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ABSTRACT

Thesis for the Ph.D. Degree of Durham University
entitled "Mystical Doctrines of Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār"
(Based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair).

The work entitled "Mystical doctrines of Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār (Based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair), has been written, in order to analyse and explain thoroughly, the Sūfī views of a poet, who was considered to be better than the celebrated Sūfī poet Rūmī. 'Attār is the nom-de-plume of Sheikh Farīd-ud-Dīn of Nishābūr, a famous district of Khurāsān in Irān, who lived in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. and was a renowned practical Sūfī-Saint of his times. Mantiq-ut-Tair is his best composition, representing him as a great Sūfī and a first-rate poet of the Persian language; but nevertheless, it has not received the proper attention of the scholars. The extant interpretations of the book are very defective and misleading.

The present work, divided into four main chapters, is intended to evaluate the contribution of 'Attār to the Sūfī literature. In the first chapter, his biography has been gleaned from the original and authentic Persian and Arabic sources along with the poet's own sayings as recorded in his own verses.

The second chapter contains a critical account of the origin and development of Sūfism upto the time of 'Attār, in order to show the shape of the movement as found by 'Attār. Different standard works on Sūfism, in English, Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Hindi, have been consulted in its preparation.

The third chapter comprises a thorough and critical analysis of 'Attār's mystical doctrines, in general, as well as, with special reference to his Mantiq-ut-Tair. In fact, it is a comparative study of 'Attār, comparing and contrasting his Sūfic conceptions with the parallel ideas in other religions viz., Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism etc.

The fourth and the last part of the book is a recapitulation of what has been discussed and explained in the preceding chapters, bringing out the focal points of 'Attār's mystical theories and experiences.

An exhaustive work on 'Attār has been conspicuous by its absence. The present volume is a humble effort to fill up that gap.

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MYSTICAL DOCTRINES OF FARĪD-UD-DĪN 'AṬṬĀR

(Based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair)

SOBHARANI BASU

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

University of Durham

October 10, 1966.

هفت شهر عشق را عطار گشت
ما هنوز اندر خم یک کوچه ایم
رومی

Attar traversed the seven cities of Love
while we are still at the corner of
a street.

Rūmī

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Scheme of Transliteration

ا	a	ص	ṣ
ب	b	ض	z
پ	p	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	z
ث	th, s	ع	ʿa
ج	j	غ	gh
چ	ch	ف	f
ح	h	ق	q
خ	kh	ک	k
د	d	گ	g
ذ	z, dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	و	w, v
ش	sh	ه	h
		ی	y

Though the scheme is given above, I have not followed it strictly.

ABSTRACT

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(Based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair).

The work entitled "Mystical doctrines of Farīd-ud-Dīn Ṭṭār (Based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair)", has been written, in order to analyse and explain thoroughly, the Sūfī views of a poet, who was considered to be better than the celebrated Sūfī poet Rūmī. Ṭṭār is the nom-de-plume of Sheikh Farīd-ud-Dīn of Nishābūr, a famous district of Khurāsān in Irān, who lived in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. and was a renowned practical Sūfī-Saint of his times. Mantiq-ut-Tair is his best composition, representing him as a great Sūfī and a first rate poet of the Persian language; but nevertheless, it has not received the proper attention of the scholars. The extant interpretations of the book are very defective and misleading.

The present work, divided into four main chapters, is intended to evaluate the contribution of Ṭṭār to the Sūfī literature. In the first chapter, his biography has been gleaned from the original and authentic Persian and Arabic sources along with the poet's own sayings as recorded in his own verses.

Chapter

The second part contains a critical account of the origin and development of Sufism upto the time of 'Attar, in order to show the shape of the movement as found by 'Attar. Different standard works on Sufism, in English, Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Hindi, have been consulted in its preparation.

The third chapter comprises a thorough and critical analysis of 'Attar's mystical doctrines, in general, as well as, with special reference to his *Maniqat-nama*. In fact, it is a comparative study of 'Attar, comparing and contrasting his Sufic conceptions with the parallel ideas in other religions viz., Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism etc.

The fourth and the last part of the book is a recapitulation of what has been discussed and explained in the preceding chapters, bringing out the focal points of 'Attar's mystical theories and experiences.

An exhaustive work on 'Attar has been conspicuous by its absence. The present volume is a humble effort to fill up that gap.

P R E F A C E

Since my early academic career, I have been interested in the deeper study of mysticism in different religions. Hindu mysticism was my favourite subject throughout my college days, and it was an ardent desire of mine to understand and grasp the essence of the Islamic Mysticism or "Sūfism", as it is popularly known to the English reader, in order to know the basic similarities in the line of thought of the two major religions of the world.

In 1953, my husband, Mr. A. Basu, the Spalding Lecturer in the University of Durham, took me to England and it was in this country that my long-cherished desire of studying Sūfism was, at long last, fulfilled. The University of Durham offered me a chance to concentrate on a Sūfic topic, and learn the language, (i.e. Persian) which is the main vehicle of expression of the three¹ of the greatest Sūfi-poets that Islām has ever produced.

I got myself enrolled as a research scholar in the Department of Persian and Islamic Studies and started my work on 'Attār's famous mystical poem, the Mantiq-ut-Tair. The reason for taking up this poet as a special study, is

1. Rūmī, Attār and Hafiz.

simple. I had been much impressed by Mr. Nicholson's renderings of the celebrated Masnavi of Maulānā-i-Rūm, the senior contemporary and the poet, who was considered to be preferable and more capable by Rūmī² himself, was still to be fully explained to the English reader, Āttār is the pen-name of Khwāja Farīd-ud-Dīn, of Nishābūr in Iran, whose Masnavis (long mystical poems) have come down, throughout, as the ideal poems, containing and explaining the mystical doctrines and experiences in a very lucid style. Mantiq-ut-Tair, is decidedly the best work of this Sūfi-poet and represents him as a great exponent of the Islamic Mysticism. With this mental background, it was but natural for me to accept gladly the present topic i.e. "Mystical doctrines of Farīd-ud-Dīn Āttār based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair" as the topic of my Ph.D. thesis in the University of Durham, when it was suggested by one of my teachers Dr. F. Rahman, the then Lecturer in Persian in the School of Oriental Studies in the same University.

The topic necessitated the study of language and I started learning Persian from Dr. F. Rahman, which, in the long run, proved to be a very laborious but fruitful adventure. After a year or so I found myself translating the Mantiq-ut-Tair, with the help of my teacher; and it was

2. "Āttār went about the seven cities of love, while we are still at a turning of one street".

perhaps the greatest pleasure of my life, when in the summer of 1955 Prof. Arberry of the Cambridge University very kindly approved and corrected about two hundred verses of this poem, translated by me from the original Persian text, and gave me some definite instructions regarding the method of translation. This advice, upto this day, has proved to be of immense value to me.

My next teacher and guide was Mr. E. Birnbaum, an Assistant Librarian of the School of Oriental Studies in the Durham University, who was a profound scholar of oriental languages and learning. He taught me the Persian language as well as the literature and, in a short while, the tempo of my work on 'Attār was set.

Now, the next stage appeared before me. A thorough study of the origin and evolution of the Islamic Mysticism was an imperative need if I were to understand and reach the depth of 'Attār's thoughts. I started from a scratch, but progressed rapidly. The books were not readily available and some of them were really much-sought-after. I toured the whole of England and France, visiting the book shops and their basements. This physical exercise, throughout my stay of three years in England i.e. Jan. 1953 to Jan. 1956, brought me great dividends. I was lucky

to procure many useful books and manuscripts, including some rare editions of Mantiq-ut-Tair.

In the beginning of the year 1956, I was called back to resume my duties at home. Thus I had to work in altogether different circumstances. In the Banaras Hindu University where I have been looking for a suitable teacher and guide, the situation presented a gloomy prospect. I went to Allahabad and, as good luck would have it, ran into Prof. Hafiz Saiyid, the retired Head of the Persian and Arabic Department of the Allahabad University. Hafiz Sahib's command over the language, his penetrating intellect and his profound study of Islām and Sūfism made an indelible impression upon my mind. Thereafter I visited him regularly and sought guidance from him. Meanwhile, at Banaras, I found three eminent scholars who gave me regular coaching in Persian and Sūfism. The first, in the line, was Mr. Nu'mān Khān whose suggestions in the translation of the Mantiq-ut-Tair were of considerable merit. Unfortunately both Prof. Hāfiz Saiyid and Mr. Khān did not survive to see the completion of my work. I acknowledge their service with grateful thanks. The second gentleman, to whom I owe my sincerest thanks is Maulānā Saiyid Sulaimān Abbas Risvi, M.A.(Persian), M.A.(Arabic), the renowned scholar and theologian whose lectures on the origin of Sūfism from Qur'an and its development on political

grounds have been very illuminating for me. The keen interest which the Maulānā, very kindly, showed in the progress of my work, was a great inspiration throughout and goaded me into action whenever I became lethargic. My present teacher, Dr. Amrit Lal Ishrat, M.A.(Persian-Urdu-History) Punjab, D.Lit (Tehran) whose capable guidance helped me to complete the work, He has been teaching me ever since his return from Iran in July 1964. I joined his post-graduate Diploma (in Persian) classes in this University also, and have received his unstinted help in exploring the new vistas of 'Attār's mystical poetry. In fact, my interpretation of the mystical doctrines of 'Attār could not have been completed without his scholarly discourses in the class. I cannot thank him adequately.

The period from 1953, the year I got myself enrolled as a research scholar, in the University of Durham, to 1966, the time of the completion of my work, may appear to be an inordinately long one. But, keeping in view my indefatigable and perpetual efforts that I had to put, in order to learn a totally new and different language, (i.e. Persian), upto the standard of understanding thoroughly the mystical poetry of a Sūfi-poet which involves many an ambiguity at every step, the long time I took cannot be wholly unjustified.

A novice could do no better than to start from the alphabet and reach the highest standard all by her individual efforts. Of course the teachers contributed a lot, still the progress is always personal.

The present work "Mystical Doctrine of Farid-ud-Din 'Attār, based on his Mantiq-ut-Tair" is, thus, the result of my thirteen years' hard work, during which, along with this volume, I have been translating and annotating, verse by verse, from original Persian text into English, the whole of Mantiq-ut-Tair, in order to catch the deep mystical essence of the poet's imagination. This side work, also, runs into several volumes and shall be published in the near future.

