agony of love, which is the greatest King who rules the lover ..”

And then talking of the suffering in separation Farid says :

“In pining in the separation for the Lord, all the blood in my body has dried up, not a drop can be discovered now. This is ever the condition of the lovers of God. Very lean and thin in body they are ”

These sentiments are in perfect conformity with the Indian Bhakti tradition.

The importance of the recitation of the 'Name of the Lord' (Nam Samaran) is accepted equally among the Sufis and the Hindu Shastras. The Sufi says : “If ye seek the Lord, seek the company of the Name i.e. repeat it constantly and be sure union will be thy lot, for there is not the least difference between the Lord and His Name.” In 'Srimad Bhavgata' too we have it : “When in helpless condition, the Name even if once repeated or even heard redeems man from all his sins.” (xiii—12-46). Bhaktas like Kabir, Guru Nanak and Tulsi all laid emphasis on efficacy of the 'Name of the Lord'.

Humility and meekness are the two cardinal tenets of Bhakti. In Farid we find not only humility and meekness, but also the other elements of Bhakti such as faith, reliance, self-reproach and surrender of the self. Farid commends the service of his master, the God, in the following words :

FARIDA SAHIB DI KAR CHAKRI
DIL DI LAHI BHARAND

“(Do the service of the master and shed of all your doubts)”.

Both in Sufi mysticism and the Bhakti complete surrender to God is the SINE QUA NON. The famous Sufi, Jami, states it beautifully—

“The goal of my body and soul art thou alone, O Lord ! I live and die only for thy service, O Lord ! Wherever I go I seek Thee.”

In this very vein Farid writes, “Get up and offer thy prayers to the Lord; If thy head does not bow to Him, burn it in place of fuel.”

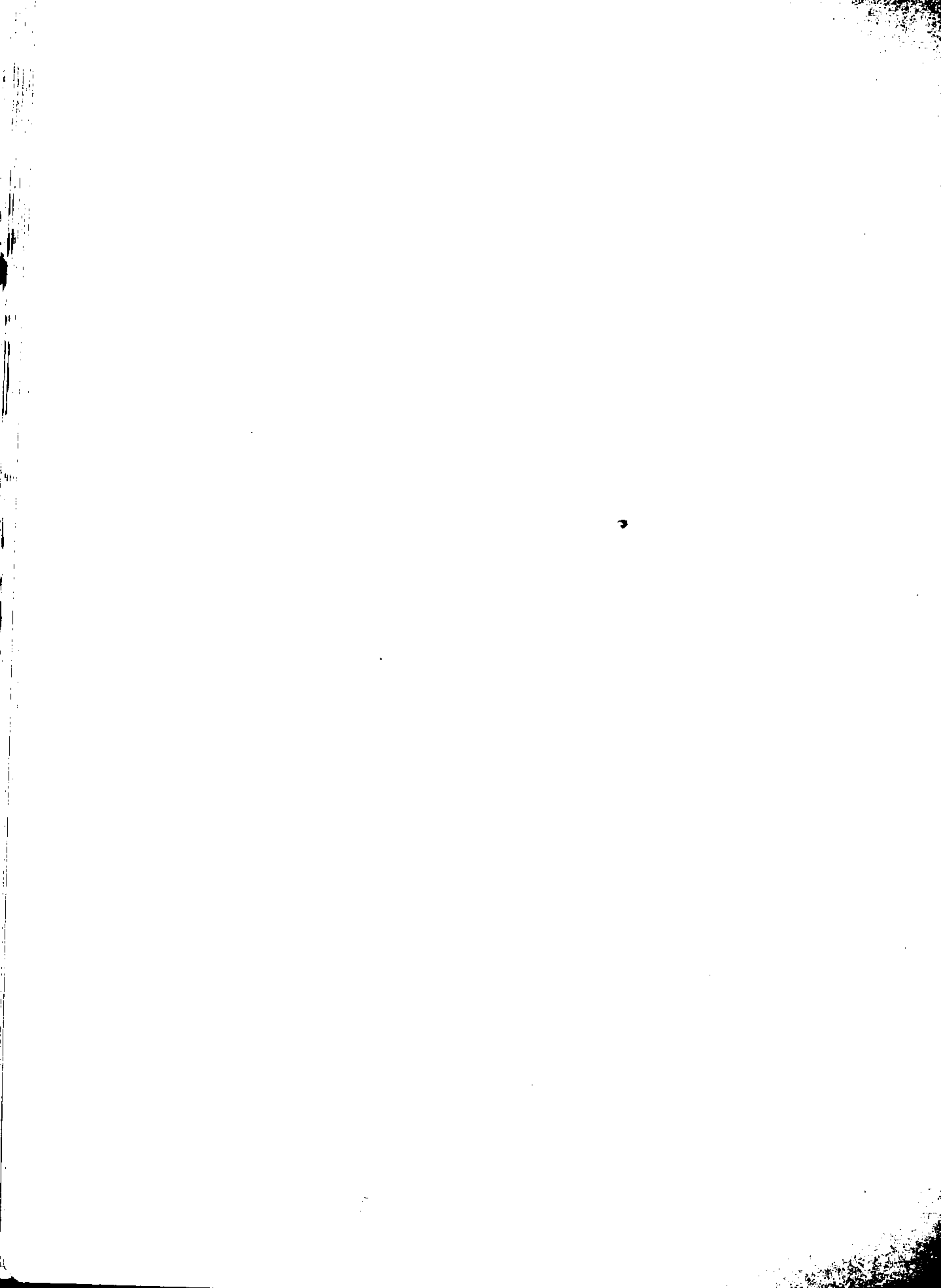
Therefore, it will be inappropriate to say that most of the elements of Bhakti are present in Farid's poetry. Alongwith the love for God, Farid seems to have imbibed the essence of asceticism and knowledge (Jyan), inherent in Bhakti. As in Bhakti tradition, he stressed the need for eradication of the ego, of covetousness, of rapacity of greed, of anger etc; and of acquiring truthfulness, contentment, spirit of service benevolence, humility and forgiveness. According to Farid it is only after acquiring these qualities and practising good deeds that one can achieve 'perfection of humanity'. ('Insanual Kamil' or 'Purnamanav') which has been given equal importance both by the Sufis and the Indian Bhaktas.

Farid saw the relevance and use of religion in the everybody life and actions of man and taught us the true and practical meaning of 'Dharma' and gave us an

understanding of sublime living. Rising above all narrow and intolerant communal feelings, he commended and advocated the oneness of humanity and the need of well-doing. Thus by ennobling the human sentiments and awakening our spiritual consciousness, he made distinct contribution to the progress of human thought.

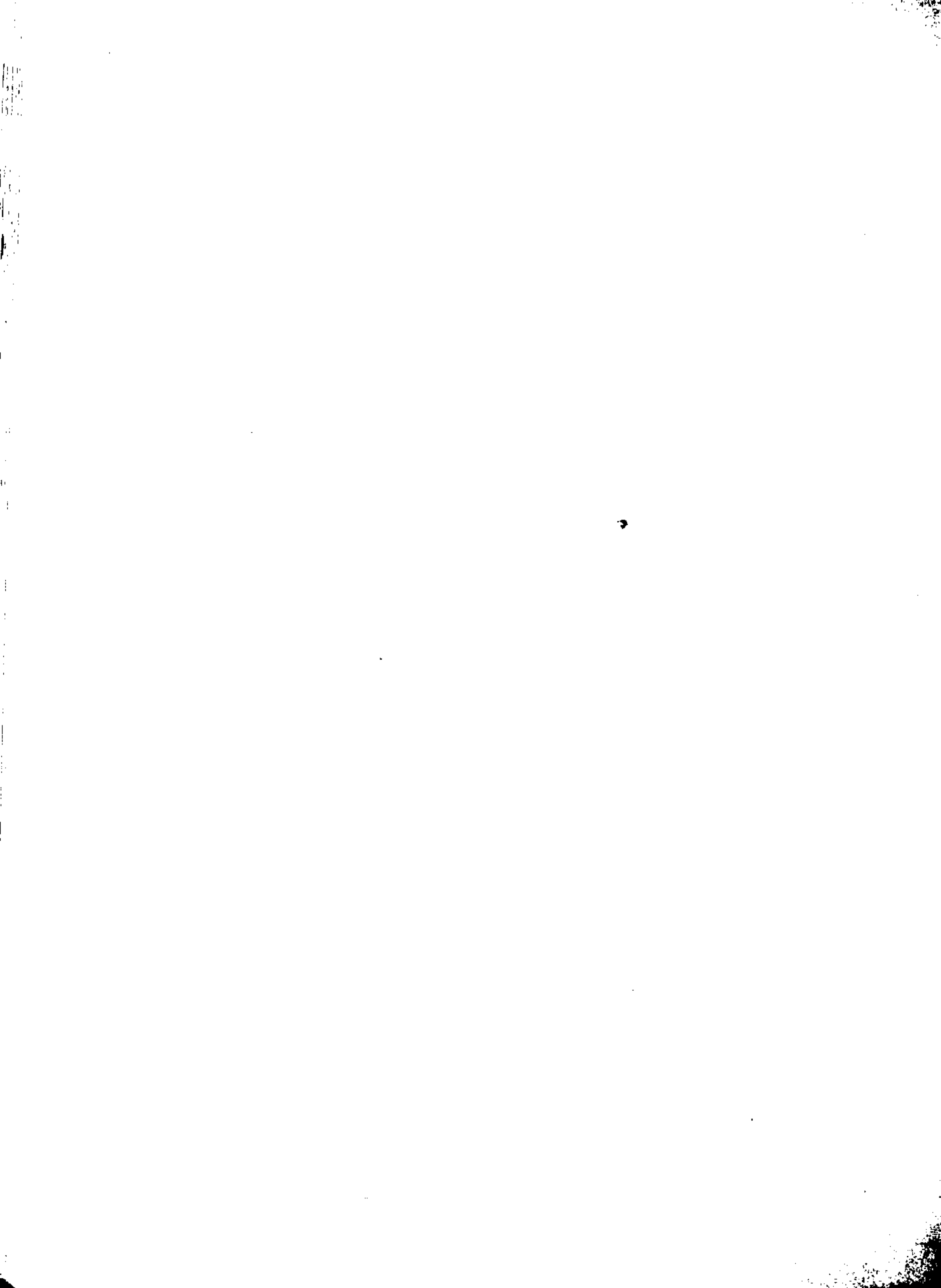
One more important feature of Farid's poetry in his assimilation of the Indian environment. Probably, he is the first foreign Muslim poet who has not only embodied the Indian customs and costumes in his poetry, but has also derived his images and symbols from the Indian environment. This trend became more pronounced in the Hindi and Punjabi Sufi poets who came after him.

To conclude, I can say that the poetry of the Sufi Poet Farid is also the poetry of an ascetic and a Nirguna Bhakta. It is sweet and satisfying like ripe dates and honey. It contains the nectar of Divine love and it is fragrant with love for mankind at large.



Section III

THE TRANSCENDENT POET
AND PIONEER



THE VISIONARY QUEST OF SHEIKH FARID

DARSHAN SINGH MAINI

Poetry, as we all know, is the articulation of certain inner urges and tensions in a unique paradigm of words and sounds. It is at bottom a subliminal exercise in the accommodation of the psyche torn between the blandishments of life on the one hand and the terror of existence on the other. This nuclear disturbance has a compelling character, and it brooks no stasis or delay. The energies thus set into motion assume sovereign dimensions and flow in fulness into "the basin of the mind" whence the imagination takes over and appropriates the seemingly intractable reality in an effort to transcend it. Such a statement regarding the nature of poetry is applicable to all varieties of verse, but more so to that verse which would be styled as vatic or visionary. In a manner, poetry *per se* is visionary, and therefore, there should be ideally no reason why vatic verse be accorded a special status. And yet it is a fact of history that poetry has assumed a cerebral and academic character since the advent of, what may be called modern consciousness. To the extent modern sensibility has absorbed the shock of reality and produced its own crop of visionary verse as in the later poetry of W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Robert Lowell and Theodore Roethke, one may see hope for the poetry of vision and values even as verse tends to become an artefact rather than a vehicle for epiphanies and inspired utterances. But if we are to view the visionary verse in its pristine purity, we must necessarily return to those days when the singer singing became a song. The bard and the seer knew no division. In fact, before published or transcribed poetry became a reality, the poet in travail scattered abroad those "magnanimities of sound" in sheer abandon and ecstasy. He was least concerned about his poetics or craft. Here there was no chiselling of verse or hammering away at it in the desire to achieve excellence. The winged word was the message, and it would abide. And it is in this context that I wish to view the poetry of Sheikh Farid, one of the greatest mystic poets of the East.