The work in hand is divided into four main chapters. In the first chapter, I have tried to trace, from different authentic Persian biographies, and poet's own poetical compositions, the events and circumstances in which 'Attār lived. This was very important in order to analyse the poet's Sufic career and his mystical tendencies. The existing account of this poet's life was so scanty and mythical that I had to depend mostly on the poet's own sayings scattered in his verses at different places. Another difficulty, which presented itself during the course of this special study, was the presence of many 'Attārs, bearing the identical name of

Farīd-ud-Dīn. This strange phenomenon has misled scholars as grand as the stature of 'Abdul Wahhāb qazwīnī and many books which actually belong to other 'Attārs have been ascribed to the author of Hantiq-ut-Tair, and consequent upon this, many a misleading conclusion have been deduced from them, regarding the life of the poet. I have tried, as best as I could, to avoid this confusion and while gleaning the important facts of his biography, have taken into account, only those books, which have been claimed by the poet himself as his own. Similarly the most controversial topic of the poet's dates of birth and death have been dealt with, thoroughly, establishing a definite period of his life, in a logical manner.

The second chapter, containing many sections like the first chapter, is a detailed account of the evolution of Sūfism, from the beginning to 'Attār's time. The origin and development has been explained at some length to show the shape in which 'Attār found it. And it was necessary in order to understand the Hantiq-ut-Tair in the light of a general background of Sūfism. The writer does not claim any originality in this. Most of the material has been taken from the standard works of the celebrated scholars and authors like Browne, Nicholson, Zaehner, Arberry, Goldziher, Margaret Smith, Sā'eed Nafī'ī, Qāsim Ghānī, Badī'uz-Zamān Farūzānfar and others.

The third chapter deals with the mystical doctrines of 'Attār, in general, as well as with special reference to his Mantig-ut-Tair. It may not be perhaps out of place here, to mention the fact that this book i.e. the Mantig, has not received the proper attention which it deserved from the scholars. The English reader finds only one full version³ of it, which is rendered into English, from the literal and complete French translation of Garcin De Tassy, by E.C. Mott. The book, bearing the title "The Conference of the Birds" contains a lot of funny translations at a number of places. Without any disparagement to the English translator, who does not appear to know Persian, the following examples may suffice to show the carelessness of the French translator. On page 68⁴, 'Attār narrates an anecdote that Rābiā', the famous woman Sūfī spent seven years in reaching the gates of the Ka'ba, by measuring her length on the ground. When she wanted to enter the sacred temple, an unexpected thing happened and she could not perform her pilgrimage. This was

3. The other three abridged English translations are :

- (i) by Edward Fitzgerald, in rhyme ;
- (ii) by Ghulam Mohd. Ubaid-i-Hindi, India, 1911 ;
- (iii) by Rustam P. Masani, in prose, printed and published in Mangalore, India, 1924. - All the three have long been out of print.

4. Paris Edition. Verses 1776 - 1778.

explained in the following verse :

قصه کعبه کرد روز حج گزار شدمی عذر ز نانش آشکار

The translator records, "on the consecrated day when she was to go into the Ka'ba, her women deserted her"⁵. The actual thing which Attār wants to convey is that at the particular moment Dābi'a experienced the "excuse of the women", got polluted, and could not perform her pilgrimage.

Similarly, on page 149⁶, the couplet

گفت روزی فارح و مسعود بود روز من شکر محمود بود

has been translated as "It is related that once Farouk and Naseud were present at a review of Mahmūd's army"⁷. It is very clear that the words Farrukh and Mas'ood (i.e. lucky) have been used as adjectives for the "day" and the couplet means that a lucky day was fixed for the inspection of the army by Mahmūd.

Such blunders are rampant in the book and a full account of them needs a separate volume. As for me, I have to assure the reader that I have taken meticulous care in

5. Nott : The Conference of the Birds, London 1954, Page 51.

6. Paris Edition.

7. Nott : The Conference of the Birds, Page 117.

interpreting the verses and drawing out conclusions from them. While explaining the different mystical conceptions of 'Attār, I have, at every step, tried to compare them with the identical ideas in other religions. Thus, parallel doctrines in Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Judaism have also been discussed at length, along with the ṣūfī ideas of 'Attār. In fact, the comparative study of the religions has been a passion with me and this work is a humble manifestation of this life-long passion. The last chapter contains a recapitulation of what has been discussed in the preceding ones. It is an estimate of 'Attār's contribution to ṣūfism in general.

In the end, I consider it my pleasant duty to thank all my friends and teachers who helped me in my work.

I was much inspired, to accomplish this work, by Prof. Arberry of the Cambridge University, and owe him my sincerest thanks.

It was late H.N. Spalding who encouraged me to take up the study of comparative religion and it was on account of his unbounded generosity, that I was awarded the Spalding Fellowship by the Union of Great Religions, Oxford, after the name of the founder. I am extremely grateful to that benefactor of mine. I take this opportunity of thanking

Mr. K.D.D. Henderson, the Secretary, Union of Great Religions, Oxford and the Spalding Trust, for regular transaction of the Fellowship to me.

My sincere thanks also are due to Prof. F.W.Thacker, Director of the School of Oriental Studies of Durham University who enrolled me as the first research fellow in the Department of Persian and Islamic Studies and made all necessary arrangements for my study.

I owe thanks to Prof. Montgomery Watt, Professor of Arabic, in the University of Edinburgh for his many valuable suggestions for the improvement of my work.

Mr.J.C.Foster, the Librarian of the School of Oriental Studies, deserves my gratitude. He secured for me, some very rare books, from distant and different parts of England. I am thankful to him for his constant help.

The last but not the least, I have no words to express my deep feelings of gratitude to my husband Mr. A.Basu without whose affectionate concern and encouragement in my studies in every possible manner, this work would never have been completed.

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CHAPTER - I

FARID-UD DIN ATTAR (Life and Works)

'Attār "the wanderer of the seven cities of Love,"¹ and "the Soul of the Sūfī poetry,"² shines like a dazzling star, on the firmament of Persian literature, but, nevertheless, like Firdowsī, the peerless epic writer, his biography is shrouded in darkness. Here is a critical account of his life, gleaned from the most trustworthy sources.

1. Name and Non-De-Plume : There is a conclusive evidence to prove that the name of this great Sūfī poet was Farīd-ud-Dīn, with two pen-names of Farīd and 'Attār. It appears that he liked to be addressed as Farīd, in the beginning of his career. Consequently, his eightytwo Ghazals, out of a

1. According to Maulavī :

صفت شیر عشق را عطار گشت
ما عنوز اندر خم یک کوچه ایم

2. At another place, the same poet writes :

عطار روح بود و سنائی دو جسم او
ما از بی سنائی و عطار آید تم

total of seven hundred and eighty-four, which we have been able to gather up till now,³ bear the pen-name of Farīd, and these Ghazals, as it could be well established from their style and vocabulary, certainly belong to the early period of the poet's life. In his long poems (Masnavīs) also, the poet addresses himself as Farīd. For instance, at the end of his well known Masnavī, Musibat-Nāmah, he says :

این چه شورست از تو در جان ای فرید
 کز هزار زبان از عهد زبان حل می نرید

(Oh Farīd! How can you explain this commotion in your soul? With hundred tongues, raise the slogan "Is there any more.") Mohd. 'Awfī, the contemporary pedantic writer, gives his patronymic as "Abū Hāmīd" and records the full name of the poet as "Farīd-ud-Dīn Abū Hāmīd Abū Bakr 'Attār Nishāpūrī."⁴ But the compiler of Mirāt-ul-Khayāl has probably misunderstood 'Awfī and recorded two patronymics for 'Attār, viz., Abū Hāmīd and Abū Bakr.⁵

Mohd. Musaffar Hossain "Sabā" the author of Rūs-i-Rūshan, has followed 'Awfī and correctly given his ancestral⁶

3. Saeed Nafisi, Justujū Dar Ahwāl-o-Aṣār, Tehran Edition 1320 (Solar) Page "Yeh".

4. Lubāb-ul-Albāb, London Edition (1321-24 A.H.) Vol II Page 337.

5. Bombay Edition 1324 A.H. Page 41.

6. Bhopal Edition 1297 A.H. Page 460.

name, but Āwar, in his famous Biographies of the Persian Poets, styled Ātash Kadeh, has again, erroneously recorded "Abū Tālīb" as the patronymic of the poet.⁷ This error has been repeated by the authors of Majma'ul-Fusahā⁸ and Riāz-ul-Ārifīn⁹.

Daulat Shāh¹⁰, and Sabā¹¹, like many others, give the name of his father as "Ibrāhīm Bin Ishāque", and summing this up, we may name the poet correctly as "Farīd-ud-Dīn Abū Hāmid, Mohd. Ibn-i-Abū Bakr, Ibrāhīm Ibn-i-Ishāque, 'Attār Nishāburī"¹².

2. Family : Farīd-ud-Dīn belonged to a very rich and respectable family of 'Attārs of Nishābur, the principal city of Khurasān of good old days. According to Sheikh 'Alī Naqī, the renowned Persian scholar of the 17th century A.D., and the compiler of an anthology of Persian poetry, the father of the poet was also addressed as "Attār Nishāburī"¹².

The word "Attār" here needs special attention.

Literally it means a 'perfumer', but in medieval ages, it was

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7. Bombay Edition 1299 A.H. Page 143-144.
 8. Tehran Edition 1295 (Solar) Vol I Page 367.
 9. Tehran Edition 1305 (Solar) Page 110-111.
 10. Taskirat-ul-Shu'arā, Leaden Edition 1318 A.H. Page 187-192.
 11. Rūz-i-Gushan, Bhopal Edition 1297 A.H. Page 460.
 12. Selections from Mir Taqi Kāshī, "Ms. Transcribed 1033 A.H. at present with Prof. Sābed Nafīcī of Tehrān University.

used in a much wider sense. The physicians used to run their own drug-stores and were styled as 'Attārs. Consequently an 'Attār meant a physician as well as a druggist.

'Attār's father was a physician-druggist by trade, a profession, which he followed and adopted as a means of his livelihood.

Further it would be deduced from his own work Asrar Nāmah that the father of the poet was a "pure-hearted old man, whose hair became white in Islam" and who died at an advanced age. According to Fuzūnī Astarābādī, the author of Buḥāira, 'Attār had ^{ten} sons, but all of them were murdered, one by one, right in front of their father, who remained a silent spectator of this ghastly tragedy and resigned to the Will of God¹³.

The story sounds incredible. However, it could be asserted, with the internal evidence of his own works, that the poet had at least one son, namely Ziā-d-dīn Yūsuf. At the end of the Bulbul Nāmah we find him giving advice to this son, who happened to be four-year-old at that time.¹⁴

13. Tehran Edition 1328 (Solar) Page 335.

14. Bibliothèque Nationale, Catalogue des Manuscrits Persans Par E. Blochet, tome troisième, Paris 1928, Page 84.

These verses have, however, been omitted in the Tehran Edition¹⁵.

The descendants of 'Attār remained at Nishābūr, for quite a long time and it was only in the 16th century A.D., when the grand-father of Sheikh Mohd. Ghaus Gowaliārī, the great Sūfi of India, migrated to India and settled at Gowaliār. His brother Sheikh Bahlul, another renowned descendant of 'Attār, is said to have been endowed with miraculous powers. He also died at Gowaliār in 979 A.H./1562 A.D. at the ripe old age of eighty¹⁶.

The author of Nigāristān-i-Sukhan¹⁷ mentions the name of a poet, Saiyid Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attārī Shattārī, who was attached to the royal court of Bhopal and claimed his descent from Sheikh Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār Nishābūrī, through Mohd. Ghaus Gowaliārī. This poet is believed to have died in 1285 A.H./1868 A.D. If this statement is accepted, and I do not see any flaw in it, it may be concluded that the great 'Attār's descendants were still traceable in India upto the end of the 19th century A.D.

15. Tehran Edition 1312 (Solar)

16. Khazīnat-ul-Asāfiya Vol II Pages 333-334.

17. Bhopal Edition 1292 A.H. Page 42-43.

3. Birth :

The biographers of 'Attār have recorded the date of his birth with a slight difference. Daulat Shāh mentions his birth on the 6th Shābān 513 A.H./1119 A.D. during the reign of Sultān Sanjar Saljūqī¹⁸ (D.1155 A.D) Nigāristān-i-Sukhan agree on 513 A.H.¹⁹ but Riāz-ul-'Arifīn²⁰ and Majma'-ul-Fusahā²¹ give it as 512 A.H. The authors of Safinat-ul-Auliā²², Mirāt-ul-Khayāl²³, Khazīnat-ul-Asafiya²⁴, Ranzat-ul-Jannāt²⁵, Majālis-ul-Mu'minin²⁶ etc. all agree on the month of Shābān 513 A.H.

Since Daulat Shāh is the oldest authority, after Nafahāt-ul-Uns of Jāmī, most of the later writers have followed him. But neither 513 nor 512 A.H. could be taken as a probable date of the poet's birth. The commonest and the most probable date of his death is given as 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. If 513 A.H. is accepted as the year of his birth, it means, he lived upto an incredibly long age of one hundred and fourteen years.

18. Taskirat-ul-Shu'arā, Page 187.

19. Saiyid-Nūr-ud-Dīn Hasan: Nigāristān-i-Sukhan; Page 66

20. Page 110 Page 110

21. Vol. I. Page 367 Vol. I ; Page 367

22. Prince Dara Shukāh; Lucknow Edition, Page 178.

23. Page 41.

24. Maulavi Ghulām Sarvar; Khazīnat-ul-Asafiya, 1332 A.H. Vol. II, Page 262-263 Cawnpur Edition.

25. Mohd. Bagir; Ranzat-ul-Jannāt, Tehran 1306, Solar Vol. II, Page 196-97

26. Nūr-ullah Shūshtarī; Tehran 1268 (solar), Majālis-ul-Mominin, Tehran 1268.

'Attār himself records his age at different stages of his poetical compositions. He refers to his sixty years at one place :

گرچه دیر راه بودم شست سال
می ندانم در چنین راه این قدر

(Although, I have been an old man of the path for sixty years, Yet I do not know so much in this way)

In 'Asrār Nāneh' there is a pun on the word "shast" i.e. sixty,

چو سالم شست شتر بنود زبانی
اگر سن شست را سازم کمائی

(If my age is sixty, there is no harm in it, provided I make a bow of this bow).

At another stage, he mentions his seventy years,

چون بهفتاد در افتادی و این نیست عجب
عجب آنست که این نفس تو هردم تیرت

(If you have entered seventy, there is no surprise in it. The astounding fact is that your carnal desires are getting meaner every moment.)

In the following verse, he is getting more than seventy.

مرگ در آورد پیش وادی هشتاد ساله را
غم تو افکند شست بر سر بهفتاد و اند

(The death has brought forward the "hundred-year-valley. Your age has thrown snare on your "seventy and a little more")

Again, in the same Asrār Nāmah²⁷ he mentions his ninety years in the couplet.

کارشیش بر پیر آمد گان پیر نود ساله
بر جست و میان جان بر بست نرزاری

(His secret leaked out as that ninety-year-old man, jumped out (of his hermitage) and fastened the waist of the soul, with a girdle (of heresy)).

From the above quoted verses, it can be presumed that Attār lived upto the age of ninety. Since no greater age is mentioned in any of his poetical works after that, the myth of his one hundred and fourteen years seems to me a mere fabrication.

On the other hand, if we accept the date of his death, (which shall be discussed at some length presently) as 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. at the ripe age of ninety or a little more his date of birth could be fixed between 535-540 A.H./1140-1145 A.D. which sounds more plausible in view of the following facts.

‘Attār himself feels proud of calling himself a disciple of Sheikh Najm-ud-Dīn Kubrā, the reputed Sūfī of the 12th century A.D. This great Sūfī, according to the most trustworthy sources, was born in 540 A.H./1145 A.D. and was killed in the year 618 A.H./1221 A.D. during the Mongol catastrophe, at the age of seventy eight. If ‘Attār’s birth is accepted in the year 513 A.H./1119 A.D. the disciple was exactly twenty seven years older than the teacher. Again, the high spiritual attainments and the great Sūfī accomplishments that go to make a perfect "Ṣālik" (a Sūfī term used for the traveller in the path of God) cannot ~~not~~ be acquired by a tender teenager. This requires a good deal of self-restraint and mortification.

Under the circumstances it may not be incorrect to presume that Sheikh Kubrā must have practised the mystical exercises for a pretty long time and it must have taken him a considerable time to become so famous in this field as to attract ‘Attār to come and sit ~~at~~ his feet. If Sheikh Kubrā attained this much-coveted elevation at the age of twenty five, at the earliest, his disciple ‘Attār should not have been less than fifty two at this time.

As we know, ‘Attār himself had acquired a great distinction as a high-ranking Sūfī at a much earlier stage.

Consequently, it would have been somewhat disgraceful for a great and mature sūfī like him to sit ~~at~~ the feet of the young Sheikh Kubrā. Hence this leads one to conclude that the difference of age between the teacher and the taught could not have been so great and at the most they could be of the same age.

4. Life :

'Attār, according to Daulat Shāh, was born in the village of Kadkān, situated in the district of Nishābūr, in modern Khurāsān. The authors of Majālis-ul-Momīn, Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, and Bustān-ul-Siyāhat derive their information from Daulat Shāh and name the same village as 'Attār's birth place, with a slight difference²⁸.

This village has been very famous from the very beginning for its thick population and prosperity.²⁹ However, 'Attār seems to have spent a very short time at Kadkān and most of his life was spent at Shadyāk³⁰ and Nishābūr, except

28. In the Tehran Edition of the Majālis-ul-Momīn, 1268(Solar), the word "Kadkān" has been misprinted as "Karkadan" (Back of Page 141).

29. Tarīkh-i-Ālam Ara-i-Abbāsi, Tehrān Edition 1314(Solar) Page 568.

30. A southern suburb of Nishābūr. In fact it was a part of Nishābūr City (Matla'-ul-Shams Vol III Page 68). According to Yaqūt, the author of Muḥam-ul-Buldān, it was a garden attached to the city of Nishābūr, and Aḥmad ibn-i-Tāhīr, the founder of the Tāhīrī Dynasty of Khurāsān, turned it into his capital. It eventually acquired so much importance that it became the nucleus of the New Nishābūr when the old city was destroyed by the Ghuz in 1155 A.D.

for the period of his travels.

A couplet on the present tomb of 'Attār tells us that he spent thirty two years at Shadyakh and eighty two years at Nishābūr. The couplet goes like this

نود و سه سال در شاد و دو سال
سی و دو در شاد و پانچ آسود حال

(He was at Shāpur (Nishābūr) for eighty two years and was prosperous at Shadyakh for thirty two years)

This couplet and many more were inscribed at 'Attār's grave by the order of Amīr 'Alī Shīr Navāi, the famous Minister of the 15th century A.D. and refer to the same myth of the poet's incredibly long age of one hundred and fourteen years. However it may be deduced from this testimony that he remained in his home-district for the major portion of his life and it was because of this long stay at Nishābūr that he has been called 'Attār Nishābūr instead of 'Attār Kadkanī. Kātibī Nishābūrī, a well-known poet of the 15th century A.D. writes:

صحرای نیشابورم ولی
خاک نیشابورم من و عطار گل

(Like 'Attār I am from the garden of Nishābūr, but I am a thorn of the forest of Nishābūr, whereas 'Attār is a flower)

The inscription on the poet's tomb also corroborates this fact:

خاک نیشابور تا بوم القیام
آبرو دارد ازین عالم مقام

(The dust of Nishābūr, till the day of resurrection, remains honoured, on account of this highly-placed (Sūfī)) As already mentioned, 'Attār's father was a well-to-do Physician-Druggist of Nishābūr and was running a Drug-store. The son followed in the footsteps of his father and before becoming an ascetic "was a man of wealth and dignity and unequalled in divine and natural wisdom, and all the Drug stores of Nishābūr belonged to him"³¹.

He had studied thoroughly the famous book on medicine and medicament entitled qanūn by the unrivalled Iranian physician "Ibn-i-Sīnā" and had acquired a command over Ishārāt, another well-known book on philosophy by the same author. His drug-store was always overcrowded with the patients, as described in his Khosrow Nāmah.

بداروخانه با نظر شخص خود
که در هر روز بنظم می نمودند

(In the Drug-store, there were five hundred persons who used to show me the pulse daily)

We are not certain for how long this great apothecary of the Sūfis carried on his business of the drugs. All

that we are told is that all of a sudden, he became an ascetic one day and distributed his wealth among the poor. This happened after an incident which occurred right in front of his Drug-store when a Darvish or a madman appeared on the scene.

The story has been related, at some length, by almost all the biographers with a few alterations here and there and makes an interesting reading.