Before the small body of verse—some 130 *sloks* and hymns——, which we find enshrined in the *Adi Granth* in the name of Farid, is examined with a view to determining the nature of its afflatus, it may not be out of place to recall the peculiar context of its survival and transference. It is now an established fact of Sikh scriptural scholarship that the Farid whom Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, is supposed to have met was not the original Farid, who lived some 300 years before him. As it is, there are authentic sources extant affirming the birth of Farid, *Shakar Ganj*, in A.D. 1173. In all probability, therefore, these

sloks were received by Guru Nanak from Sheikh Ibrahim, a direct descendant of the great Farid and an apostolic successor who sang in the preceptor's name. To what extent this sheaf of gathered verse is free form interpolations is difficult to tell, though we may well presume that Guru Nanak took enough care to sift and character in his own hand the *sloks* that went homing, as it were, to a common numinous centre. Sheikh Ibrahim and his intermediary ancestors occupying the Farid *gaddi* were thus merely the vehicle of the inspired utterances which had been preserved with loving rectitude on the whole. It is not as if Guru Nanak saved them from desuetude or neglect, for no poetry that had the power to move generations of religious divines and laity alike could have encountered any such crisis. What the First Guru apparently did was to realise the intrinsic value of these *sloks* as moments of ineffable intuition clamouring for expression. And since his ministry was to seek the eternal paradigms of truth wherever he could find them—amidst saints and scholars, amidst unlettered peasants and householders—he must have at once seen the need to recapture this poetry of Vision which drew him like a flame. In fact, some of Farid's *sloks* spurred not only Guru Nanak, but Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjan also into song. Those hymns were generally intended to illumine and extend the meaning of the *sloks* which had been misinterpreted by Farid's followers. The symbolic import and ambiguity had to be settled in terms of matching couplets to reverse the trend of current thinking. The humanist potential of Farid's poetry was clearly in danger of subversion and erosion in some quarters at any rate.

Again, it was entirely in keeping with the spirit of catholicity which informs the compositional character of the *Adi Granth* that a Muslim saint's verses were inscribed therein with loving care in their purity and idiom. For, the Sikh Gurus like other religious mentors and prophets believed that all scriptures, whatever their origin or language, finally stipulated the same elemental questions, and arrived at the same ineluctable answers. This is because despite the infinite variety of human experience, the human reality at bottom is inviolate and indivisible. We are forced back to the same truth when we have stripped it to the bone. Religious experience becomes more and more analogous as pluralities and nuances shade off into a converging centre. In giving Farid's utterances a place of pride and honour, the Sikh Gurus, in fact, emphasized the unique community of mystic psyches reaching out to one another in fraternal understanding.

Like most hymns of this kind, Farid's *sloks* were uttered to match the mood and the occasion. However, their "occasional" character in no way diminished or circumscribed their range and intensity. On the contrary, it brought out the full ardour of the saint's overflowing heart. The songs, on the whole centre round the themes of transience and mortality, sin and suffering, self and pride, illusion and reality, pity and love, longing and nostalgia, alienation and fulfilment. In *slok* after *slok*, one finds evidence of an awakened and aching soul in deep torment over the creature state of man, pondering the path of self-realisation in a world designed to defeat such a quest. The ravishing power of the "many—splendoured" life then constituted a test of one's visionary veracity.

The paradox of redemption stipulated an agonizing awareness of the limits

of human understanding on the one hand, of the boundless divine grace on the other. In the final analysis, a mystic breakthrough was more an act of Providence and the inscrutable will of God than of cognition or merit or endeavour. However, "the doors of perception" as Blake said, had to be "cleansed" before a vision of godhead would be vouchsafed. Beatitude was indeed a gift of God, but the receiving vessel had to be whole and ready.

Though there are several strands in Farid's complex of thought, one persistent or unfailling idea which informs his verse is the idea of the proximity, inevitability and universality of death. Several *sloks* are directly inspired by the thought of human transience and the fundamentally unstable nature of human reality. This appears to constitute the bed-rock of his world-view. A little consideration will, however, show that Farid's haunting concern with morality does not really stem from the terror of the void. The existential ache in his poetry is not conditioned by death *qua* death. It is, on the contrary, caused by consciousness of a void within. Since the world in his view is essentially a vanity of vanities, a theatre of illusions, death was but a cease of the void and the ache if only because it opened the way to the abiding life of the spirit. The obsessive imagery of dust and ashes, of bone and skeleton, of worm and maggot does suggest a strong streak of *thanatos* in his utterances, but the ubiquity of death is always emphasized with a view to transcending this creature state and merging with the Oversoul. On one occasion, when his turban slipped from his head and fell on the ground, he sang :

Farid, I fear that my turban will be soiled,

My thoughtless soul knoweth not that dust will rot my head also.

(Translated by Macauliffe)

Again, in another *slok* he observed:

Sheikh Farid has grown old, and his body hath begun to totter:

Were he to live even for aeons, his body

Would become dust *at last*

(Macauliffe)

Of a woman, once young and seductive, he says :

Farid, I saw eyes that once captivated the world,

Eyes that would at one time not bear a daub

too bold of collyrium, pecked

at by birds.

(G.S. Talib)

The sepulchral tone of these and other such couplets does not, as I have said above, suggest mere negation or void, chaos or horror. In fact, at times, death is viewed as a bridegroom and a paramour that our aching flesh seeks for ravishment. The use of the spousal imagery in the context of death suggests mystical overtones. One is reminded of Emily Dickinson's mystic lyrics wherein too death is seen as a keen ravisher, sought after and longed for. In one of these *thanatos*-oriented poems, she talks of death as, "a dialogue between the spirit and the dust". Farid's vision too encompassed a similar passage from here to eternity.

The theme of death is often related in Farid's *sloks* to the theme of life's vanities. Power and pelf, forts and mansions, fleshly beauty and charm hold men captive in endless illusions. Few indeed can break the stranglehold of sense, habit and indulgence. The grime of greed makes the spirit opaque to heavenly splendours.

The wayfarer soul is decoyed *en route* and entangled in all manner of worldly pageants. The blandishments of life thus lead to alienation from the Lord :

Listen O Man, thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat
When it was yet time;
In the lake swollen with tempests, how shall it float ?
Fugitive are pleasures like Kusumbha, burning away at a touch :
Touch it not, my beloved, lest it wither away.

(G.S. Talib)

The *kusumbha* flower here symbolises all transient and eye-filling beauties which undermine the pilgrim soul in its quest of eternal bliss.

Farid's other-worldly vision has often led people to think that he preached a life of bitter and hard asceticism, that he sought a retreat from the business and traffic of life. Indeed, there are several *sloks* which do commend abstinence, control, forbearance and resignation. But this does not mean that Farid had either abdicated his human estate or sought the jungle and the mountain in search of *Nirvan*. The *dervish* of his imagination was not the recluse who spurned the world, but the one who living amidst pain and suffering cultivated a sensibility of discipline and held himself into eternal readiness for union with the Lord. The tragic vision of Farid stipulates higher altitudes of existence even as it recognises the pitiful waste of life and the terrors of thoughtless, hedonistic indulgence. Indeed, there is something heroic about that vision which in encountering the assault of reality seeks to annul the ache of existence through a sustained faith in the will of God. For suffering in Farid's view is simply separation from the Lord. In one of his *sloks* he even calls this state "kingly", for separation, as the spouse knows, whets the appetite for union and creates conditions of ineffable joy. In true mystic idiom, he refers time and again to the yearnings of the bridal soul for the nocturnal raptures of the anticipated embrace. If anything, the archetypal imagery of wedlock, bed-chamber, musk and flower should prove that Farid was no stranger to the bliss flowing from the appeasement of the body's hungers. No recluse who abjured the fleshly delights and scoffed at the creature pleasures of existence could have created a poetry of warm, sensuous imagery and symbols.

I burn and writhe in agony.
I wring my hands in despair.
I am crazed with a longing for the Lord.
You forsook and you had a cause.
For I was in error, not Thou, O Lord.
For such a Sire as thee little did I care.
When my youth faded, I fell into despair.
Black Koel what burnt thee so black ?
The fire of separation from the Lord.
Without the Lord how can one cheer ?
Through his mercy does one meet Him.

(Selections from *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*)

Or consider the utter directness and beauty of the following couplets.
I slept not with my husband last night,

my body is pining away;
Go ask the wife whom her husband has put
away, how she passeth the night.

(Macauliffe)

My body is heated like an oven;
my bones burn like firewood;
Were my feet to tire, I would walk on
My head to meet the Beloved.

(Macauliffe)

What's that word, what those virtues, what that
priceless spell;

What dress shall I wear that I may captivate the spouse.

(Macauliffe)

Again, like all great mystics, Farid was a perfect humanist. His agnoised concern for humanity, his pity and compassion, his boundless charity and understanding are visible in dozens of *sloks*.

All men's hearts are jewels; to distress
them is by no means good :

If thou desire the Beloved, distress no one's heart.

That's how later, an inspired Sikh poet, Bhai Nand Lal also sings :

Know, the people are of God,

Hurt not the people;

If the people are hurt, O Nand Lal,

It provok'th the Lord into anger.

Farid's humility and meekness, marks of a true visionary, became proverbial during his life time, and have since then been enshrined in story and fable. We find these virtues embalmed in his Verse :

Farid, should any man smite thee,

Return not blow for blow,

Nay, kiss his feet that smiteth thee,

And go peacefully homeward.

(Selections from *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*)

Again :

Farid, revile not dust, there is nothing like it :

When we are alive it's beneath our feet, when we are dead, it's above us.

(Macauliffe)

Or :

Farid, if thou long for the Lord of all, become the grass

On the pathway for men to tread on,

When one breaketh thee and another trampleth on thee,

Then shalt thou enter the court of the Lord.

(Macauliffe)

These lines reminded me of Walt Whitman who through a deceptive show of aggrandizement of the self reaches in the concluding section of "Song of Myself", a state of utter humility :

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass

I love,

If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

Farid was also a sworn foe of all empty ritualism, cant and humbug. The rosary and the prayer-mat, the pilgrimage and the ablutions were of no avail if the heart had no spark of love or charity or understanding. In several of his *sloks* he voices the woes of the poor and the wretched, of the insulted and the humiliated. The exploiting class of the rich and of the entrenched clergy is viewed with distrust, if not loathing.

Farid's visionary verse has a uniquely haunting quality about it. Composed in one of the Punjabi dialects of the day, these hymns and couplets are justly famous for their soulful sincerity, immediacy and nostalgia. These outpourings of a heart brimful of beatitude constitute nearly the crown or summit of mystic experience. The quality of the commitment and the authenticity of the vision lend them a rare intensity. This poetry is woven, stitch by stitch from the elemental skeins of life. It has, therefore, the warmth and ruggedness of the homespun about it. There is, indeed, an extraordinary richness and density in it. The sinewy, muscular idiom of his native dialect subsumes thought in such a manner that the thought itself acquires an *affective* wash. The long and varied experiences of life, the sights and sounds of diurnal existence have all been distilled into sweet and supple verse. The inflexional felicity of the Punjabi language permits the poet to achieve at once directness and complexity. A certain rhetorical neatness, characteristic of aphorisms, is thus obtained in an effortless exercise of the imagination.

However, all visionary in the end becomes indirect and symbolic. Beyond a point, the language cannot bear the burden of thought and involved. The ineffable indeed may never be truly rendered in any idiom or style. When such a state is reached, the poet needs must stop singing or break out into song in hieroglyphic terms.

Farid, the rain hath churned the road,
Distant is the Beloved's house;
If thou goest to Him, thou wettest thy garments,
If thou remainst at home
Thou breakest the ties of love.

(Selections from *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*)

In the following *slok*, Farid is actually concerned with the plight of the soul which having lost its opportunities of salvation now regrets [the inability to return to the fleshly habitat :

When a woman is virgin she is happy; when
she is married her troubles begin.

Farid, she hath this regret that she cannot
become a Virgin again.

Farid's visionary verse has a compelling ardour. No one who has had a taste of it can ever forget the moments of truth which this verse forces upon us. It is a pity that no translation can ever hope to capture its infinite charm if only because poetry, as we know, is fundamentally untranslatable.

BABA FARID AS A PERSIAN PROSE-WRITER

DR. S. A. H. ABIDI

Throughout the medieval period of Indian history Persian has served not only as a state language, but also as the common medium of expression among the intelligentsia. It was also employed by our great Sufis, who not only made a notable contribution to the development of Persian prose and poetry, but also added through their discourses (*malfuzat*) a new chapter to the history of Indo-Persian literature.

The Indian style (Sabk-i-Hindi) emphasises similes and metaphors, and profusely uses figurative words and constructions. Moreover, the writings of Indian style writers are generally burdened with artificiality and verbosity, exaggeration and far-fetched ideas and words. But Sufi writers are an exception, as they always use simple language to express themselves. In addition, they are too engrossed in deep mystic thought to pay attention to outward graces of style.

The *Asrarul-Auliya*¹ is said to be a collection of the discourses (*malfuzat*) of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar, known as Baba Farid, by his disciple and son-in-law, Badruddin Ishaq. The following sentence in the introductory portion of the book shows that the compiler had taken the ideas of the Shaikh and reproduced them in his own language :

(Badar-i-Ishaq the compiler of this matter, had the good fortune to *kiss the feet* of Sheikh Farid).