In the Tazkirat-ul-Shuharā of Daulat Shāh, the episode runs as follows :

"His father" was an apothecary and he also adopted the same profession. One day when he was sitting in his shop, with his slaves around him, incidentally a madman appeared, stared into the shop, and heaved a sigh with his eyes full of tears. 'Attār said "Why are you looking fixedly ? It is better for you to be gone". The madman replied, "Oh master! mine is a light burden and I have no more than this rag. I can pass soon from this market (of the world), you better plan for your encumbrances and think a while, prudently, over your plight". 'Attār said "How would you pass"? The man answered, "Like this", ^{then he} took off his rags, put them under his head and resigned his soul to God. 'Attār was much moved,

closed the shop and retired from the world".

Jāmī, in Nafahāt-ul-Uns records "a wooden-cup" instead of the rags and mentions the word "Darvīsh (a mendicant) in place of "Divāneh" (a madman).

In Bustān-ul-Siyāhat³², we find the Darvīsh, a regular visitor of 'Attār, who used to give him alms on every trip. When the mendicant formed it his habit, 'Attār rebuked him and said, "why are you so greedy and why do'nt you take rest in the bed of contentment". The mendicant afterwards performed the same miracle and 'Attār renounced the world for good.

Garcin De Tassy³³ makes it more natural and here the Darvīsh is represented as a very sane man, who advises and impresses upon the apothecary to get detached from his worldly merchandise. 'Attār feels moved and becomes an ascetic. The author of Majālis-ul-'Ushshāq³⁴ relates that the Darvīsh was very insistant and persisted in his demand, but 'Attār was not attentive. There upon, in order to teach him a lesson, the Darvīsh died on the spot and the shopkeeper became a hermit.

32. Page 163.

33. La Poesie Philosophique Et Religieuse, Paris Edition 1856 Pages 4-5

34. Lucknow Edition 1314 A.H. Page 99-101.

The famous French writer Louis DuRoi, in his book entitled Le Perse narrates the episode in a more logical and plausible way, and the darvish is seen instructing 'Attār to pack up the heavy loads of the worldly attachments, well in advance³⁵. This story may or may not be true, but there can be no doubt that 'Attār had become a sūfī, long before he left the shop. Such stories, as Prof. Sa'ed Nafīcī³⁶, puts it, are usually attached to the biographies of the towering personalities to show miraculous changes in their lives.

Another story, a romantic one, has been concocted by the author of Majālis-ul-Ushshāq depicting the amorous nature of 'Attār. He tells us that at this stage of life, 'Attār had fallen in love with the son of the headman of the village already referred to³⁷. An interesting fact about this statement is that there is absolutely no name or reference of the village. Therefore one is naturally inclined to believe that by adding such romantic statements, the author simply wants to make his book more interesting.

The biographers relate that after leaving the shop, 'Attār started travelling. Daulat Shāh, followed by Amīn

35. Paris Edition 1841 P.444, Column 2.

36. Justujū-Dar Ahwāl, Page "Neh".

37. Page 100.

Ahmed Rāzī³⁸, and Garcin De Tassy³⁹, record that he went to Mecca for the holy pilgrimage after renouncing the Drug-store. This may be true as the poet shows himself very eager for this in his Asrār Nāmah, putting his three desires respectively in the following order :

سه حاجت خواهم از درگاه تو من
که هستم نیک حاجت خواه تو من

(I want my three desires to be fulfilled from your threshold as I am a very needy (creature) of yours).

که پیش از مرگ این دل داده ریش
بید روضه پاک تو در پیش

(The first one is that before death, this bruised heart-giver may see in his front, your sacred tomb).

دگر کز شاعرانم شمیری تو
بحکم شاعرانم شمری تو

(The other one is that you may not count me among the poets and may not look at me with the eyes of the poets).

دگر چون جانم از تن بشد آزاد
تو بر گیسوین یارب هم چنین باد

(The third one is, when my soul is freed from body; you

"O Lord! retain this and may this remain in this state for

38. Haft Iqlīm

39. Le Language Des Oiseaux, Paris 1856 A.D. Page 5.

ever).

These desires were versified and incorporated in the Asrār Nāmah, while in the Drug-store, After abandoning the store, he may be presumed to have fulfilled his foremost desire of the pilgrimage. But, before this, a formal repentance was necessary and this he is said to have done in the convent of Sūfī Rukn-ud-Dīn Iskāfī, who has been very often, wrongly named as Rukn-ud-Dīn Akkāf or Akāf.

On his way back from Mecca, 'Attār is reported to have met Sheikh Majd-ud-Dīn Baghdādī and received from him "a garment", which is the sign of becoming one's pupil. 'Attār himself refers to this great Sūfī of Khwārazm in the preface of his Tazkirat-ul-Auliya,⁴¹ and apparently it is this tone and style of the description of the Sūfī that has led some biographers to conclude that 'Attār was Baghdādī's pupil.

Mirzā Mohd. Wahhāb Qazwīnī, the illustrious scholar, has summed up the travels of 'Attār in his introduction to Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, in the following extract :

"Attār says in the book the Maqhar-ul-Ajaib that he spent thirteen years of his early life in Mashhad, where there is the shrine of 'Alī Rizā, and again in the book

41. London Edition Vol I Page 6.

Lisān-ul-Ghaib, he informs us that he travelled in the four climates, going to Mecca, Egypt, Damascus, Kufeh, Ray, Khurāsān, crossing the rivers of Sayhān and Jayhūn, visiting India and Turkistān, and then went back to Nishāpūr⁴².

As we shall see later, it is perhaps improbable to establish that Hasht-ul-Azāib and Lisān-ul-Ghaib belong to this 'Attār. So, under the circumstances, no authenticity could be attached to the above-noted account of the travels.

However in his Mukhatār Nāmah, we come across different passages from which we can sift some information regarding his travels. On page 990, he says "How long shall I wander round the world? I am tired of the worldly troubles"⁴³.

Again on page 982, this couplet is noticed "Thirty years we travelled, a hundred thousand journeys until your road brought me to your court"⁴⁴. At another place, he writes that his travels were made for quenching the thirst of knowledge. These lines, on page 961, run like this⁴⁵.
'I roamed a life-time in every path and was blown about like chaff around mountain - statured personalities. I left home as a beggar and returned as a king'.

42. Page 425 - K. India Office MS.

43. Kulliyāt-i-Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār, Lucknow Edition.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

These extracts clearly show that the ⁸regions of Attār's journeys were purely spiritual. He kept migrating from place to place in search of the truth and found solace in the company of the great spiritual personalities of his age. These outstanding Sūfis must have exercised a good deal of influence on his mystical views. Hence a brief account of them will not be out of place here.

According to Daulat Shāh, Attār's father, namely Ibrāhīm-ibn-i-Ishāque, a native of Kādkān was the disciple of Qutb-ud-Dīn Haider, the great Sūfi of "Zāveh", a place in the vicinity of "Kadkān". Attār also became his disciple and composed a long poem entitled Haider Nāmeh in his praise.

Qutb-ud-Dīn Haider is said to have been one of the ⁴⁶"Abdāl" and believed to have died at a very old age of one hundred and ten or one hundred and four years. His father's name was Shahūr and his mother was a "Majzūb"⁴⁷. The author of Tarāiq-ul-Haqāiq traces his descent from Imām Musa Kāzim,

46. "Abdāl" is the plural of "Badal" which means a 'substitute'. In Sūfic terminology "Abdāl", are certain spiritual personalities by whom God continues the world in existence. Their number is believed to be seventy, of whom forty reside in Syria and thirty elsewhere; when anyone of them dies his place is filled up by someone selected from among the rest of mankind.

47. A "Majzūb" is a person who is attracted by Divine Grace and renounced all worldly concerns. Such a person gives himself entirely over to piety and contemplation.

and describes him as the founder of the "Haideryeh" Sect of the Sūfīs.⁴⁸ The probable dates of his death are given as 597, 602 and 618 A.H./1200, ^{1205, 1221} A.D. He was buried at Zāveh, which in the course of time came to be known as "Turbat-i-Haideryeh". He seems to have been a good poet of Persian and a manuscript containing a collection of his mystical poems is still extant in the Sipah Salar School Library of Tehrān.⁴⁹

Almost all the biographers, following Daulat Shāh, describe 'Attār as a disciple of Qutb-ud-Dīn Haider, his father's teacher, but as for the Haider Nāmah or Haideri Nāmah (as recorded by Majālis-ul-Mominīn), no trace of it has been found by me.

The second spiritual personality, with whom 'Attār came into contact, seems to be Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn who has been mentioned as Rukn-ud-Dīn Akāf or Akkāf by different authors. His correct name as described by 'Attār himself in his Musibat-Nāmah, is Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn Iskāf⁵⁰ and he

48. Tarīq-ul-Haqīq, Vol II, Page 287. Also see Asār-i-Ajam, Bombay Edition 1314 A.H. Page 73.

49. Ibn-i-Yūsuf Shirāzi: Vol II, Tehrān Edition 1316-18 (Solar) Page 656. Catalogue of the Sipah Salar School Library.

50. "Iskāf" literally means a 'shoe-maker' or a 'workman'.

was a renowned Sheikh and distinguished Sūfī of his times.

‘Attār, having renounced the worldly concerns, is recorded to have joined his convent for penance and remained there for some years before embarking upon his spiritual missions⁵¹. On pages 33, 124, 238 and 271, of the Musibat-Nāmah⁵², Attār has ascribed four anecdotes to this Sheikh. The second one contains many couplets in Sheikh's praise.

کواجه اسکافی آمد در سخن
خلق می باشد از او چو گردن

(Khawāja Iskāfī became eloquent. The public, from his eloquence was growing like a cypress tree).

میزش گوئی و برای مرشش بود
آسمان در جنب او چون زل بود⁵³

(His pulpit was, as if, beyond the empyrean. The sky on his side, was like the earth).

Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn Iskāf was a contemporary of Sultān Sanjar Saljūqī (511-582 A.H./1117-1157 A.D.) and in the fourth anecdote in the Musibat Nāmah, we find him instructing the Sultān on religious matters⁵⁴.