But the book ends with the following words, which indicate that the compiler had collected words also :

بدراستحق که جامع این معانیست دولت پای بوس حاصل کرد
از اسرار و انوار و الفاظ و در دربار شیخ الاسلام در مدت دو فائزده سال
شیده است، درین مجموعہ نبشته آمد

1. Nowalkishore Press, February, 1881
2. *Asrarul Auliya*, p. 3
3. *Ibid*, p. 94

It is written in a simple and fluent language, and may be called a mixture of the words of the compiler and his preceptor. A few lines may be quoted here as a specimen :

مخزن در ذل رزق و جز آن افتاده بود دولت یای بوس
 حاصل شد... بر لفظ مبارک راند که ای درویش، بده صدق در راه
 خیریت و طریقت کسی است که او از برای روزی دل آویخته ندارد و بدل ناری
 سعادت خدای مشغول باشد. حقیقت بدانند آنچه مقدر در راز دل رفته است آنچه
 چیز بدو خواهد رسید و ذره از آن کم نخواهد شد. پس ای درویش نه سالها
 بدیده روی یا چوئی رزق که در راز دل تقدیر برای تو نوشته اند ناخوستر
 بپوش خواهد داد. اما ای درویش در راه فقر ثابت قدم کسی است که دل را
 برای رزق آویخته ندارد که امروز خورده ام، فردا چه خواهم خورد!

The *Rahatul-Qulub* is regarded as yet another collection of the discourses (*malfuzat*) of Shaikh Fariduddin, compiled by his pupil, Hazrat Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya Mahbub-i-Ilahi d. (A. H. 725/A.D. 1325). Whatever has been said about the *Asrarul-Auliya* and Badr Ishaq, may be equally true in regard to the *Rahatul-Qulub* and its compiler.

The *Fawaidus-Salikin* is said to be a collection of the discourses (*malfuzat*) of Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. A.H. 634/A.D. 1236) compiled by his pupil, Hazrat Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar. We may assert that in the *Asrraul-Auliya* and *Rahatul-Qulub*, we come across the specimens of the styles of their compilers, and they are not in the words of Hazrat Shaikh Fariduddin. In that case, the *Fawaidus Salikin* may be regarded as a specimen of the language and style of the Shaikh. Moreover, as I have said earlier, all such collections are more or less uniform with regard to simplicity and lucidity of style.

There is perhaps a hitherto unknown treatise² of Hazrat Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar preserved in the Government Raza Library, Rampur. It forms a part of a collection of treatises³ in the same library. As it is a very small treatise of only two pages⁴, the whole treatise is reproduced here to show the language and

1. *Asrarul-Auliya*, p. 15
2. MS. No. 2751, *Suluk, Malfuzot-u-Maktubat*.
3. MS. No. 364, *Insha, Adab-i-Farsi*.
4. pp. 205-206

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

این رساله از گفتار قلب الموحیدین و برهان الواحیدین
 شیخ ابرو البحر گنج شکر فرید الدین قدس الله سره العزیز راست
 بر کرا اسپ نفس بد عملی می کند باید که در باز کمر طیبه و قابله
 روزه را همیشه از دهن دور نکنند و دست کله و پای بند لقیین ده
 دست و پای انداخته بکس نه قل استوار ساخته در طویل مسجد به سجد
 تا بوی مادیان دنیاوی در دماغ او نرسد بجز ریزه ذکر و نماز فکر
 پاک صاف ساخته و خورگ شریعت و زین طریقت بر پشت انداخته و تنگ
 جهان را بدوال اعتقاد محکم داشته و لغاشیه الحقیقه و مگوسار معرفت و
 چابک آزادت در دست گرفته در میدان شب پوی چهار تنگ رکوع وجود
 و محمود خنگ گردان و وصله عقیدت از پشت وی فرود نیاورد و دایم ابرو بند
 هوا را کوه دارد با چپ و راست میل نکند و در وقت مهود دواز
 تحت لایموت بآب صلاح تر کرده و در نوبه قناعت می داده باشد تا
 در خدمت نیاید که فراخی وی در آنست و شتر دل نگردد و مانند میل ار
 عبادت خانه خلطو زنده و پیاده وار از میدان اعتقاد لیس پای نگردد

و سینه خود را سپر ناوا و جفا و تیر بدف کرده جهت نقشبند و قیام نماید
 و دایم الادوات سلاح و حلو پوشیده و دلیف سبحان الله و ابر سر نهاده
 شمشیر همت علم کرده در کنش کمان نماید تیر کس نگذار بی حکم لبته همت
 خود را بلازمت میدان جان بازاں گوشه گیر شده بیگانه بر درگاه در آید
 در آن وقت هر جا که تبارد انشاء الله تعالی بمقصود منفوذ با برود

بحیثی بی معاذی فرمایند که چهار هزار کتاب خواندم از آن جمله چهار
 کلمه اختیار کردم . کلمه اول آنست که ای نفس من ، اگر طاعت حق تعالی
 می کنی بکن و گرنه روزی او محمور . و دوم : ای نفس من ، اگر تقسیم
 الهی راضی می شوی شو ، و گرنه از خدای تعالی چیز دیگر طلب کن ،
 تا ترا بهتر دهد . و سوم : ای نفس من ، اگر قصد گناه داری ، اول
 جای پیدا کن ، تا ترا حق تعالی نه بیند ، و الا گناه نکن . چهارم : ای
 نفس من ، نه آنچه که حق تعالی منع کرده است ، نه آن باز آئی ، و
 الا از ملک او بیرون شو .

والد طای والسلام و الکرام ، زیاده چه لولید در دست راست
 تمت ، تمام شد ، کار من الفرام شد .

In the end, I may add that Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami considers the "*Malfuz literature*"¹ as "fabricated",² which does not seem to be credible. He should discuss such collections of discourses (*malfuzat*) individually, and then may come to any conclusion he likes. However, the authenticity of the discourses (*malfuzat*) of Baba Farid is yet to be proved and would be determined by the earliest manuscripts available. But one can safely present all these utterances, whether genuine or otherwise, as a fine specimen of Indo-Persian prose of the medieval period.

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1. The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh), p. 83.
 2. Ibid. p. 83.

HERITAGE OF BABA FARID AND PROBLEM OF GENESIS OF PANJABI LITERATURE

I. D. SEREBRIAKOV

Approaching the 800th birth anniversary of the brilliant poet and thinker Baba Farid, scholars first of all sum up what has already been accomplished, and may further research into his creative works, determining their significance for contemporaneity. The convening of an international seminar on the occasion of this outstanding date in the history of Hindustan's culture points to the fact that researches into Baba Farid's creative legacy have passed beyond the confines of Indology. The present broad interest in his poetical and philosophical legacy is determined above all by the circumstances that Baba Farid is today perceived not only as a classic of Punjabi literature, not only as a classic of Indian and Pakistani literature, but as a man who had made an invaluable contribution to the artistic cognition of the world, one of those whom we consider today as the classics of world literature.

This fact serves as additional important proof of the fundamental changes that have taken place within the last few decades in the very concept of world literature. The latter has acquired genuine universality, and this became possible, above all, because of the final collapse the colonial-racialist approach to the problem of mankind's cultural legacy. Other, seemingly unshakeable positions in science were also revised. The treasure-house of world culture became opened wide not only that it could enrich national cultures, but so that it would itself become enriched with the best attainments of the national cultures of each and every nation of our planet.

There are a good many scholarly articles and monographs devoted to Baba Farid's creative work. From this welath of ideas, based on facts and sources analyzed in the above works, there emerged the image of a great humanist, who reflected in his poetry the tragedy of the epoch he lived in, the invincibility of the human soul, the greatness of the human spirit, and his striving to oppose to feudal society's cruel norms of life, his contempt for wealth, his denouncement of parasitism, his rejection of religious intolerance, and repudiation of social distinctions and the assertion that humbleness and patience were the most important of virtues. Baba Farid's Sufistic outlook reflected not only a characteristic trend of thought of the Middle Ages, which at times served as a cover for free-thinking, a protest against orthodoxy, but was also a form for the revealing of simple and

natural human emotions.

His creative work has one more important distinguishing feature to which I would like to draw the reader's attention. His works reflect the tragedy of his age, an age of wars, bloodshed, outrages and injustices, griefs and misfortunes. It can also not be denied that man in his slokas, at least at first glance is frequently depicted as a weak being, whose efforts are futile and only boundless patience may yield salvation, ".....thanks to which, if you, man, strengthen it in your soul, you will become a huge sea and not pour out into little streams" (I, 158). But his verses as well show a realization of the social significance of poetry, its importance in understanding that the individual's suffering was the people's suffering:

"I thought only I was unfortunate, Farid.

But in fact the whole world is in pain.

When I climbed the mountain and looked about me,

I saw that the fire of suffering raged in every home !"

(I, 156)

Literature becomes for Farid, the mountain from which one can see the flames of human suffering. In that is embodied one of the old tradition of Indian literature in general, and Punjabi, in particular. Farid's creative work is one of the indisputable summits of Punjabi literature. But if his work is one of the summits, we may rightfully ask, what preceded it; we may raise the question of the genesis of Punjabi literature.

This problem is a common one of all contemporary Indian literatures, and has not only methodological but general cultural and typological significance. The literary history of India is of exceptional complexity at each of its stages, a complexity conditioned first of all by a lingual and ideological diversity. The process of literary history in India comprises a most complicated interaction of different types of literary communities—confessional, ethno-linguistic, folkloric-literary, etc., not only at an all-India level, but at a regional level, and the development of Punjabi literature can serve as an example.

The problem of the genesis of a literature is above all associated with the historical formation of a nation for whom that literature serves as a means for the ideological and aesthetic cognition of the world, i.e, it is associated to a certain extent with the problem of ethnogenesis. This association should be understood, above all, so as to probe into the folklore sources of Punjabi literature.

An important factor in the formation of Punjabi literature were the various social and religio-reformist movements which to a certain degree possessed an independent, although tradition-based, ideology. For instance, the well-known folklore cycles about Raja Rasalu, Puran Bhagat and Raja Barathari bear the imprint of Buddhism, the Nath's ideology, and later of Islam and Sikhism.

As to the initial stages in the history of Punjabi literature, the political factors that influenced its development remain as before, poorly probed. However, the circumstances under which Multan with its Multani language was for a long period a major centre in the development of Punjabi literature, cannot but attract attention in connection with some essential features. In the first place, Multan turned out to be the base of the so-called Karmatian kingdom towards the close of the first

millenium A.D. Massingnon spoke of the ideology of the Karmatians as a kind of primitive-communist, egalitarian utopia. Secondly, Multan for quite a long time continued to remain a seat of trouble for the various dynasties that ruled Delhi; and, thirdly, Addahman Multani's poem "Sandeshrasak" (published in 1039) a remarkable literary creation of the early Middle Ages, written in local Avahattha, was associated with Multan. H.P. Dvivedi and V. Tripathi believe that this work dates from the 9th-10th centuries.

For a long time Baba Farid was considered the first author in Punjabi literature. His writings however, prompted the supposition that a long tradition had preceded him, and, to our mind, Addahman Multani's work permits us to move the date of the emergence of Punjabi literature back about three centuries. But the crux of the matter lies not only in the exact dating, as such, but in at least three important problems the researcher is faced with on his first acquaintance with Addahman Multani's Work. *Firstly*, the identity of the author. According to H.P. Dvivedi and V. Tripathi, who base themselves on traditional commentary, Addahman is the Prakrit form of the Moslem name Abdul Rakhman. By birth the poet belonged to the weavers' caste. Strictly speaking, he was the very first Moslem poet in the history of India's literature (6, 142). *Secondly*, his work begins with a defence of astounding force and vividness of the mother tongue's right to high poetry. It is well known that Bhamaha and Dandin held that poetry was possible in Prakrit, Apabhramsa and Bhutahasa, and Dandin considered Gunadhya's "Brikatkatha" in Paisachi to be a supreme model of narrative literature. The store of works in Prakrit and Apabhramsa is rather considerable and should be differentiated territorially and ethnically, and not only linguistically. This could afford a broader idea of the initial stages of the development of literatures in the vernaculars.

However, not only in his first 23 slokas does Addahman affirm the mother tongue's rights; he returns to this problem later, in his description of the city of Sambhapura, in which "all are the scholarswhere delightfully fine verses in Prakrit are heard everywhere... where different kinds of rasaks (poems) are recited at different placeswhere the beautiful 'Life of Nala' and other entertaining stories from the 'Tale of Bharatas' are recounted, where the dedicated Brahman gives his blessings, where trickv actors perform "Ramayana."

Thtrdly, Addahman drew an amazing broad picture of the state of literature within the confines of a lyrical poem, which by its very content was seemingly not at all adopted for this. The picture appears before us in two planes—in the plane of information of the kind cited earlier, regarding the language, genres, kinds of literature and individual works, and in the stylistic and compositional plane—the structure of the work proper, and the definite literary traditions and even folklore and literary images reflected in it.

Fourthly—and this is a summary of the first three points—it is a consciously declared platform of creative work's kinship with the people, of poetry's national roots; of the poet's need to draw on the popular language, on the traditions of folk poetry. In that lies the significance of Addahman's remarkable work.

It can thus be stated that a rich and diversified literary life developed in Multan

in Addahman's days. But it is quite natural to ask ourselves how that literary life proceeded in Multan and in other major historic cultural centres of Punjab in the period preceding Baba Farid. Unfortunately, much on this plane remains guesswork and shaky supposition for the researcher. For instance, the poetry of the Naths is an indisputable literary fact of that period. But it represented a very wide literary community; the area of which practically embraced the greater part of Northern India. There were also other literary communities which influenced the spiritual life of the people of Punjab of that time. These people who had not yet fully consolidated, were also greatly influenced by various political forces they came under. At any rate, only a thorough study, based on actual literary material, can make possible a characterization of the processes which led to the emergence of Punjabi literature, of which Baba Farid's works of genius became an early summit.