51. Tajkhat-ul-Ashkārā, Khazinat-ul-Ashfā, Safinat-ul-Anlīyā etc.
52. Tehrān Edition.

53. Ibid Page 124.

54. Ibid Page 271.

خواجہ اسکافی آن برہان دین گفت سبخر کہ ای سلطان دین
واجبم آمد بتو دادن زکاۃ زیرا کہ تو در پیش حالی در حیوۃ

(Khwājah Iskāfi, that "Proof of the Faith" said to Sanjar "O Sultān of the Faith", it is binding on me to give you the alms, because you are in a state of a beggar in life). Prof. Sābeed Nafīōī is doubtful about the words "Burhān-i-Dīn" and thinks him to be another contemporary of Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn⁵⁶, whereas this adjective, Burhān-ud-Dīn i.e. "Proof of the Faith", has been used for the same Khwāja-i-Iskāfi and the question of another Iskāfi does not arise.

After his pilgrimage of Mecca and other places, 'Attār is believed to have run into another great Sūfī, whom he names as Imām Majd-ud-Dīn Khwārazmī and records a meeting with him which goes to show a deep spiritual affinity between the two. The later writes like ^{that of} "Tarāiq-ul-Hadāiq"⁵⁶ and many others⁵⁷, following Jāmī, have concluded from this reference in the Tazkirat-ul-Auliya that 'Attār was a pupil of Majd-ud-Dīn Baghdādī Khwārazmī and the receipt of the

56. Vol II, Page 150.

57. Majālis-ul-Mominin, Majma'ul-Fusahā, Rūz-i-Rūshan, Ris̄s-ul-Arifin, Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Haft Iqlim, Safinat-ul-Auliya etc.

garment, by the latter from Baghdādī, definitely goes to prove that he became his "Khalīfat" (a Spiritual vicegerent).

Some biographers go even farther and think 'Attār to be a student of Baghdādī, in Medicine.

Majd-ud-Dīn Abū Sa'eed Moḥd, was born at Baghdādak, a small village near Khwārazm (Modern Tajikistān) and was attached to the court of Sultān Moḥd. Khwārazm Shāh as his court physician. As a Sūfī, he was considered to be the most trustworthy and renowned companion of Sheikh Najm-ud-Dīn Kubrā. Baghdādī is reported to have practised mortification for a long time. Towards the end of his life, he was raised to the lofty position of the Sheikh-ul-Shuyūkh (the grand Shaikh) of Khwārazm. Baghdādī died or was drowned between 606-617 A.H./1209-1220 A.D. He was a prolific writer and a good poet. Some mystical treatises from his pen are still traceable in different Iranian libraries.

The next Sūfī, who seems to have impressed 'Attār is Khwāja Sad-ud-Dīn Khurāsānī, who has been styled as "quth-ul-Auliya" by him. This reputed Sūfī was also one of the near and dear companions of the great Kubrā and belonged to a very respectable family of Khurāsān. According to the author of Kitāb-ul-Ansā⁵⁸, his grand father Imām Hambiya -

Juwainī, was incomparable in piety and spiritual attainments during his times. Khwāja Sad-ud-Dīn followed in the footsteps of his ancestors and became peerless in his Sūfī career. He lived from 542 to 605 A.H./1147-1208 A.D.⁵⁹. 'Attār describes him as an ascetic who renounced the world and remained in seclusion for over thirty years. He is said to have solved all the mysteries of the qurān. In the words of 'Attār.

دل دین خواجہ سعد الدین کہ امروز
دل دوست آفتابی عالم افروز

(Heart of the Faith, Khawāja Sad-ud-Dīn, one whose heart, today, is a world-dazzling Sun).

حق امروز قطب اولیا دوست
حریم خاص را خاص خدا دوست

(By God, to-day, he is the chief of the Friends of God. He is a favourite of God in the special Sanctuary).

Khwāja Sad-ud-Dīn is identical with the author of Kitāb-ul-Mehbūf (The Beloved Book) and Sajanjal-ul-Arvāh (The Mirror of the Souls). The mysterious and mystical tone of his writings is very conspicuous.

Of all the Sūfī Sheikhs that lived in the Twelfth and

59. Justujū-Dar Ahwāl-o-Āsār (Preface).

Thirteenth Centuries, the name of Sheikh Najm-ud-Dīn Kubrā, the founder of the Kubrūyeh or Zahabiyeh Sect of the Sūfis, is very prominent. Most of the out-standing sheikhs of his times ~~of~~flocked to his convent at Khwārazm and followed his spiritual teachings and mystical exercises. The most distinguished among them were Sad-ud-Dīn Khurāsānī, Najm-ud-Dīn Rāzī, Majd-ud-Dīn Baghdādī, Bābā Kamal Khujandī, Even Bāhā-ud-Dīn Walad, father of the renowned poet, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī is reported to have joined his hermitage before his permanent migration from Transoxiana. The chief characteristics of his school will be dealt with at another place. Here it may suffice to say that his system was quite different from the earlier and later Sūfis.

Sheikh Najm-ud-Dīn was born in the city of Khiweh in Khwārazm in the year 540 A.H./1145 A.D. and received his early training at Nishābūr, Hamadān and Alexandria. In Egypt he became a pupil of the famous Sheikh Ruzbahān and married his daughter. After some time he was attracted by the teachings of Imām Abū Nasr of Tabrīz, from whom he learned Theosophy and composed his first work entitled Sharh-ul-Sunnawal-Masālih. But the culmination in his mystical career was reached under Faraj Tabrizī and Ismāil Gasri, after which, he was asked to return to Khwārazm. It was in his Monastery at Khwārazm that he became a centre of attraction for all

the Sūfīs and mendicants of the age and among the most popular of them we notice Farīd-ud-^{Du}Attār rushing to his convent and sitting at his feet for the attainment of "Divine Knowledge". This fact has been recorded by Attār himself in his work Mazhar-ul-Sifāt, the manuscript of which seems to have been lost but a reference of it, mentioning the above noted fact has been given by the author of Yanābi-ul-Mavadda.⁶⁰ Sheikh Najm-ud-Dīn, has been styled as "Sheikh-i-Walī Tarāsh (A friend Carver for God) and Tāmmat-ul-Kubrā" (The greater Resurrection) in view of his illustrious disciples, and his revolutionary teachings. According to his Persian biography "Tuhfat-ul-Fugaya, he and some of his companions died in 618 A.H./1221 A.D. while fighting against the Barbarian Mongols in Khwarazm. Some of his mystical tracts are extant in Arabic.

It appears, that Attār had developed a special predilection for the company of the Sūfīs of different sects from a very early time. In his Tazkirat-ul-Auliya "alone" we find him recording the biographies, sayings and the chief mystical qualities of seventy two saints many of whom are otherwise unknown to us. Many of them were personally known to him and from a good number of them, he acquired the

60. Istanbul Edition, Vol I Pages 95-137.
(Arabic)

'Divine Knowledge.' His other writings also bear testimony to this fact. His grasp of the main characteristics of different early and contemporary Sūfī Schools is remarkably represented in his various compositions. It is on account of this, that Daulat Shāh writes, "He came into contact with very many Sheikhs and studied four hundred books of the, "Ahl-i-Tarīqat" (Devotees). At another place, the same author continues, "He was busy collecting the Sūfī anecdotes for over seventy years and none has collected so many among the devotees. He remained an ascetic during this time and was the best informed one".⁶¹

In addition to Sūfī studies and spiritual exercises which Attār appears to have undergone at different periods of his associations with the prominent Sheikhs, it is evident from his works that the author had acquired a good command over the Qurān, Jurisprudence, Tradition, Theology with its mixture of Philosophy. In medicine perhaps, he received the best training which enabled him to become an expert medical practitioner. His knowledge of history was also considerable. His accounts of the eventful lives of the old Iranian Kings, Ministers and poets like Mahmūd of Ghazna, Nizām-ul-Mulk Tūsī, Ahmad Bin Hasan-i-Maimandī,

61. Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Page.192.

Firdowsī, Sanāī, Rūdakī etc. are very vivid and authentic. His compositions abound in such historical material and are at times, immensely valuable for yielding useful informations.

In his Musibat Nāmeḥ, 'Attār tells us that he had a smell of every science and took a patch from every colour, "but draws the conclusion from his various experiences that only religious sciences i.e. Qurān and its commentaries, Jurisprudence, Traditions etc., were worth reading and anyone who reads other sciences, was liable to be condemned⁶².

5. Death :

The date of 'Attār's death, like his birth, is an extremely controversial topic. The earlier date of his death has been recorded as 586 A.H./1190 A.D. and the latest one is given as 732 A.H./1331 A.D. and between these two, we come across scores of other suggestions, most of which sound entirely unbelievable and baseless.

The earliest date i.e. 586 A.H./1190 A.D. is probably deduced from the following fragment which has been copied by a number of biographers like "Haft-Iqlīm", Taqvīm-ul-Tawārīkh etc. The complete qita (a Fragment of Poetry)

62. Musibat Nāmeḥ, Page 192 B.M. MSS. add 16, 787.

reads like this

شیخ عطار آن فرید روزگار
مرشد شاهان و شاهنشاه فقر

(Sheikh Attār that incomparable of the age, the guide of the kings and the king of poverty).

سال عرش جامع آمد زانکه بود
جامع اسرار و حدت شاه فقر

(The years of his age are incorporated in the word "Jāmi" (collector) because he was collector of the mysteries of Unity of God and the King of Poverty).

شهر شهید راه فقر آن برهنما
سال تار بخش از آن شهر راه فقر

(That guide become a martyr in the Way of Poverty therefore the date of his death is "Rāh-i-Fagr" i.e. Path of Poverty).

According to the chronogram "Jāmi" (Collector in the above noted fragment the years of his age amount to one hundred and fourteen, whereas the date of his death is conveyed through the second chronogram "Rāh-i-Fagr" i.e. 586 A.H./ 1190 A.D.. But both these dates are highly disputable and were not versified immediately after the death of Attār. As Prof. Nafīci argues⁶³, versification of the chronograms on the Arabic pattern were not in vogue in Iran before the end of the Fourteenth Century A.D. Hence these chronograms

63. Justujū-Dar-Ahwāl Page (Seen).

were composed atleast two hundred and fifty years after the death of Attār and do not carry any authenticity.

Chronologically speaking, Jāmī is the oldest authority D.881 A.H./1476 A.D recording the date of the martyrdom of Attār as 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. Daulat Shāh comes next (892 A.H./1486 A.D.), and gives three dates of his death i.e. 627, 589 and 619 A.H./1222 A.D., explaining that even in his times this topic had become very controversial and there was an incredible difference of opinions in this regard. According to the same author, Shadyākh was completely ruined after three years of Attār's death.

The authors of already mentioned "Selections from Tazkira-i-Mir Tāqi Kāshī, Majālis-ul-Ushshāq, Tarāiq-ul-Haqāiq, Majālis-ul-Mominīn, Majma'ul-Fusahā, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn", Rūz-i-Rūshan follow Jāmī and agree on 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D.

In order to have an idea of the vast difference of opinions of the subject, a brief survey of the dates recorded by different writers is as follows :

<u>Name of the MSS or Books</u>	<u>Dates recorded</u>
<u>Rauzat-ul-Jannāt</u>	627 or 589 A.H.
<u>Safinat-ul-Auliya</u>	607 A.H.
<u>Kashf-ul-Zunūn</u>	627 or 632 or 619 A.H.

<u>Mirāt-ul-Khayāt</u>	619 or 607 A.H.
<u>Haft Idm</u>	627 or 619 or 586 A.H.
<u>Nigāristān-i-Sukhan</u>	610 A.H.
<u>Riāz-ul-Siyāhat</u> ⁶⁴	617 A.H.
<u>Shāhid-i-Sādiq</u> ⁶⁵	617 A.H.
<u>Khazinat-ul-Asafiya</u>	628 or 672 A.H.
<u>Asar-i-Ajam</u> ⁶⁶	621 A.H.
<u>Jawāhir-ul-Zāt</u>	727 A.H.
<u>Preface Pand Nāmah</u> ⁶⁷	597 or 602 A.H.
<u>Catalogue Public Library Tehran</u> ⁶⁸	589, 597, 627 or 619 A.H.
<u>Preface Tazkirat-ul-Auliya</u> ⁶⁹	597 A.H.
<u>Catalogue Asafiya Library Haiderabad</u> ⁷⁰	622 A.H.
<u>Mukhbir-ul-Wasili</u> ⁷¹	626, 627 A.H.
<u>Encyclopedic de l'Islam</u> ⁷²	587, 597, 619, 627, 632 A.H.

A close examination of these dates reveal that the date
627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. is the commonest and has been repeated

64. Vol III Page 173.

65. A Manuscript with Prof. Nafici with chapter on History.

66. Bombay Edition, 1314, Page 72.

67. Old Edition 1290 (Solar) Page 12.

68. Vol II Tehrān 1314 (Solar) Page 27.

69. Page "Yed".

70. Haiderabad Deccan Edition 1333 A.H. Page 1492-93.

71. Vol II Page 262.

72. Vol I Leyde et Paris 1913 P.522.

by a majority of the authors. Any date before 618 A.H./1221 A.D. cannot be accepted due to the following cogent arguments.

'Attār was definitely alive in the year 618 A.H./1221 A.D. when according to Jāmī⁷³ and Daulat Shāh⁷⁴, Bāhā-ud-Dīn, the father of the great Rūmī migrated from Transoxiana. On their way the father and the promising son came across 'Attār at Nishābūr. Maulānā Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī was only fourteen year old at that time⁷⁵. 'Attār presented his Sūfic composition Asrār Nāmah to the son and is reported to have remarked, "Very soon this son of yours will kindle fire in the devotees of the world". There is no denying the fact that Asrār Nāmah was always kept in mind by the great Rūmī in his Sūfic career and we find atleast three anecdotes of this book being adapted by him, in his world-fame Masnavī. The first is "Hikāyat-i-Bazargān-va-Tutī"⁷⁶ (The story of the Merchant and the Parrot), the second being "Hikāyat-i-Baz-i-Shāh"⁷⁷ (The story of the Falcon of the King) and the third is "Hikāyat-i-Shikveh-i-Passeh"⁷⁸ (The story of the

73. Mafahāt-ul-Uns, Page

74. Tashkīrāt-ul-Shuharā Page 193.

75. Risāla-Dar Tahqīq-i-Ahwal-i-Maulānā Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī by Dr. Bādī-ul-Zamān Fīrkhānfar, Tehran Edition 1315 (Solar) Page 18.

76. Masnavī, Edited by Alā-ud-Daula Page 41-43.

77. Ibid Page 112.

78. Ibid Page 315-6.

Complaint of the Mosquito).

'Attār records twice, in his *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya* that the book was composed in the year 617 A.H./1220 A.D., during the reign of Mohd. Khwāram Shāh⁷⁹. Naturally the author was perfectly alive at that time.

The author of Lubāb-ul-Albāb, the pedantic Mohd. 'Awfī also speaks of 'Attār in a manner which suggests that the latter was living at the time he wrote⁸⁰ (618 A.H./1221 A.D.).

Under the circumstances, the commonest date of his death, 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. agreed upon by most of the biographers seems to be quite probable from another view-point. Jāmī, Daulat Shāh and some others are very accurate regarding this date and record even the day and the month of his death in 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. Hence this date i.e. 10th of Jumada-ul-Ukhrā, 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. may be taken to be a quite correct one.

The story of 'Attār's murder is worthy of special attention on account of its curiosity. He was captured by one of the Barbarian Mongols in the massacre of Nishāpūr. According to Daulat Shāh when the blood-thirsty savage was

79. Catalogue of the Persian MSS Bloche Vol III Page 78-79.

80. Vol II Page 337.

about to chop his head off, one of his fellow men begged him not to kill the old man, offering the murderer, a ransom of a thousand Dirhams. The captor accepted the offer and declined to kill him. The old Sheikh 'Attār, however, advised the captor not to sell him for a thousand Dirhams because he was worth more than that. A third Mongol appeared on the scene and offered a nosebag of horse fodder as his ransom. This time the Sheikh advised the captor to sell him saying, "Sell me because I am not worthy of more than this." The Sheikh then "drank the beverage of Martyrdom". As evident from the inscription on the Sheikh's tomb, this story was very common in the Fifteenth Century A.D.

The subsequent biographers have introduced many interesting changes in this episode and related it in a very mystical way. The author of Tazkira-i-Hosaini⁸¹ records the story in a still more curious manner. According to him, the Sheikh possessed a supernatural power of producing fire from his furious eyes. When Changiz Khān reached near the city, the citizens implored the Sheikh to reduce that cruel fellow to ashes and save the public from annihilation. The Sheikh conceded to the request of the people and took his position in front of the armies of Changiz Khān. Inspite

81. Lucknow Edition 1292 A.H. Page 202-203.

of the best efforts of the Sheikh the armies kept advancing and ultimately started a terrible massacre in the city. The captor of the Sheikh was offered gold equal to the weight of the Sheikh as his ransom by his three disciples. But the Sheikh advised the captor not to accept it. In the end an old woman offered a skirtful of grass and begged for the release of the Sheikh. The infidel got infuriated and the Sheikh attained martyrdom. Majalis-ul-Ushshāh tells us that Najmud-dīn-Kubrā and his disciple, 'Attār were murdered by the order of Ghangiz himself.

Haft Iqlīm, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat and many others derive their information from Daulat Shāh. The author of Ātash-Kadeh adds another curious episode to this and goes on to record that when his neck was cut, he carried his head in his both hands and ultimately covered a distance of about half a league upto his present tomb. At this place his blessed soul flew to the highest nest. The murderer, on seeing this sight was much ashamed, gave him ablutions in the manner of the Muslims, shrouded and buried him on the spot and remained on his lighted tomb devoutly employed throughout the rest of his life.

The same story has been repeated by the authors of

82. A coarse cloth.

Riāz-ul-ʿArifīn and Bustān-ul-Siyāhat. But Rūz-i-Rūshan goes a step further and makes the episode still more colourful, recording even the dialogues passed between the Sheikh and the Mongol Soldier. Thus according to this author, 'Attār on seeing the Mongol said mystically "Wearing a Cap Namad⁸² on your head and an Egyptian sword on your waist you have come all the way from Turkistān for murdering and plundering, and think as ^{if} I do not recognise you in this garb". Immediately another man appeared and offered a ransom of eighteen thousand Dirhams. But the Sheikh refused to be sold. Another fellow presented a nosebag full of horse fodder and the Mongol becoming indignant beheaded him with the sword. The beheaded Sheikh began to walk carrying his own head in his both hands. The murderer got stunned, buried the Sheikh, became a convert and spent the rest of his life, doing penance at the tomb of 'Attār'.

These stories perhaps have no basis in reality, firstly, because of their unconvincing and supernatural character and secondly on account of the historical anachronism. The year 627 A.H./1228-29 A.D. does not correspond to the year of the attacks of Changīz or Halāgu. Changīz attacked Nishāpūr quite earlier and Halagu came very late. The city of Nishāpūr according to the authentic historical evidence was ransacked

82. A coarse cloth.

four times in 548 A.H./1153 A.D. It was ruined by the Ghuz Turks. Again the Turks plundered it in the years 553 A.H./1158 A.D. and 556 A.H./1160 A.D.⁸³. Lastly it was ravaged by the Mongol in 617 A.H./1220 A.D. and this time the ruin was so complete that there was no sign of any other habitation, around it except Shādyākh. The city of Nishāpūr was rebuilt during the reign of Ghausan Khan and after that date the suburban habitation of Shādyākh ceased to exist.

Consequent upon this, we may deduce that 'Attār' does not seem to have been killed in one of the above-noted four massacres. To me the story of this murder at the hand of a Mongol does not appeal more than a myth. The only thing that we may infer from this is that 'Attār' perhaps met with a tragic death.

6. Recapitulation :

'Attār' was a man of wealth and considerations in his early career, but in his own words "He lived without seeing life's face", which implies his sad experiences in search of the Truth. He was a real Sūfī, giving up all the worldly concerns and secluding himself for the major portion of his life. He widely travelled to quench his thirst for

83. Tarikh-i-Ibn-i-Asir Waqai-sal 538, 553, 556 A.H./1143-1160 A.D.

the Divine Knowledge and during these wanderings was devoutly employed in the service of the distinguished personalities of the Sufic world. He learned to traverse the Path of the Knowledge of God, shunning all the hurdles of the worldly attachments. This apparently brought poverty, but he was too proud and too ascetic to be a dolesman. He knew his lofty place among the human beings and considered himself to be a companion of the Angel Gabriel. The following lines from his Mantiq-ul-Tair ⁸⁴ will be elucidating.

گر چه عطارم من و تر یاک ده
سوختم دارم جگر خون تاک ده

(Although I am a druggist and an "antidote seller", yet I have a burnt liver which gives out blood like wine.).

صفت خلق بی ملک بسن بی خبر
لاجرم زان می خورم تنها جگر

(The unfaithful public is unaware (of my sufferings), indispensably, I suffer my grief alone).