It goes without saying that the solution of the above problem will be tackled primarily by India's and Pakistan's scholars, and Indologists from other countries and particularly Soviet Indologists, who devoted themselves to the study and popularization of Punjabi literature as an integral component of the literary process of the peoples of the Hindustan sub-continent, and are ready to do all they can to make their modest contribution to this effort. The present seminar¹ is very convincing proof of effectiveness of joint efforts. Many noble ideas expressed by Baba Farid eight hundred years ago still have relevance to the sharpest problems of the present days. Those ideas of peace and tolerance were shared by many other thinkers and today these ideas are shared by a major part of mankind. Today it became possible to make the humanistic ideals of Farid true and to create a better world. Let us work for the noble cause of peace, mutual understanding, amity, prosperity and social progress, to make humanism real !

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SHEIKH FARID AND THE PUNJABI POETIC TRADITION

ATTAR SINGH

The identity of the author of the works attributed to Sheikh Farid and included in the *Adi Granth* (ed. 1604 A.D.) by Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 A.D.) has invited lively polemics and debates. The ball was set rolling by M.A. Macauliffe who made the assertion that "It is certain that it was Sheikh Brahm who composed the sloks and hymns bearing the name of Farid in the *Granth Sahib* though he used the name of the founder of his spiritual line as poetical *nom de plume*".¹ Since then the controversy has flourished, thanks to the endless labours of Sikh theologians as well as historians of Punjabi literature. While one group has pleaded the case for Sheikh Farid Shakarganj (1173-1265 A.D.) another one followed Macauliffe to bestow the distinction upon Sheikh Brahm or Ibrahim (died 1552 A.D.). To make the issues all the more confused another theory was offered suggesting that the hundred and odd couplets and four hymns are the composition of several poets including Farid Shakarganj and others following him in his spiritual line. There is no denying the validity as well as the utility of this seemingly un-resolving controversy, more particularly the latter keeping in view the resultant exploration at depth of rich Persian sources bearing upon the life and times of Sheikh Farid Shakarganj.

It may very well be argued that much of the passion which has gone into this endless debate was slightly misplaced if not at the same time wasteful as well. Scant, if ever, attention was paid to two very simple, but significant nonethelss, facts. Firstly, projecting Sheikh Brahm as the author of the compositions in question meant ignoring if not also repudiating the authority of Guru Arjan, the compiler of the *Adi Granth*. Both the conception of this compendium of medieval Indian religious texts and the execution of the project demanded thorough planning, an all out effort for collection of material from all possible sources and exhaustive scrutiny of the texts both from the viewpoint of their authenticity and their correlation to the broader ideological framework of the sacred corpus. We have evidence of the compositions attributed even to Guru Nanak being left out of the *Great Granth* due to lack of satisfactory evidence with regard to their authenticity. The incident of *Pran Sangli* is a typical case to the point. After all one of the major impulses behind the compilation of the *Adi Granth* was to protect the sacred *Bani* against confusion with the apocryphal compositions. There is **another** internal evidence from the

Adi Granth of the particular care with which Guru Arjan approached the question of authorship of various texts. Included in *Rag Suhi* are certain hymns which go under the heading *Rag Suhi Bani Sri Kabir Jio tatha Sabhna Bhagtan Ki Kabir Ke.*² (The Sacred hymns of Kabir and all his disciples). These are five hymns in all which carry the name of Kabir as the poet and yet Guru Arjan is clearly hesitant to put his seal on Kabir's authorship of them.

Guru Arjan, who contributed the most towards systematization and institutionalization of Sikhism most unambiguously accepted the hymns attributed to Farid as the creation of Sheikh Farid. And the great scholar of Sikh faith that he was and with the active assistance of his scholarly scribes Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Sant Ram, Bhai Haria, Bhai Sukha and Bhai Mansa Ram being available to him as it was, he could not be ignorant of the phenomenon of Sheikh Brahm, which had become a regular part even of the popular Sikh lore as evidenced by the references to him occurring in *Janam Sakhis*.

In the face of this clear-cut evidence it should be impermissible to confuse Sheikh Farid with Sheikh Brahm who at best was known only as *Sheikh Farid Sani* i.e. Sheikh Farid the Second.* The conjecture of M.A. Macauliffe that Sheikh Brahm used as the poetical *nom de plume* the name of his spiritual ancestor Sheikh Farid is also warranted neither by the known facts of the life of Sheikh Brahm nor by any known practice amongst the Muslim mystic tradition of disciples adopting the names of their spiritual progenitor as the poetic *nom de plume*.

The second fact also easily ignored is the historical memory of the Muslim Punjabi literary tradition which did not feed itself upon the Sikh tradition for its legends and beliefs. In the entire Muslim Punjabi literary tradition, there is no mention whatsoever of Sheikh Brahm either as a significant man of God or as a votary of the Muse. On the other hand there are frequent references to Sheikh Farid Shakarganj both as a moral and spiritual perceptor as also a distinguished Punjabi poet.

I would like to make reference to at least two most important of such sources. Waris Shah (b. circa. 1729 A.D.) who composed the immortal *Qissa of Heer Ranjha* invokes Sheikh Farid Shakarganj :

ਮੌਦੂਦ ਦਾ ਲਾਡਲਾ ਪੀਰ ਚਿਸ਼ਤੀ,
ਸ਼ਕਰ-ਗੰਜ ਮਸਊਦ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੈ ਜੀ ।
ਖਾਨਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਚਿਸ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਕਾਮਲੀਅਤ,
ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਫਕਰ ਦਾ ਪਟਨ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਹੈ ਜੀ ।
ਬਾਈਆਂ ਕੁਤਬਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਪੀਰ ਕਾਮਲ,
ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਜ਼ੀ ਜੁਹਦ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰ ਹੈ ਜੀ ।
ਸ਼ਕਰ-ਗੰਜ ਹੈ ਆਣ ਮਕਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ,
ਦੁੱਖ ਦਰਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਦੂਰ ਹੈ ਜੀ ।³

*There is no evidence in Muslim hagiological history that Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim) was ever called Farid Sani. (Editor)

By correlating this "deliverer of the Punjab from pain and suffering" in the words of Waris Shah with "the first amongst the poets of the Punjab" as projected by Mohd. Bakhsh (b. 1831 A.D.), creator of that inimitable *tour de force* Saiful Maluk, we can have clear the perspective of Muslim Punjabi tradition upon Sheikh Farid :

ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜ਼ਿਮੀ ਦੇ, ਹੋਏ ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਵਾਲੇ ।
ਕਾਫੀ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਮਾਂਹ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ, ਦੋਹੜੇ ਬੈਂਤ ਉਜਾਲੇ ।
ਹਿਕਨਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ, ਕਿੱਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰਸਾਲੇ ।
ਕਿਧਰ ਗਏ ਉਹ ਸੰਗ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ, ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵੇਖ ਸਮਾਲੇ ।
ਅਵਲ ਸ਼ੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਸ਼ਕਰਗੰਜ, ਆਰਿਫ ਅਹਿਲਿ ਵਿਲਾਇਤ ।
ਹਿਕ ਹਿਕ ਸੁਖਨ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਉਹਦੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਹਬਰ ਰਾਹੀ ਹਦਾਇਤ ।⁴

II

Whether speaking strictly in the context of the history of Punjabi literature or in the broader perspective of cultural history of the Punjab, the Punjabi works of Sheikh Baba Farid retain a certain distinctive character. From the very start the Punjabi literary tradition emerged and evolved along two distinct and parallel mainstreams "one Muslim inspired and other Sikh inspired".⁵ For all practical purposes Punjabi poetic tradition instead of evolving as a single continuous process began to grow as a conglomerate of several continuities; each not only with its own distinctive style, idiom, imagery patterns, diction, allusions, poetic devices, forms and even script but also almost totally oblivious of the existence of the other. Sikh poetry written exclusively in Gurmukhi does exhibit an awareness of the Punjabi Sufi poetry insomuch that works of Sheikh Farid find a place in the Adi Granth, the corpus of Sikh religious poetry compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604 A.D. But beyond Sheikh Farid no other Muslim Punjabi poet came to be recognized by this tradition except in the modern phase of its evolution. On the other hand several Muslim Punjabi poets especially Hafiz Barkhurdar⁶, Maulvi Ahmed Yar (1768-1845)⁷, and Mian Muhammed Bakhsh (1831-1906)⁸, during the course of their compositions made pointed references to the writings of earlier poets in the language. Invariably, these references are only to poets of Muslim tradition and never to any Punjabi poet outside this tradition. This only demonstrates that both these traditions because of the unresolved antagonism between the sources of their emergence grew in almost total isolation of each other, with their separate cultural memories shutting out the awareness of the other.

Another interesting feature of this mutual isolation of the two streams within Punjabi literary tradition is the fact that in any one particular era of the history of Punjabi literature only one remained in the ascendancy. Even though Sheikh Farid (1173-1265 A.D.) is credited with the distinction of being the first outstanding figure in the history of Punjabi literature, he remained only a distinctive exception during the first major period of this history dominated till the early seventeenth century by the poetry of Sikh Gurus which actually represented poetry of Indian response to cultural impact of Islam. From this time onwards (when Sikh faith

started crystallizing as a separate religious category and Sikh poetic tradition began its drift away from Punjabi language and towards *Braj* classicism) till the latter half of nineteenth century, it is the Muslim Punjabi poetry whether mystic or of secular themes which dominates the scene with only an odd Hindu or Sikh poet of some merit registering his appearance. This means that in the medieval Punjabi poetry religion was of central importance not only as a progenitive element but also as a factor in describing and sustaining group boundaries and in providing the cultural background against which a particular poet or poem found its place in history.

Before we may pass on to consideration of other problems, it may be noted in passing that both the Sikh and Muslim traditions of Punjabi literature describe diametrically opposite but identical courses in their historical careers. Arising from two different religious sources (Semitic-Islamic in case of Muslim and Aryan-Hindu in case of Sikh Punjabi poetry), aligning themselves with two separate linguistic-literary hierarchies (Arabic-Persian in case of Muslim and Sanskrit-Prakrit in case of Sikh tradition), and aspiring to adhere to two distinctive systems of poetics (Persian in case of Muslim and Sanskrit in case of Sikh Punjabi poetry) both the streams—Islamic and Sikh in the period of their drift away from Punjabi language sought identification with Urdu and Braji respectively. And when these two traditions re-emerged in Punjabi after a period of their relative absence from Punjabi literary scene they did not adopt their immediately preceding Punjabi writing as the point of departure. Thus when Bhai Vir Singh started writing in Punjabi, in the last decade of the 19th century he remained almost totally insouciant to the Punjabi poetry of the Muslim Punjabi poets of pre-Vir Singh era and made deliberate efforts to realign himself with the cultural ethos bequeathed by the Sikh tradition of Braj poetry through the last important poet of the tradition Bhai Santokh Singh (1788-1843). Similarly when after over half a century of its estrangement with Punjabi the Muslim tradition started surfacing in Pakistani Punjab after the partition of the province in 1947, it all but disowned the five or six eventful decades of the growth of Punjabi language in its modern phase under the leadership of the Sikh tradition and adopted as its background either the medieval Punjabi Sufi or Qissa poets or the tradition of Urdu literature in the Punjab.¹

From the preceding analysis it may be construed that the Muslim and Sikh mainstreams of Punjabi literary tradition, did not have any common elements at all to share. This is not the case. The element of protest in Sufi Punjabi poetry and also in Qissa poetry inspired by it against the religious particularism of Islam, which is one of the dominant notes of this poetry, has also to be viewed as involving the process, within the Punjabi poetry, of secularization of religion. In this and Sikh Punjabi poetry of the kindered variety, the emphasis is on the individual and the spark of divine love enshrined in his heart as against the priestly rituals and observances. To that extent this may be characterised as the literature of religious dissent which, however, is operative only within the closed circle of an over-all religious faith. Mr D.P. Mukerji makes a very acute observation in his study of the sociology of Indian literature which has a very

close bearing upon our subject :

“The very fact that mysticism including Sufism, was the utmost limit of protest is an evidence of the closed nature of the society”⁹.