خون ز نان خشک گیرم سفوفه پیش
ترنم از شور بای چشم خویش

(When I lay my table of dry bread, I water it with the soup of my tears).

از دلم آن سفوفه را بریان کنم
که گهی صبریل را پیهان کنم

84. Mantiq-ul-Tair, Paris Edition, Edited by Garcin De Tassy, Page 179, verses 4533-4545.

(I provide roasted meat of my heart for that table so that I may sometime invite Gabriel to it).

چون مرا روح القدس هم ماست
می توانم نانِ صومدر بر شکست

(when the sacred spirit is my fellow cup-bearer, how can I partake the bread of a mean man).

شکر ایندرا که درباری نیستم
بسته صومدر اواری نیستم

(I owe thanks to God that I am neither a courtier nor enslaved to any ignoble man).

نه طعام هیچ ظالم خورده ام
نه نانی را تخلص کرده ام

(I never ate the food of any tyrant, nor did I dedicate any book to any such person).

هفت عالمم بخورم بس است
قوت جسمم قوت روحم بس است

(It is sufficient if I praise my high spirits only. The food of my body depends upon the strength of my soul).

7. 'Attār's Rank among Poets and Sūfis :

The biographers of 'Attār from Jāmi to Prof. Nafīcī, are all praise for this great Sūfi and his incomparable poetry. But before knowing their opinions, about him, it is interesting to note that inspite of his self-humiliation as a Sūfi, the poet is found praising himself at a

number of places. In order to know what 'Attār thought of himself, the following verses⁸⁵ are worthy of attention.

کردی ای عطار بر عالم نثار
نافم اسم از مردم آشکار

(Oh 'Attār, every moment, publicly, you have scattered the musk of mysteries over the world).

از تو پُر عطرسست آفاق جهان
وز تو پر شورند عشاق جهان

(The horizons of the world are perfumed by you and the lovers of the world have been put into tumult).

شعر تو عشاق را اسیر مایه داد
عاشقان را دایم این پیرایه داد

(Your verses have given wealth to the lovers. May it remain to be the embellishment of the lovers for ever).

تا قیامت نیز چون من بی تودی
در سخن نهند قلم بر کاغذی

86

(No enraptured (in ecstasy) will place his pen on the paper, in the art of poetry, like me till the day of resurrection).

آنچه من برفق خلق افشاند ام
گر نمانم تا قیامت ماند ام

(On account of that which I have scattered over the head of the people, I may not remain, still I will remain till the

85. Mantiq-ul-Tair, Paris Edition 1857, Page 175 verses 4424-40

86. Ibid page 176 - verses 4450-55.

Resurrection).

هستم از بحر حقیقت در فشان
ختم شد بر من سخن اینک نشان

(I am showering pearls out of the Ocean of Truth. The poetry ends with me. Here is the proof).

گر تنای خویشتم گویم بسی
کسی بپزد آن ثنا از من بسی

(If I continue praising myself, who will approve of my self-praise ?).

بیک خود صفت شناسد قدر من
ز آنکه پنهان نیست نور بدر من

(But the just will allot me the proper place because the light of my full moon is not hidden).

In his Introduction to the Mukhtār Nāmah⁸⁷ also 'Attār claims that such verses never occurred to any other writer and the like of those lines with such refined and exquisite language could not be found in any poetical work, other than his.

In Persian literature the Pen-name of 'Attār has been very common and we come across a galaxy of famous poets with this nom-de-plume. The biographers have very often confused

87. Kulliyāt-i-'Attār, Lucknow Edition page 581.

our 'Attār with the other 'Attārs and mixed up their works and biographies, making it very difficult to establish their identity, according to the chronological order.

One such 'Attār who has been mistaken for Bābā-Farīd-ud-dīn Attār Nishāpūrī by Khāqānī the well-known Persian poet of the Twelfth Century A.D. in his famous long poem Tuhfat-ul-Irāqain⁸⁸ is 'Attār of Hamadān whose full name was Hāfiz Abū-l-'Alā Hasan bin Mohd. 'Attār Hamadānī and who died 569 A.H./1173 A.D. at Hamadān. He was a renowned traditionist of his times and was a prolific writer, having many standard works to his credit. The people of Hamadān held him in high esteem⁸⁹. The author of Kash-ul-Zunūn has ascribed many works of Attār Nishāpūrī viz. Mantiq-ul-Tair, Ilahī Nāmah, Tazkiyat-ul-Auliya, Jawahir-ul-Zāt, Khosrova Nāmah, Pand Nāmah etc. to Attār Hamadānī and has committed an inexcusable blunder like Khāqānī.

Another 'Attār of Hamadān has been reported by Prof. Nafīcī in his Preface to the Justujū Dar Ahwāl⁹⁰. This 'Attār according to him was originally from Zanjān and his full name was Zain-ud-Dīn Mohd. Bin Ibrāhīm Ibn-i-Mustafa Qīn Shabān 'Attār Hamadānī. The books Tarjama-

88. Tarikh-i-Guzideh : Gib Memorial Edition Page 787.

89. Tarikh-i-Kāmil-i-Ibn-i-Asir year 569.

90. Page - 6.

-Tul-Ahadi's Kanz-ul-Haqāiq, Kanz-ul-Asrār and Miftāh-ul-Futuh, wrongly ascribed to 'Attār' Nishāpūrī, are from his pen. He was murdered in 727 A.H./1326 A.D.

A third 'Attār' a great impostor, has also come to light, very recently, through the scholarly efforts of Prof. Nafīcī of Tehran University. This 'Attār' who has tried in vain to be identical with the great 'Attār', the author of Mantiq-ul-Tair, lived in the fifteenth century A.D. and came from Tūn, a suburb of Mashhad. Intentionally or accidentally, he also adopted the surname of Farīd-ud-Dīn with the pen-name of 'Attār' and composed the books, Bisār Nāmah, Bulbul Nāmah, Lisān-ul-Ghaib, Mazhar-ul-Ājāib, Waslat Nāmah, Hallāi Nāmah, Shutur Nāmah, Mirāi Nāmah etc. in the name of the great 'Attār'. Apart from the style and imagination of the latter 'Attār' which differs extremely from that of the real 'Attār', there are passages in the Mazhar-ul-Ājāib and Lisān-ul-Ghaib, which provide a conclusive evidence to the fact that these books were composed much later and bear no resemblance with the poetical works of the illustrious 'Attār' of the early thirteenth century. The master-piece of the latter 'Attār' appears to be the book Mazhar-ul-Ājāib about which he feels proud in the following lines⁹¹.

91. Justujū Dar Ahwāl. Page 164.

مظہر از روی حرمت پیش گیر
این سخن را یاد ازین درویش گیر

(My Mazhar may be taken as first from the point of view of veneration. Remember this word from this Darvish).

گر تو مظہر کتابت می کنی
دان کہ در مہنی عبادت می کنی

(If you are a scribe of Mazhar, you should know that it is a meditation on your part).

مظہر من وصف ذات مظہر است
آنکہ شیر علم اقدس را درست

(My book Mazhar is an encomium of the manifested essence that which is a door to the city of the knowledge of Ahmad).

As we shall discuss later, at some length, on the whole the poetical works of the latter 'Attār are much inferior to that of the former and an ordinary reader of the Mantiq-ul-Tair may be able to discern, very easily, the difference between the two 'poles apart styles'.

Besides these three 'Attārs, there is an interminably long list of 'Attārs in Persian literature, some of them being poets and writers of considerable merits. But our 'Attār stands as a noble contrast to all of them because of his fluent phraseology and well-weighed mystical pantheistic

thoughts. His poetical artifices and novel comparisons and similes are simply incomparable. Other 'Attārs are too tiny to step into his mighty shoes. Moreover there is no temperamental compatibility among them. He is the most remarkable personality thrown by the centuries of Mystical History, and his works offer solace to a section of people who have accepted Sūfism as a way of life. He deserves to be remembered for his superb qualities of head and heart. He stands head and shoulders above others.

Mawlānā Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, who is reported to have received 'Attār's blessings as well as his Asrār Namah, at the age of fourteen, when passing through Nishābūr with his father, on their way to Turkey, considered himself to be "a follower of 'Attār, revolving round his star"⁹² At another place, he records,

عطار روح بود و سنایی دو چشم او
ما از پی سنایی و عطار آمدیم

(Attār was the soul and Sanāi, the two eyes (of the Doctrine) we have followed Attār and Sanāi).

Similarly we find another verse in one of his Ghazals.

صفت شیر عشق را عطار گشت
ما هنوز اندر خم یاب کوچه ایم

(Attār went about the seven Cities of Love, while we are still at a turning of one street).

Further more Maulānā Jāmī is related to have said that "the soul of Mansūr-i-Hallāj, manifested in Attār after one hundred and fifty years"⁹³. This quotation of Jāmī has been inserted by the authors of Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Safinat-ul-Auliya, Haft Iqlīm, Khazīnat-ul-Asafiya etc. but can never be taken as an indicator to the accurate date of the birth of Attār.

Abu'l Mughis Hosain bin Mansūr Hallāj-i-Baizvi was born about 224 A.H./838 A.D. in the village of Tūr, near Baiza, in the province of Fars of Iran and attained martyrdom in 309 A.H./921 A.D. on the right bank of the river Tigris near Baghdād.

Jāmī, who was himself a great Sūfī and head of the Naqsh Bandiyeh Sect, praises highly the lofty qualities of Attār's writings and considers him to be the best Sūfī Poet.

Sheikh Mehmūd Shabistāri, in the Preface of his famous Mystical work Gulshān-i-Rās says :

مرا از شاعری خود عمار ناپید
که در صد قرن چون عمار ناپید

93. Ibid Page 698.

(The poetry does not put me to shame, because the like of 'Attār' may not come again for a hundred centuries)⁹⁴. According to 'Alā-ul-Dauleh' Samnānī, the renowned saint of the 14th Century.

سری کہ درون دل مرا پیدائش
از لفظ عطار و مولانا شاعر

(The secret, that has appeared in my heart, is due to the sayings of 'Attār and Maulānā Rūmī).

At the end, it may be correct to sum up that Irān has produced two of the greatest Sūfīs in the 12th and 13th Centuries viz. Farīd-ud-Dīn Attār and Maulānā Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī. The author of the Haft Iqlīm has recorded a very good and appropriate comparison of the both. According to him, when a man "who was a traveller of the Path of Knowledge and a Knower of the Valley of Truth", was asked his opinion about the both great Sūfīs, he answered, "Maulavī, like an excellent falcon, flew up to the height of perfection, in the twinkling of an eye, while 'Attār' reached the same acme by slowly crawling through the path, perseveringly, like an ant".