Punjabi Poetic tradition originated in religious dissent as did Sikhism and Punjabi Sufism the main ideological impulse behind it. Insofar as Sikhism and Punjabi Sufism were movements of protest against religious pluralism, priestly ritualism or dogmatism Punjabi poetic tradition also flourished as a movement of cultural renewal of the medieval Punjab in opposition to the tradition of Sanskrit literature and the formalism to which that movement had been reduced. Adoption of the spoken language itself was in the nature of a radical departure from the Sanskrit tradition. Import of folk motifs and folk-forms in the poetic structures evolved in the poetry of the spoken language further testifies to the spirit of revolt against the rigid conventionalism of the older tradition. Spirit of devotionism, mysticism and protest permeating the religious ideology of Sikhism or Punjabi Sufism found its objective correlatives in the lyrical abandon of the tunes borrowed from folk-music, in the luxuriance of the fresh imagery drawn from the nature and life intimately experienced, and in the unconventionality of the poetic forms adopted and devised. As one approaches the Punjabi poetic tradition from the side of the tradition of Sanskrit Literature preceding it, one experiences a fresh breath of vitality, vigour and power, almost remantic in its sweep. But with the spirit of revolt and protest itself seeking its consummation in religious crystallization and institutionalization and the institutionalized religion becoming the source of stylization, idealization and formalization, this vitality and power also came to be channelised into conformism with the older forms. In the case of Sikh tradition, the pull towards neoclassicism came to be felt by the time of Guru Arjan (1563-1606) in the shape of a formal purity as in *Sukhmani*, in deliberate use of poetic devices, and in a certain trend towards Sanskritized diction. Providing almost a schizophrenic model of the tension between the original impulse and the new trend is Bhai Gurdas (1551-1637) who in his *Punjabi Vars* still retains a certain indifference towards metrical rigidity of form, plays with and occasionally distorts the verbal forms, derives his profusely illustrative imagery heavily from the local landscape. But in his *Braji Kabits* and *Swayyas* he emerges as a strictly conventional poet perfectly corresponding to the traditional meters using only traditional imagery and adhering in every other detail to the Sanskrit tradition of poetics. From here onwards till Bhai Santokh Singh in nineteenth century Sikh poetic tradition flourished not only outside Punjabi language but also as a highly conventional and formalistic tradition cultivating only traditional forms in a highly stylized form of expression.

Corresponding to this evolution of the Sikh poetic tradition is the case also of Punjabi *Sufi* and *Qissa* traditions. In these too, the original folk-lyricism of diction and imagery and the freedom of folk-forms, so eloquently eulogized by Professor Teja Singh, which characterized verses of Sheikh Farid and the *Kafis* of Shah Hussain (1538-1599) and Bulhe Shah (1680-1753) had already started drifting towards formalism of Persian acrostics in Ali Haider (1690-1785) with preponderance of Persianism in diction and imagery of distant lands. This trend

is distinctly visible in Waris Shah and Ahmed Yar (1768-1845) and by the time we reach Mohammed Bakhsh (1831-1906) and Fazal Shah (1827-1890) the last major poets of the tradition, Punjabi poetry had already grown very formal, conventional and manneristic. In its diction this tradition came to be identified by excessive use of Arabo-Persian vocabulary, in its expression by imitation of traditional ornate Persian imagery and in symbolism by rich Islamic historical, theological and cultural motifs. No surprise, therefore, that when Urdu was adopted as the language of education and State administration in the Punjab by the Britishers, it struck its roots immediately amongst the Punjabi Muslims who had till then been cultivating the *Sufi* and *Qissa* traditions of Punjabi poetry.

From the point of view of our study it is interesting to note that it is in the poetry of Sikh devotionism and Sufi mystics in the aspect of their protest against the religious particularism and priestly ritualism of their respective religious traditions that the Sikh and Islamic streams of Punjabi poetic tradition drew nearest to each other. In their articulation of the religious dissent and protest, as also in the deep influence of the folk-poetic traditions upon them these two seem almost to converge upon a single point. But in their drift towards conventionalism of their respective traditions the two started drifting away from each other too, till by the time the modern phase set in and they had grown too distinctly different to be characterized as a single tradition. The efforts made within the traditional framework by the Hindu and Sikh Punjabi *Qissa* poets of the latter half of the nineteenth century towards merger of the two streams such as of *Vedantic* interpretation of the *Heer-Ranjha* cycle of story by Kishen Singh Arif, and extension of *Qissa* tradition by Kalidas alias Man Singh to incorporate tales of Indian origin into this tradition might have not proved abortive had not mighty forces of historical change intervened in the way they did. This attempt is almost parallel to the one made earlier by Qadir Yar during the early nineteenth century to resurrect the Punjabi national epic through tales of Puran and Rasalu. The earlier attempt was impelled by the spirit of Punjabism during Ranjit Singh's reign, which was dissipated with the fall of Sikh kingdom. The latter could not flourish because of the emergence of religious nationalism as a powerful cultural force in latter nineteenth century India.

III

Our purpose in giving this rather extended introduction was to provide the historical background against which another important detail of cultural history of the Punjab can be properly appreciated. As we have alluded above Sheikh Farid Shakarganj is the only distinguished Muslim poet to be included in the *Adi Granth* compiled by Guru Arjan Dev. Perhaps the reason was that no other Muslim Punjabi poet of any consequence had emerged till the compilation of the *Adi Granth* except Shah Hussain. And there is a tradition in the Sikh theological lore that Guru Arjan Dev did not consider the works of Shah Hussain worthy of inclusion in the corpus of Sikh sacred texts. This raises the question of criteria which Guru Arjan Dev adopted to determine the worthiness of a poet for acceptance of his works for the *Adi Granth*. Several theories have been put

forward to determine these criteria without any attempt being made to correlate the significance of the compilation of *Adi Granth* to the cultural history of the Punjab. A most significant point overlooked by the theological scholars is the question of the inner social contents of the works of religious poets. While Guru Arjan Dev gave a place of prominence to the works of Kabir he ignored the works of another equally significant Hindi poet Tulsi Dass who found wider acceptance in the medieval Hindu world perhaps because of his conservative outlook. The reason is not very far to seek. The works of Tulsi Dass are deeply imbued in traditionalism and extol the value of *Varan Ashram* and immutability of the rigid traditional structures. On the other hand Kabir gives expression to a voice of radical social protest. Similarly when we analyse comparatively the works of Sheikh Farid and Shah Hussain we find Sheikh Farid motivated by a strong social awareness while Shah Hussain seeks articulation either for dark passions of a disturbed subjectivity or for pure mystical visions divorced from human concerns of more mundane character.

Undertaking a comparative study of the works on identical themes of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Amar Das on the one hand and those of Sheikh Farid on the other should reveal very clearly the shifting of emphasis from a passive pessimistic outlook to that of an active affirmation. Of particular interest is Guru Nanak's hymn in *Suhi Rag* (5.2.4) *Jap Tap Ka Bandh Berla* juxtaposed with Sheikh Farid's hymn to *Suhi Lalit* (3.2) *Bera Bandh Na Sakio*. Guru Arjan himself has at several places put riders on the verses of Sheikh Farid. These riders can very easily be considered as editorial comments providing some sort of corrective to the view of Sheikh Farid. A study in depth of Sheikh Farid's *Sloks* in juxtaposition with the riders and comments of Sikh Gurus provides evidence that Guru Arjan Dev took special pains to restore social sanity to the view of Sheikh Farid where they touch borders of nihilism and total denial of life here and now.

But such instances where Sheikh Farid is overwhelmed by the pervasive pessimism of his times are very rare indeed. On the whole he exhibits a keen awareness of social injustice inherent in the sociopolitical situation of his times.

It may well be remembered that there are three distinct facets of Islam in India : the Islamic State, the Muslim Church and the Sufi Mystics and intellectuals. In the very nature of things the Islamic State structure was alienated from the general mass of people and sustained itself by continuously alienating the local people whether Hindus and Muslims. The difference of alienation between Muslims of local region and the non-Muslims from this Islamic State was only quantitative and not qualitative. Islamic State in India was characterised throughout by rule through alien elitist class.

The Muslim Church especially because of the help it received from the State in its proselytizing mission was subservient to the State structure and to that extent was alienated from the common people. As I have shown elsewhere, apart from its alien character the authoritarian Islamic State in medieval India derived its sanction from "a traditionalist hierarchical social organisation", based upon, "distinctions of caste, creed and class and a culture built round classicism, scholasticism and court and Church patronage", and, "for their existence and sustenance all these were

dependant upon the terror they struck and awe they inspired"¹⁰. The Sufi mystics and Muslims alone identified themselves with the general mass of the people and to that extent were critical of and hence alienated from the State structure as well as the Church. This explains the tone of righteous indignation with which Sufis like Sheikh Farid condemned the inequities of the feudal society and ranged themselves with the weak and disinherited, those who patiently braved their disabilities and sufferings.

Sheikh Farid was the first poet in Punjabi literary tradition to herald an essentially humanistic commitment. There are several aspects of this commitment but none more significant than his deliberate choice of the language of the soil and exploitation of its rich repository of folk motifs to propagate his vision and message. By adopting a language that was neither the court language (which was Persian) nor the language of church and elitist culture of those times (which were Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit) Sheikh Farid virtually ushered in renaissance in medieval Punjab. All the distinctive feature of this renaissance such as moral fervour, spirit of freedom, opposition to distinction of caste, creed and faith, anti-particularism, anti-clericalism, acculturation of spoken languages and folk traditions which found their consummation in the history of the medieval Punjab, are anticipated in the teachings and sayings of Sheikh Farid.

Another significant feature of the humanistic commitment of Sheikh Farid lies in his celebration of work-a-day human experience. As Najm Hossain Syed has so convincingly demonstrated in his lucid monograph entitled, *Austere Rhythm of Farid*, "The setting of Farid's Verses takes place in the midst of his immediate experience, which is the daily experience of common man. The imagery is usually drawn from the busy working-day of common living. The hum of associations from the sweat of the farmers or other working men is a subtly contrasting accompaniment for the almost abstemious aloofness of Farid's basic rhythm"¹¹. Whether it is the experience of a forsaken woman, or a girl awaiting consummation of her marriage, of the steadily debilitating effects of ageing or of youthful adventures of marriage or death, of piety or hypocrisy, of lust for power and glory or failure and frustration, all these get orchestrated into a meaningful human pattern called forth by Sheikh Farid's "contemplating wisdom". On their part all these experiences redolent as they are of strong human passions and drives, impart an aura of warmth and glow to the atmosphere of austerity and abstemiousness that otherwise pervades his teachings. Similarly Sheikh Farid consciously and deliberately restricts his choice of poetic images to the topography and social and institutional life native to the people of the Punjab. His verses are deeply imbued with the colours and flavour of the rural Punjab. Similarly he adopts poetic forms of *Slok* (Dohra) and *Shabad* (*Bishanpada*) which are not derived from any alien tradition.

In all these three aspects, language, imagery and form, germane to the character of a poetic style Sheikh Farid aspires towards a quality of, what can be called for want of a better term, Punjabism. It is this quality of Punjabism which lends a distinct identity and personality to his works as distinguished from other Sufi Punjabi poets with the possible exception of Shah Hussain and to a limited

extent Bulhe Shah. But saying this is not to deny the universal appeal and import of his works. His essential humanistic concerns, his moral fervour and commitment, his aspiration towards freedom, his uncanny social awareness, all these posit a content of distinctly universal significance. It is truly remarkable that with his distinguished background he should have been so singularly successful in not only eschewing identification with the conquerors and rulers but also in steering clear of the influences of Arabo-Persian traditionalism which became more and more pronounced in later poets of Muslim mainstream of Punjabi literary tradition. To rediscover their soul the Punjabi people shall have to turn more and more towards the mainsprings of the inspiration that motivated and sustained such visionaries as Sheikh Farid and Guru Nanak.

NOTES

1. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. VI, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, p. 357.
2. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Adi Satik* (Farid Kot Wala Tika), Vol. III, Patiala, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1970, p. 1626.
3. Sant Singh Sekhon, Ed. Heer Waris Shah, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1969, p. 29.
4. Mian Mohd. Bakhsh Jehlmi, *Qissa Saif-ul-Maluk*, Patiala, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1971, pp. 655-56.
5. Quoted from the article entitled *The Achievement of Bhai Vir Singh* by Amrik Singh, included in *Bhai Vir Singh : Life, Times and Works*, edited by Gurbachan Singh Talib and Attar Singh, Chandigarh, Publication Bureau, Punjab University, 1973, p. 56.
6. Harnam Singh Shan, *Parakh Parchol*, Chandigarh, Publication Bureau, Panjab University, 1963, p. 13.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
9. D.P. Mukerji, *Diversities*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1958, p. 165.
10. See *Guru Nanak Today* (An Anthology) edited by Sant Singh Sekhon, Jandiala, Guru Gobind Singh Republic College, 1970, Article entitled 'Alienation as a Poetic Principle in Guru Nanak's Poetry' by Attar Singh, pp. 71-80.
11. Najm Hossain Syed, *Recurrent Patterns in Punjabi Poetry*, Lahore, Majlis Shah Hussain, 1968, pp. 29.

1. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲਲਿਤ ॥

ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ ॥

ਭਰਿ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਜਬ ਉਛਲੈ ਤਬ ਤਰਣੁ ਦੁਹੇਲਾ ॥

ਹਬੁ ਨਾ ਲਾਇ ਕਸੁੰਭੜੈ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਸੀ ਢੇਲਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਇਕ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਪਤਲੀ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੇ ਬੋਲਾ ॥
 ਦੁਧਾ ਥਣੀ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਫਿਰ ਹੋਇ ਨਾ ਮੇਲਾ ॥
 ਕਹੇ ਫਰੀਦੁ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ਸਹੁ ਅਲਾਏਸੀ ॥
 ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲਸੀ ਡੁਮਣਾ ਅਹਿ ਤਨੁ ਢੇਰੀ ਥੀਸੀ ॥

2. ਬੋਲੈ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਅਲਹ ਲਗੇ ॥
 ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਹੋਸੀ ਖਾਕ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਗੋਰ ਘਰੇ ॥
 ਆਜੁ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਟਾਕਿਮ ਕੁੰਜੜੀਆ ਮਨਹੁ ਮਚਿੰਦੜੀਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਘੁਮਿ ਨ ਆਈਐ ॥
 ਝੂਠੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਲਗਿ ਨਾ ਆਪੁ ਵਢਾਈਐ ॥
 ਬੋਲੀਐ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਝੂਠੁ ਨ ਬੋਲੀਐ ॥
 ਜੋ ਗੁਰ ਦਸੈ ਵਾਟ ਮੁਰੀਦਾ ਜੋਲੀਐ ॥
 ਛੈਲ ਲੰਘੰਦੇ ਪਾਰਿ ਗੋਰੀ ਮਨੁ ਧੀਰਿਆ ॥
 ਕੰਚਨ ਵੰਨੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਕਲਵਤਿ ਚੀਰਿਆ ॥
 ਸੇਖ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਜਗਿ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਥਿਰੁ ਰਹਿਆ ॥
 ਜਿਸੁ ਆਸਣਿ ਹਮ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਸ ਗਇਆ ॥
 ਕਤਿਕ ਕੁੰਜਾਂ ਚੇਤਿ ਡਉ ਸਾਵਣਿ ਬਿਜੁਲੀਆਂ ॥
 ਸੀਆਲੇ ਸੋਹੰਦੀਆਂ ਪਿਰ ਗਲਿ ਬਾਹੜੀਆਂ ॥
 ਚਲੇ ਚਲਣ ਹਾਰ ਵਿਚਾਰਾ ਲੇਇ ਮਨੋ ॥
 ਗੰਢੇਦਿਆਂ ਛਿਅ ਮਾਹ ਤੁੜੰਦਿਆਂ ਹਿਕੁ ਖਿਨੋ ॥
 ਜਿਮੀ ਪੁਛੈ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਖੇਵਟ ਕਿੰਨਿ ਗਏ ॥
 ਜਾਲਣ ਗੋਰਾਂ ਨਾਲਿ ਉਲਾਮੇ ਜੀਆ ਸਹੇ ॥
3. ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਧਨ ਵਰੀ ਸਾਹੇ ਲਏ ਲਿਖਾਇ ॥
 ਮਲਕ ਜਿ ਕੰਨੀ ਸੁਣੀਦਾ ਮੁਹੁ ਦੇਖਾਲੇ ਆਇ ॥
 ਜਿੰਦੁ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਕਢੀਐ ਹਡਾ ਕੂ ਕੜਕਾਇ ॥
 ਸਾਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨ ਚਲਨੀ ਜਿੰਦੁ ਕੂ ਸਮਝਾਇ ॥
 ਜਿੰਦੁ ਵਹੁਟੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਵਰ ਲੈ ਜਾਸੀ ਪਰਣਾਇ ॥
 ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਜੋਲਿ ਕੈ ਕੈ ਗਲਿ ਲਗੈ ਧਾਇ ॥
 ਵਾਲਹੁ ਨਿਕੀ ਪੁਰਸਲਾਤ ਕੰਨੀ ਨ ਸੁਣੀਆਇ ॥
 ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕਿੜੀ ਪਵੰਦਈ ਖੜਾ ਨ ਆਪੁ ਮੁਹਾਇ ॥
4. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਤਿਲ ਥੋੜੜੇ ਸੰਮਲਿ ਬੁਕੁ ਭਰੀ ॥
 ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਸਹੁ ਨਢੜਾ ਤਾਂ ਥੋੜਾ ਮਾਣੁ ਕਰੀ ॥
5. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਅਖੀ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਤੀਣੀਆਂ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਰੀਣੇ ਕੰਨ ॥
 ਸਾਖ ਪਕੰਦੀ ਆਈਆ ਹੋਰ ਕਰੇਦੀ ਵੰਨ ॥
6. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਕਿਆ ਭਵਹਿ ਵਣਿ ਕੰਡਾ ਮੋੜੋਹਿ ॥
 ਵਸੀ ਰਬੁ ਹਿਆਲੀਐ ਜੰਗਲੁ ਕਿਆ ਢੂਢੋਹਿ ॥
7. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਗਲੀਏ ਚਿਕੜੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਘਰੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੇਹੁ ॥
 ਚਲਾ ਤ ਭਿਜੈ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਰਹਾ ਤ ਤੁਟੇ ਨੇਹੁ ॥

8. ਭਿਜਉ ਸਿਜਉ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਅਲਹ ਵਰਸਉ ਮੇਹੁ ॥
ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਸਜਣਾ ਤੁਟਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਨੇਹੁ ॥
9. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਕਰ ਖੰਡੁ ਨਿਵਾਤ ਗੁੜੁ ਮਾਖਿਓ ਮਾਂਝਾ ਦੁਧੁ ॥
ਸਭੇ ਵਸਤੂ ਮਿਠੀਆਂ ਰਬ ਨ ਪੁਜਨਿ ਤੁਧੁ ॥
10. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਲਾਵਣੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਭੁਖ ॥
ਜਿਨਾ ਖਾਧੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਘਣੇ ਸਹਿਨਗੇ ਦੁਖ ॥
11. ਨਾਤੀ ਧੌਤੀ ਸੰਬਹੀ ਸੁਤੀ ਆਇ ਨਹਿੰਦੁ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੁ ਬੇੜੀ ਹਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਗਈ ਕਥੂਰੀ ਗੰਧ ॥
12. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚਿੰਤ ਖਟੋਲਾ ਵਾਣੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਵਿਛਾਵਣਿ ਲੇਫੁ ॥
ਏਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਤੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਚੇ ਵੇਖੁ ॥
13. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਇਐ ਬੈਸਣਾ ਸਾਂਈ ਮੁਝੇ ਨ ਦੇਹਿ ॥
ਜੇ ਤੂ ਏਵੇ ਰਖਸੀ ਜੀਉ ਸਰੀਰਹੁ ਲੇਹਿ ॥
14. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਆਟਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਇਕਨਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਲੋਣੁ ॥
ਅਗੈ ਗਏ ਸਿੰਵਾਪਸਨਿ ਚੋਟਾ ਖਾਸੀ ਕਉਣੁ ।
15. ਪਾਸਿ ਦਮਾਮੇ ਛਤੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਭੇਰੀ ਸਡੋ ਰਡ ॥
ਜਾਇ ਸੁਤੇ ਜੀਰਾਣਿ ਮਹਿ ਥੀਏ ਅਤੀਮਾ ਗਡ ॥
16. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਭੀ ਗਏ ॥
ਕੂੜਾ ਸਉਦਾ ਕਰਿ ਗਏ ਗੌਰੀ ਆਇ ਪਏ ॥
17. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੰਨਿ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਸੂਫੁ ਗਲਿ ਦਿਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਗੁੜੁ ਵਾਤਿ ॥
ਬਾਹਰਿ ਦਿਸੇ ਚਾਨਣਾ ਦਿਲਿ ਅੰਧਿਆਰੀ ਰਾਤਿ ॥
18. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕੋਠੇ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਾੜੀਆ ਏਤੁ ਨ ਲਾਏ ਚਿਤੁ ॥
ਮਿਟੀ ਪਈ ਅਤੋਲਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਨ ਹੋਸੀ ਮਿਤ ॥
19. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਕਰ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਦਿਲ ਦੀ ਲਾਹਿ ਭਰਾਂਦਿ ॥
ਦਰਵੇਸਾਂ ਨੋ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਰੁਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਰਾਂਦਿ ॥
20. ਜਾਂ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਤਾ ਚਾਉ ਵੀਵਾਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਮਲੇ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਏਹੋ ਪਛੋਤਾਉ ਵਤਿ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਨ ਥੀਐ ॥
21. ਕਲਰ ਕੇਰੀ ਛਪੜੀ ਆਇ ਉਲਥੇ ਹੰਝ ॥
ਚਿੰਜੂ ਬੋੜਨਿ ਨ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਉਡਣ ਸੰਦੀ ਡੰਝ ॥
22. ਚਲਿ ਚਲਿ ਗਈਆਂ ਪੰਖੀਆਂ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਏ ਤਲ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਸਰੁ ਭਰਿਆ ਭੀ ਚਲਸੀ ਥਕੇ ਕਲਲ ਇਕਲ ॥
23. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਭੰਨੀ ਧੜੀ ਸਵੰਨਵੀ ਟੁਟੀ ਨਾਗਰ ਲਜੁ ॥
ਅਜਰਾਈਲ ਫਰੇਸਤਾ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਨਾਠੀ ਅਜੁ ॥
24. ਚਬਣ ਚਲਣ ਰਤੰਨ ਸੇ ਸੁਣੀਅਰ ਬਹਿ ਗਏ ।
ਹੇੜੇ ਮੁਤੀ ਥਾਹ ਸੇ ਜਾਨੀ ਚਲਿ ਗਏ ॥
25. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰਬ ਖਜੂਰੀ ਪਕੀਆਂ ਮਾਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਵਹੰਨਿ ॥
ਜੋ ਜੋ ਵੰਞੇ ਡੀਹੜਾ ਸੋ ਉਮਰ ਹਥ ਪਵੰਨਿ ।

26. ਕੰਧੀ ਉਤੇ ਰੁਖੜਾ ਕਿਚਰਕੁ ਬੰਨੇ ਧੀਰ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਕਚੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਰਖੀਐ ਕਿਚਰੁ ਤਾਂਈ ਨੀਰੁ ॥
27. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਹਉ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਪੰਖੀਆ ਜੰਗਲਿ ਜਿਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ॥
ਕਕਰੁ ਚੁਗਨਿ ਬਲਿ ਵਸਨਿ ਰਬ ਨ ਛੋਡਨ ਪਾਸੁ ॥
28. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੁਤਿ ਫਿਰੀ ਵਣੁ ਕੰਬਿਆ ਪਤ ਝੜੇ ਝੜਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥
ਚਾਰੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਢੂਢੀਆਂ ਰਹਣੁ ਕਿਥਾਉ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
29. ਸਰਵਰ ਪੰਖੀ ਹੋਕੜੋ ਫਾਹੀ ਵਾਲ ਪਚਾਸ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਲਹਰੀ ਗਡੁ ਥਿਆ ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਸ ॥
30. ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨਾ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ ॥
ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਹੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ ॥

THE SACRED POETRY OF SHEIKH FARID FROM THE GRANTH SAHIB, RENDERED INTO ENGLISH

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

IN RAGA ASA

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE INDIVISIBLE SUPREME BEING, REALIZED
THROUGH HIS GRACE

Those alone are true devotees whose heart is sincerely
in love with God :

The ones whose heart is belied by their tongue are false,
inconstant¹.

The true devotees soaked in God's love are ever in ecstasy
of realization ;

Those indifferent to Him are a burden on earth.

The true devotees are those whom God attaches unto Himself ;

Blessed is their birth ; truly fruitful their life. (2)

Thou art the Cherisher—unfathomable, inaccessible ;

I worship² at their feet who have realized Thee.

Lord, I seek shelter in Thee ;

Thou alone the bestower of forgiveness.

Grant to Sheikh Farid the charity of Thy devotion.

Thus saith Sheikh Farid: My loved friends, attach yourselves
to Allah :

A day will come when this body must turn to dust,
and lodge in the lowly grave.

Listen Sheikh Farid, union with Allah may come about

Shouldst thou restrain the cries of these cranes of desire,
frisking about in thy mind.

Should one realize that death is inescapable,

After which return is barred,

One will then not lose the higher life

in pursuit of this worthless world.

Let thy words be ever what is truthful and pure :

1. Lit. of unbaked clay.

2. Lit. Kiss

Shun what is false ;
 Let the disciple ever tread the path shown by the master.
 Splendid heroes¹ cross over the stream;
 The faint-hearted female takes heart from their sight :
 Those indifferent to God shall have their golden
 frames sawn through.

Listen thou Sheikh² : none ever got eternal life in this world;
 Many before our day have warmed this seat. (5)
 The flying cranes of autumn,
 the forest-fires of summer; the lightning flashes of Sawan³ :
 Neither these nor the long joyful embrace of long winter's
 nights shall last.⁴

Consider well, what is evanescent must go from hence:
 Long is the labour of joining hearts in love ;
 A moment may see them cast asunder⁵.
 Asked the earth the sky, tell over count of the great ones who
 have been.
 Said the sky : they all bide time in graves, bearing the
 burden of God's reproaches.

Adi Granth—Page 588

IN RAGA SUHI

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE INDIVISIBLE SUPREME BEING
 REALIZED THROUGH HIS GRACE :

In fever of anguish I burn and in fits of regret rub my hands ;
 In my frenzy of passion seek I the Beloved.
 Beloved, Thou hast taken some offence at me.
 I am to blame for this, not He.
 To the Beloved's true value was I indifferent.
 And now when youth is past, am fallen into regrets.
 Thou Koel sable-winged, what hath darkened thee ?
 Sorrow of separation from the Beloved hath singed my wings.
 To one separated from her Lord, what comfort ?
 Through His grace alone may she find union.
 In Life am I a lone female by an unfrequented well,
 Bereft of friends and companions :
 God in His grace may join me to holy company.

1. In this great poetic symbol, 'heroes,' are devotees of God, and the 'female' stands for persons of weak spiritual power.

2. Refers here to himself, as well as the haughty class of Muslim divines that went by this name.

3. The rainy month, July–August.

4. Here is a warning, as also in a number of other slokas, against expectation of the perpetuation of life and its pleasures.

5. The import here is mystical, as referring to devotion to God.

As I look around, God alone I find my Succourer.
 Our path through life is cheerless—sharper than the sword,
 narrow in extreme.
 Over such a path doth my way lie :
 Listen Sheikh Farid, contemplate thy departure hence—
 The hour of dawn is arrived.

IN RAGA SUHI LALIT

Listen O man,, thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat
 when it was yet time :
 In the lake swollen with tempest, how shall it float ?
 Fugitive are pleasures like Kasumbha¹, burning away at a touch :
 Touch it not, beloved, lest it wither away.
 This frail life-female is atremble under the Master's stern
 accents.
 Past is youth; never will the breast be brimful again of milk;
 never again the love-embrace !
 Saith Farid : Listen, sisters of my soul !
 One day life's Swan shall take his reluctant flight !
 This frame will turn a dust-heap.

(Adi Granth—Page 794)

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE INDIVISIBLE SUPREME BEING REALIZED THROUGH HIS GRACE :

SLOKAS OF SHEIKH FARID

The day this life-female shall be claimed² is pre-ordained;
 The Angel of Death³ ye have heard speak of,
 will show his face, and draw this frail life out, twisting and torturing the
 frame to the marrow in the bones :
 This day pre-ordained shall nowise be put off—
 tell this to thy life :
 This life is the bride, death the bridegroom who will carry
 her away in wedlock;
 On whose shoulder will the body weep after giving away the
 bride with its own hands ?⁴
 On the other side of Death is the bridge⁵, narrower than hair's breadth,
 over the chasm of hell, full with deafening cries;

1. A flower yielding a reddish dye, easily was hable-sybmol of frailty.
2. That is, by Death, figured here as the bridegroom.
3. Malak, here Malakaul-Maut—the Angel of Death according to Muslim belief.
4. The imagery in this Sloka is of the giving away of a bride, who in India is customarily loth to leave the parents' home.
5. According to Muslim belief, Sirat, an extremely narrow path passing over hell, which the righteous alone can cross over.

Listen Farid : Terrible will be the hubbub there—
 let not thyself be robbed through thoughtlessness. (1)
 Sheikh Farid, hard is the way of God's devotees;
 Wretched that I am, I follow only the way of the world :
 Burdened with this bundle of worldliness,
 where may I cast it off ? (2)

(Related to the above is the reflection contained in the next Sloka :)

Worldliness is a hidden fire clouding thought and vision :
 I thank the Master for this gift of indifference;
 Else would it burn me through. (3)

Farid, had I known the store of life¹ so slender,
 sparing would I be of scattering it about;
 Did I know the Beloved so indifferent, less would I
 show of woman's vanity. (4)

(Theme continued)

Did I know the knot of love so frail,
 firmer would I tie it :
 Lord, none to me is dear as Thou—thus have
 I determined after life's sojourn. (5)

Farid, if thou be possessed of true² wisdom,
 blacken not the record of the life;
 Look into thy heart³ (what thy deeds are.) (6)

Farid, strike not back those that strike thee;
 In utter humility and forgiveness⁴ turn towards thy home. (7)

Farid, time when thou couldst garner merit, wast thou
 engrossed in the world;
 Now with Death approaching⁵, must thou be loaded for departure
 the moment thy sack is full. (8)

(RELATED TO THE ABOVE IN THEME ARE SLOKAS UPTO 13)

Look Farid, what hath befallen thee;
 Thy beard hath turned grey;
 The end⁶ is approaching, the past far behind. (9)

Look Farid, what hath come to pass :
 life sweet as sugar is turned to bitter poison⁶;
 In this state to whom but the Lord may I carry my
 tale of sorrow ? (10)

1. Original, til, grains of sesame.
2. Original, latif (Arabic : subtle, fine).
3. Lit. thy shirt-collar (girivan)
4. Lit. kiss their feet
5. Lit. the next world.
6. Loss of pleasures is meant.

Farid, thy eyes have grown feeble¹

thy ears lost power to hear;

This body is now like a ripening stalk,
changing colour. (11)

Farid, those who thought not on God in their days of vigour

Rarely may they turn to Him while gone gray :

Devote thyself to the Master while youth is still on thee. (12)

(The next Sloka contains a comment on the above by Guru Amar Das,
third in Guru Nanak's line of Apostles.)

Farid, the Master may be served in youth or old age,
as one may turn to Him :

This devotion comes not of man's own effort or desire,

This cup of the Master's love comes to whoever

He chooses to bless. (13)

Farid, I saw eyes that once captivated the world—

Eyes that would at one time not bear a daub too bold or collyrium,
pecked at by birds. (14)

Farid, despite the loudest shrieking warnings

against evil, and exhortation to good,

For the heart led astray by Satan what turning away ? (15)

Farid, wouldst thou seek the Master of all,

Look to the grass under thy feet :

Be like it cut and trampled.² (16)

Farid, speak not ill of the earth—its merit is great;

While living, it is trampled by us;

Dead, it covers us over. (17)

Farid, love of God and greed go not together :

With greed love is rendered impure.

Such love is frail as leaking straw roof
against rain. (18)

Farid, why wanderest thou over wild places,
trampling thorns under thy feet ?

God abides in the heart : seek Him not in lonely wastes. (19)

Farid, once these frail legs of mine scoured
over hill and desert;

Today the prayer-jug³ at hand is removed
a hundred miles.⁴ (20)

Farid, in separation from the Master
the nights seem endlessly long;

1. Lit. thin.

2. Humility and penance are implied.

3. Kuza : small earthenware jug for water for ablution before namaz, the Muslim prayer.

4. Original-koh (kos).

My sides are burning in pain.
 Cursed is he life of those that have sought
 other than Him. (21)

Farid, may my flesh burn over red embers of fire,
 If ever I kept back¹ anything from the friends of my heart. (22)

Farid, the ignorant peasant seeks luscious²
 grapes while sowing thistles;³
 And seeks to wear silk while carding and
 spinning rough wool. (23)

Farid, the lanes are muddy; the Beloved's home far,
 Yet my love for Him is deep;
 If I stir out, my cloak⁴ will get wet;
 If I stay back, am I false to my love. (24)

Let the cloak be drenched through;
 let it rain never so much—
 Go I must to meet the Loved One,⁵
 So my love prove not false. (25)

Farid, I feared a touch of dust soiling my turban;
 simple heart !
 A day will come when dust will eat too
 into his head. (26)

Sugar, sweets, candy, butter, rich creamy⁶ milk—
 Lord, nothing for Thy devotees approaches the
 joy in Thee. (27)

Farid, my subsistence is on a dry crust of bread⁷;
 Hard will be the lot of those seeking to indulge
 their palate with delicacies. (28)

(Theme continued)

Friend, eat thy hard crust of bread; take simple cold water :
 Envy not the delicacies another is enjoying. (29)

This night I couched not with my Lord;
 My limbs are all in torture with unfulfilment :
 I ask the woman cast off,
 In what agony must thy nights be passed ? (30)

-
1. May imply keeping back one's worldly goods or secrets of the heart.
 2. Dakh Bijouri : a fine variety of grape.
 3. Original : kikar—acacia tree.
 4. Lit. : woollen sheet or blanket (kamali).
 5. Plural in the original, but the sense rendered is meant.
 6. Lit. Buffalo's milk, favoured in Punjab, and rich with cream.
 7. Lit. : flat-cake of wood.

(This sloka may perhaps give some biographical detail. At one shrine a pan-cake of wood is actually kept as being Sheikh Farid's sustenance during (his penance !)

8. This import is mystical in Slokas 30 to 32.

(Theme continued in Slokas 31 and 32)

She who finds comfort neither in the husband's
home nor in the parents';
Neglected by her Love—what kind of wedded wife
would she be? (31)

In the Husband's home or the Parents', she is
her Lord's—the Lord inaccessible, unfathomable;
Saith Nanak, the happily married wife is one
on whom her Lord's favour falls. (32)¹

Man's life is like a gaily-decked female,
Perfect in toilet and make-up in care-free sleep;
In the end the fragrance of musk is gone;
Foul odours² alone remain. (33)

I fear not loss of youth were not the Beloved's love lost;
Many a youth hath withered away for lack of love's sustenance. (34)

Farid: anguish is my bed, suffering the bed-strings,
Separation from the Beloved my bed-sheets;
Such is my life;
Cast Thy glance of compassion on it, Lord. (35)

(Theme Continued)

Sorrow of the Beloved's separation is the Lord of Life :
Saith Farid : like to the cremation-yard is the
heart that knoweth not such sorrow. (36)

Farid, the world's pleasures³ are poison-shoots
coated with sugar :

Some there are who spend their days
cultivating these;

Others uproot them from the field. (37)

Farid, one part⁴ of the day didst thou waste in
wandering, part in sleep.

When God asks thee to render thy account,
What will thou say was thy life's aim? (38)

Farid, hast thou noticed the Bell beaten without blame?
What may then be the fate of us sinners? (39)

(Theme continued)

See the bell beaten every hour, every quarter-hour :
Friend with beautiful frame sound as Bell's,
Without devotion will thy life's night be
one of torment. (40)

1. This Sloka is of Guru Nanak's composition, containing comment on the foregoing Sloka of Sheikh Farid.
2. Original : hing—asafoetida.
3. Interpreted generally as referring to woman.
4. Lit. four pahars. constituting half the length of day and night.

Sheikh Farid hath gone old, all atremble his frame;
 Though life's span be a hundred years,
 In the end will it turn to dust. (41)
 Lord, Farid begs this of Thee;
 Give me not to hang on another¹ for favour :
 Should such be Thy will, take then this life out of me. (42)
 See the blacksmith with axe slung on shoulder,
 A pitcher of water on his head,
 Seeking to cut down a *van* tree :
 Saith Farid to thee, friend blacksmith :
 Spare this tree;
 Under this I seek my Beloved Lord;
 To thee it may yield no more than charcoal.² (43)
 Farid, some there are who have excess of meal.³
 Others do not have even salt for it⁴ :
 In the Beyond alone will it appear,
 Which is subjected to hard blows for a life of sin. (44)
 Those who commanded drums to be beaten for them,
 Umbrellas to rise over their heads;
 Trumpets to proclaim their glory—
 Ultimately have they been laid to rest in the graveyard,
 Buried under the earth, helpless. (45)
 Saith Farid, those who erected vast mansions,
 halls and bowers—
 Their commerce in the world false,
 ultimately the grave their abode. (45)
 Saith Farid, thy quilt hath numerous stitches to keep it together;
 But none to thy own frame;
 Friend, however revered and great,⁵ all must depart
 when their turn cometh. (47)
 Saith Farid, the Angel of Death steals in,
 Despite our two burning lamps;
 He comes; takes the fort, denudes the vessel
 And leaving, extinguishes the lamps. (48)
 Farid, see how cotton and sesame are crushed in the press;
 so also sugarcane;
 How paper and the pot are put into flames—
 Such will be the punishment of evildoers. (49)
 Farid, those who carry the prayer-mat on

1. Lit. at another's door.

2. This graphic description is variously interpreted, but the sense suggested here appears to be meant.

3. Stands for worldly goods in general.

4. This may be an 'autobiographical' touch.

5. Original. . . Mashaikh, Sheikh—men of Muslim holy Orders.

their shoulders and wear rough wool,¹
But bear daggers in their hearts and utter falsehood
with glib tongues—

These are bright outside but have the dark night
in their hearts. (50)

Farid, my body is macerated in penance—
Not a drop² of blood will ooze from it if cut;
Those dyed in God³ have no blood left in them. (51)

(Added by Guru Amar Das)

This frame is all blood;
Without blood a body may not be;
Fear of God emaciates the body;
Banishes from it the blood of greed;
As fire purifies metals, so does fear of God cast out
impurities of foul thinking;
Nanak, those alone are beautiful who are soaked in God's dye.⁴ (52)

Farid, seek a vast lake wherein thou mayst find
what thou seekest—God's Name;

Why seek a filthy pound, muddying thy hands⁵? (53)

Saith Farid, in youth this life-female loved not the Lord;
Grown in years, she died :

In the grave her soul walleth:

Lord, Thee I failed to meet. (54)

Listen Farid, the hair on thy head, thy beard and
thy lips all are greyed;

Thou thoughtless madman, wake up !

What art still at thy idle pleasure? (55)

(Continued)

Farid, how long this play of thoughtless pleasures ?

Wake up to serve the Master !

Thy few days of life are fast slipping by. (56)

Farid, set not thy heart on mansions and bowers;

Under the immeasurable heap of earth none will thy succourer be. (57)

(Continued)

Farid, love not mansions and wealth;

Keep in thy mind mighty Death :

Contemplate alone where thou hast perforce to go. (58)

Farid, give up what brings thee no merit,

1. This was the usual wear of the Sufi (from *suf*, wool.)

2. Original, ratti, a grain's weight.

3. Here is a pun on ratte (dyed) and rat (blood).

4. The dye as symbol for the spiritual life is also used in the Koran (Sibghatu-Allah.)

5. Lake is a great teacher or creed; pond a petty or narrow one.

Lest thou be disgraced at the Court Divine. (59)
Farid, serve the Master, throw all doubt from thy mind;
Men of God need to be forbearing like trees. (60)
Farid, despite my black wear and clothing full of sins am I—
In the world's eyes I yet a Dervish appear. (61)
The crop destroyed by water will not revive if soaked again in water.
Saith Farid : As this, one bereft of God will find no
respite from sorrow. (62)

When a virgin, her heart fondly thought of marriage;
Marriage bought with it entanglements :
Alas, impossible it is for the state of virginity to return. (63)
On the marge of the pond of the world have alighted Swans;¹
They dip not their beaks in it,
Spreading their pinions for flight ever. (64)

(Theme Continued)

The Swan hath alighted in the field of chaff;
People scare it away;
The ignorant multitude not knowing,
The Swan pecks not at chaff. (65)
Gone are the birds which brought life to the pools;
The entire pool will flow off, leaving alone the Lotuses.¹ (65)
Farid, in the grave a stone thy pillow,
The earth thy bed; the worm will eat thy flesh;
For aeons wilt thou lie on one side, unchanged. (67)
Farid, the beautiful pitcher of the body is broken,
The firm cord of breath is snapped :
In what home Izrael, Angel of Death,
Finds entertainment tonight ? (68)

(Theme continued)

Farid, such is the end : the beautiful pitcher will break;
the firm cord is snapped :
To what end were born those who were merely a burden on earth ? (69)
Farid, thou shameless² truant from prayer :
Worthless is thy tenor of life :
Never hast thou come to the House of God to pray.³ (70)

(Continued)

Wake up betimes Farid, perform thy ablutions, engage in prayers;
A head not bowing before the Lord merits not to remain on
the shoulders. (71)

-
1. Symbols for men of God.
 2. Original. kuttia—thou dog !
 3. Lit. Never turned up in the mosque for thy daily prayers.

What worth the head obstinate in God-denial ?

Worthy such head to burn under the pot,

To be fuel to the fire. (72)

Consider Farid, where are thy parents who begot thee ?

Gone on a never-ending journey—still is thy heart unmoved to see thy
own end. (73)

Farid, make thy mind straight, free of ups and downs of passing passions :

Then mayst thou escape the furnace-blast of hell. (74)

(Theme continued by Guru Arjan Dev)

Farid, the Creator is manifest in His creation;

the creation is in Him;

Cavil not at any one—He pervades all. (75)

Farid, if while cutting my umbilical cord, my throat were a little gagged,

Life would then escape these trials, this suffering. (76)

Gone are those pearly teeth, those quick-moving¹

feet, those sparkling eyes, vigilant ears :

A loud cry hath arisen from the flesh at departure of such companions. (77)

Farid, return thou good for evil; bear no revenge in thy heart :

Thus will thy body be free of maladies,

And thy life blest. (78)

Farid, this bird of life is a passing guest;

The world a lovely garden :

Hear the drum of departure beaten since dawn;

Get ready for the journey hence. (79)

Farid, at midnight is scattered fragrant musk;

Those asleep share not this blessing² :

What union for those with eyes slumber-oppressed³ ? (80)

Farid, I had imagined alone I were unhappy;

Behold, the entire world is by suffering gripped :

From my house-top I saw, this fire hath spared no home. (81)

(Theme continued by Guru Arjan Dev in Slokas 82 and 83)

Farid, this world is so inviting :

In its midst is a garden-spot of poison-bearing plants :

This poison injures not those blessed with the Master's grace. (82)

Farid, this life is full of delights with this body beautiful :

Rare are those that seek the Beloved and not the world. (83)

Mighty river, erode not thy banks; thou too art answerable to thy Maker :

But what power in the river to flow this way or that ?

God's will alone guide its course. (84)

1. The epithets herein are added to suit the rendering.

2. Original, will obtain nothing.

3. A noble mystical state of joy and communion is expressed in this Sloka, one of the most beautiful in this collection.

Farid, thy long life hath thus been passed :
Thy days sorrow-filled, thy nights lying on thorns.
Now towards the close the Pilot shouts :
"Thy boat's in jaws of storm." (85)

(Theme continued)

The long river of life flows on,
bringing down the sandy banks;
Yet the boat is safe from the storm, if the Pilot be attentive. (86)

Farid, scores profess to be my friends: but true friends
see I nowhere;

For one true and devoted friend my heart yearns as in
smouldering fire.¹ (87)

Farid, the senses² keep always a tumult around the soul,
causing pain and anxiety;

Let me plug these ears—

Blow storm never so loud. (88)

Farid, in this life is joy in God, attractive like the
ripe dates and rivers of honey of paradise;

Realize these, since with each passing day the grip of Death
tightens. (89)

Farid, penance hath left my body a skeleton;³
crows peck at my soles;

God still hath not revealed Himself—
such is my destiny. (90)

(Theme continued in Slokas 91 and 92)

Thou Crow pecking at my emaciated body, eating away
its flesh,

Pray touch not these two eyes, so I may have sight of the
Beloved. (91)

Pray Crow, peck not at my body, fly off from where
thou art settled;

Swallow not the flesh of this body wherein is lodged
the Beloved. (92)

Farid, the lowly grave makes call to
man to come to this everlasting abode—

Saying, come to me thou must; fear not death ! (93)

These eyes have seen the vast world vanish into eternity;
Each is caught in his own trials;

1. Lit. fire made from cow-dung.

2. Lit. body.

3. This Sloka and the two next are related in theme. This imagery is found elsewhere too in the spiritual poetry of India. Sloka numbered 90 resembles one ascribed to Sheikh Farid by a Muslim writer.

Nor am I free from mine. (94)
 Listen Man, shouldst thou ennoble thyself,
 Then mayst thou have union with the Creator and have
 true bliss;
 Whoever is for God, the world will be for him.¹ (95)
 Life is like a tree growing on the river's bank—
 how long may it last ?
 How long may the unbaked pitcher tetain water ?
 Farid, lofty mansions have been deserted—
 Their inmates gone to occupy abodes under the earth;
 In the lowly graves abide the dead.
 Tell the proud ones of the world : Engage in prayer,
 for the Departure is at hand. (97)
 Farid, Death is visible as the opposite bank of the river:
 Beyond is said to be flaming hell, resounding with
 ear-piercing shrieks:
 Some there are who have realization of this;
 Many go about wrapped in thoughtlessness;
 Know that the deeds done in this world bear
 witness against us in the next. (98)
 Farid, life is like a crane sporting on the river's bank,
 Suddenly on it hath swooped the swift hawk;
 As comes this hawk from God, all sporting is forgotten;
 God sends on man what never he thought or imagined. (99)
 This body weighing three and a half maunds² is sustained
 by food and water;
 Man comes into the world with a vast store of hopes;
 As visible Death approaches, smashing through all doors,
 Those loving friends and brothers perforce surrender thee
 to him.
 Behold Man, departing this world borne on shoulders of
 four pall-bearers;
 Farid, only the good deeds done in this life stand by us in
 the next. (100)
 Farid, I am a sacrifice to those birds³ who pass their days in
 solitary places,
 Picking pebbles, living on sandy mounds, yet turning not
 away from God. (101)
 Farid, behold ! seasons change, woods are shaken in storms,
 trees shed leaves;
 Scour the world over, no escape wilt thou find from
 change. (102)

1. The original is in the first person, as from God.
 2. The 'maund' in early times weighed less than now-a-days.
 3. Hermits living in solitude are meant.

Farid, tear thy clothes to strips; assume coarse woolen wear.
Assume whatever wear will bring thee near to the Beloved. (103)

(Theme continued by Guru Amar Das)

Why tear off thy silken robes; why wear wool ?
Saith Nanak, within the course of daily life in the home
mayst thou attain to the Beloved, if thy heart be sincere. (104)

(Continued by Guru Arjan Dev)

Farid, those proud of worldly greatness, wealth and looks
Will of the Beloved remain deprived, as sandhills of rain. (105)

Listen Farid, frightening are the faces of those
indifferent to God;

In this world would they suffer;

Hereafter shall they not be honoured. (106)

Farid, though alive, art thou no better than dead—

Thou hast not arisen from sleep at dawn to pray;

Thou hast forgotten God, but know God hath not forgotten thee. (107)

(Theme continued by Guru Arjan Dev uptill Sloka 111)

Listen Farid, the Lord abides ever lovely, eternally fulfilled.

The purest of wears comes to those dyed in God's dye. (109)

Listen Farid, bear joy and sorrow alike; cleanse thy self
of evil thoughts;

He alone shall enter the Court Divine whose will is bent to
Allah's will. (109)

Listen Farid, the world is subject to all kinds of stresses;
so is each man.¹

He alone escapes this who is under Allah's² protection. (110)

Farid; our hearts are dyed in the world that is worthless;

Hard is the way of life of God's devotees:

This may come by the greatest good fortune.³ (111)

Prayer done in the first part of night is like the flower:

Prayer continued later in the night the fruit thereof;

These blessings of the Lord's descend upon those who keep
vigils in prayer. (112)

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)⁴

The Lord's blessings may not be forced out of His hand:

Some may not get these though awake;

1. Original, thou,

2. Note the Guru's use of the orthodox Muslim name of God, Allah.

3. Original, Karma, which implies fortune made by one's meritorious actions.

4. Sloka 113 is thus ascribed in Puratan Janam Sakhi, probably the earliest biography of Guru Nanak, to him. In Siri Rag, on page 83 of Adi Granth also this Sloka is recorded as Guru Nanak's.

On some He may confer these shaking them out of slumber. (113)

Thou who lookest for bliss with thy husband,

What is lacking to give thee joy,

with all thy charms ?

Listen, the truly blessed in marriage look for

joy nowhere but in obedience to the Spouse.¹ (114)

Make forbearance thy bow and bow-string;

The arrow too of forbearance—

God will not let it go off its mark. (115)

(Theme continued for two Slokas)

Those who adopt forbearance and take upon themselves

suffering—

Such alone will be near God : their secret strength none will

know. (116)

Make forbearance thy life's ideal; learn hard this lesson;

Thus wilt thou become a mighty river, not a petty channel. (117)

Farid, know the ascetic's path is hard;

This devotion thou hast is only of the surface

Rare is the man who truly treads it. (118)

In separation from God my body burns like the oven.

My bones flame like firewood;

I would walk till I be dead tired,

Would walk on my head,

To find union with the Beloved. (119)

(Theme continued by the holy Gurus.)

Thou needst not burn thyself like the oven nor put in

flames thy bones :

Why torture thy poor limbs ? Behold !—the Beloved in thy own

Heart.² (12)

I seek the Lord elsewhere—Behold ! He is here with me :

Saith Nanak, the Inaccessible may not be approached,

But the Divine Guide may grant thee a sight of Him. (121)³

The sight of graceful Swans on water excited in cranes

the desire likewise to swim;

The poor Cranes got only drowned, head downwards.⁴ (122)

I sought companionship with one whom I took for a Swan;

I would shun him had I known him for a wretched Crane. (123)

1. This rendering is 'shaped' a little.

2. With minor verbal variation this Sloka occurs among Guru Nanak's own on page 1411, **Adi Granth.**

3. This Sloka is of the composition of Guru Ram Das (vide **Adi Granth**, page 1318, **Rag Kanra**).

4. Slokas 122 and 123 appear as of the composition of Guru Amar Das in **Rag Wadhans**, on page 585 of **Adi Granth**.

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)

Talk not of Swans and Cranes—His grace alone suffices :
Saith Nanak, should He so wish, He may turn Crow to Swan.¹ (124)
On the marge of the Lake sits a solitary bird, with numerous
snares around :

This body is caught amid waves of desire—God's mercy
alone may save it ! (125)

What the word, what the qualities, what rich jewels of speech ?
What wear to adopt, the Lord's love to win ? (126)

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)

The word is Humility, the quality Forgiveness;
Sweet speech the jewel :
Sister, wear these ever—then alone will thy Lord by thine.² (127)
One who is wise yet innocent as a child :
Mighty yet forbearing as though without might;
One who shares with others his store though slender—
Rare is a devotee with such qualities. (128)
Speak never a rude word to any—the Lord Eternal abideth in all :
Break no heart—know each being is a priceless jewel. (129)

(Theme continued)

Each heart is a jewel; evil it is to break any;
Shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no
one's heart. (130)

(Pages 1377—1384 Adi Granth)

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1. With a minor variation, this Sloka appears among Guru Nanak's in Siri Rag, page 82 of Adi Granth.

2. The Puratan Janamsakhi, ascribed this reply to Guru Nanak, in the colloquy between him and Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim).

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