The same author considers 'Attār's verses, as the scourage of the Sūfīs. What he means is that his poetry

94. Tashtīrat-ul-Shu'ara Page 325. Daulat Shāh has wrongly ascribed this verse to Kamāl Khujandī.

squired them on to further efforts in the Path of Knowledge.

8. Works :

Attār was a prolific writer, but, nevertheless, his works like the different events of his biography have been highly exaggerated and overstated. His works are stated to have been as many as the years of his life age (i.e. one hundred and fourteen) and understandably the biographers have tried in this way to conclude that Attār composed his books at the rate of one book per year. From another view-point his works are equal to the number of the sūras of Qurān. The author of Majma'-ul-Fusahā has gone many steps further and puts the number of his works at one hundred and ninety.

However the number one hundred and fourteen seems to have been deduced from the following verses, Apparently composed by qāzi Nūr-ullah-Shushtārī, the author of the oft-repeated Majālis-ul-Memnin.

طمان خریطم لشن داروی فنا عطار
که نظم اوست شفا بخش عاشقان خربین

(That Attār the carrier of the medicine-bag of the mortality whose poetry is salutary for the sad lovers).

مقابل عدد سوره کلام نوشت
سجدهای عزیز و کنایه های نرین

(He wrote selected books and excellent note books equal to the number of the chapters of the Quran i.e. one hundred and fourteen).

The author of Āsar-i-Ājam, Ruzat-ul-Jannat, Riāz-ul-Ārifin, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat etc. draw their conclusions from the above - inserted verses and do not care to verify their authenticity which is very doubtful.

Prof. Nafisi has compiled a copious list of the works which have been correctly or otherwise ascribed to the pen of Attār. Here is a reproduction of that with the names of the books in which these books have been alluded to.

Names of the Books

1. Ikhwān-ul-Safā

2. Asrār Nāmah

3. Ushtur-Nāmah

Names of the Referring Books

Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Haft Iqlim,
Rūz-i-Rūshan.

Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Majalis-ul-Mominin, Kashf-ul-Zumun, Haft Iqlim, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Āsar-i-Ājam etc.

Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Haft Iqlim,
Riāz-ul-Ārifin, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat,
Ālāz Kadeh, Rūz-i-Rūshan.

Ālāz

4. Ilāhī Nāmah

Tazkirat-ul-Shuhrā, Rauzat-ul-Jannāt, Majālis-ul-Mominīn, Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Rīāz-ul-Ārifīn, Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Safīnat-ul-Auliya, Ātash Kadeh, Āsar-i-Ājam.

5. Bulbul Nāmah

Tazkirat-ul-Shuhrā, Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft-Iqlīm, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat.

6. Pīsar Nāmah

Haft Iqlīm, Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Ātash Kadeh, Safīnat-ul-Auliya.

7. Pīsar Nāmah

Kashf-ul-Zunūn.

8. Pand Nāmah

Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, Rūz-i-Rūshan, Nigāristān-i-Sukhan.

9. Tazkirat-ul-Auliya

Tazkirat-ul-Shuhrā, Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Rīāz-ul-Ārifīn, Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Āsar-i-Ājam, Safīnat-ul-Auliya.

10. Jawāb Nāmah

Kashf-ul-Zunūn.

Name of the Books11. Jawāhir-ul-Zāt12. Jawāhir Nāmah13. Haider Nāmah14. Khosrove Nāmah15. Daryā-i-Abrār16. Diwan-i-Attār17. Sitta-i-Attār18. Shutur Nāmah19. Shayh-ul-Galb20. 'Abir Nāmah21. Gul-o-BulbulNames of the Referring Books.Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn, Asār-i-Ātam, Ātash-Kadeh, Rūz-i-Rūshan.Haft Iqlīm.Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat.Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Asār-i-Ātam, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn.Kashf-ul-Zunūn.Tazkirat-ul-Shu'arā, Ḥabīb-ul-Siyar, Haft Iqlīm, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Ātash Kadeh.Kashf-ul-Zunūn.Kashf-ul-Zunūn.Haft Iqlīm.Rūz-i-Rūshan.Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Ātash-Kadeh, Rūz-i-Rūshan.

Names of the Books22. Gul-e-Hormoz23. Lisān-ul-Ghaib24. Laili-ul-Majnūn25. Mehmūd-u-Ayāz26. Mukhtār-i-Nāmah27. Nakhzan-ul-Asrār28. Musibat Nāmah29. Mazhar-ul-Sifāt30. Mazhar-ul-AjaibNames of the Referring BooksTazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Haft Iqlīm,
Kashf-ul-Zunūn.Riāz-ul-Ārifīn, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat,
Āsār-i-Ājam.Bustān-ul-Siyāhat.Bustān-ul-Siyāhat.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Riāz-ul-
Ārifīn, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Āsār-
i-Ājam, Selections from the
Tazkirah of Mīr Taqī Kāshī.Haft Iqlīm.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Kashf-ul-
Zunūn, Haft Iqlīm, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn,
Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Āsār-i-Ājam,
Ātash Kadeh, Rūz-i-Rūshan.Yahābi-ul-Mawaddah.Rauzat-ul-Jannāt, Majālis-ul-
Mominīn, Haft Iqlīm, Riāz-ul-
Ārifīn, Bustān-ul-Siyāhat, Āsār-
i-Ājam, Ātash Kadeh, Rūz-i-
Rūshan.

Names of the Books31. Hiftāh-ul-Futūh32. Hantiq-ul-Tair33. Nāmah-i-Siyāh34. Waslat Nāmah35. Wasīrat Nāmah36. Walad Nāmah37. Hailāi NāmahNames of the Referring of BooksRiāz-ul-Ārifīn, Āsar-i-Ājam.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Rauzat-ul-Jannāt, Majālis-ul-Mominīn,Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Ḥabīb-ul-Siyar,Haft Iqlīm, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn,Khasinat-ul-Āsafiya, Bustān-ul-Siyābat, Āsar-i-Ājam, Ātash KadehRūz-i-Rūshan, Nisāristān-i-Gukhan, Safinat-ul-Auliya.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā.Kashf-ul-Zunūn, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Haft Iqlīm,Āsar-i-Ājam.Haft Iqlīm.Tazkirat-ul-Shuārā, Riāz-ul-Ārifīn, Bustān-ul-Siyābat.⁹⁶

In addition to the above noted thirty^{seven} works, the following twenty nine books have also been attributed to Attār :

1. Irshād-ul-Bayān.

96. Intisāf Dar Ahwāl, page 96-97.

2. Tarjanat-ul-Ahādīs.
3. Hellāi Nāmah or Mansūr Nāmah.
4. Khīrad Nāmah.
5. Khosrove-wa-Gol.
6. Khayyāt Nāmah.
7. Diwān-i-Rubāiyāt.
8. Siyyāh Nāmah.
9. Si Fasl.
10. Shāh Nāmah.
11. Shifā-ul-Qulub Fi Lagā'il-Mehbūb.
12. Sad Pand.
13. Ushshāq Nāmah.
14. Kanz-ul-Asrār.
15. Kanz-ul-Haqāiq.
16. Masnavi-i-Ishqiyah-i-Attār.
17. Masnavi-i-Attār.
18. Mazhar-i-Asār.
19. Mazhar-ul-Zat.
20. Mirāi Nāmah.
21. Muffarih Nāmah.
22. Misbāh Nāmah.
23. Maqāmāt-i-Tuyūr.
24. Muntakhab-i-Hadiqa-i-Sanāi.
25. Mansūr-i-Nāmah.

- 26. Mawaiz.
- 27. Muzhat-ul-Ahbab.
- 28. Nuzhat Nameh.
- 29. Haft Wadi.

A critical examination of the afore-mentioned works clearly leads one to conclude that the style of most of them do not bear even the slightest resemblance with the spontaneous and incomparably simple style of Attār. Hence their attribution to Attār is highly disputable and fictions.

In fact, the best way to ascertain the number of Attār's works could be, to quote the poet himself from his two famous compositions, Mukhtār Nāmeḥ, and Khosrove Nāmeḥ. In the prose-preface⁹⁶ to his Mukhtār Nāmeḥ, Attār, in a pedantic style, enumerates the following books, written by him up to that time. Khosrove Nāmeḥ, Asrār Nāmeḥ, Musibat Nāmeḥ, Diwān, Jawāhir Nāmeḥ, Shawh-ul-salb. Mukhtār Nāmeḥ itself is a collection of Attār's quatrains, selected by himself and contains about five thousand verses. Again, in his versified introduction to the Khosrove Nāmeḥ, he gives a most authentic account of his works in the following verses:

96. Mukhtār Nāmeḥ, Muqaddama, Tehran Edition. 1303 (Solar)

محببت نامه زادِ هر دو نیست
ایلی نامه بیخِ خسرو نیست

(Musibat Nāneh is the travellers' provisions. Ilahi Nāneh is the treasure of the Kings.).

جهان معرفت اسمِ او نامه است
بهشت اصلِ دل مختار نامه است

(Asrār Nāneh is the world of Divine Knowledge. Mukhtār Nāneh is the paradise for the spirited.).

مقامات طیور ما چنانست
که مرغ عشق را مزاج جانست

(Our Maqāmāt-i-Tuyūr (Mantiq-ut-Tair) is such that it serves as a spiritual height for the bird of love.).

حوشِ خرد نامه را طریقی عجیب است
ز طرز او که و مه با لطف است

(As the style of Khesrove Nāneh is uncommon, young and elder equally benefit from it).

..... ز شعرم یاد داشت آن یارِ دانی
هم مختار نامی از زبانی

(That well-wishing friend remembered from my poetry the whole Mukhtār Nāneh, containing the quatrains).

ز گفت من که طبع آب زرد داشت
فزون از حد فضا بد صمیم زبرد داشت

(From my poetry which contains the natural lustre of gold he remembered orally more than hundred panegyrics).

غزل قریب هزار و قلیعہ عم نیز
ز غزلوں کی عقل بیشمار عم نیز

(Ghazals about one thousand and qitas also about the same number of all types, detailed as well as shorter and longer).

جو احقر نامہ میں بر زبان داشت

ز شرح اقلب میں جان در بیان داشت (97)

(My Jawāhir Nāmah was on his tongue. He had drawn the essence of my Shash-ul-Qalb).

Thus, according to poet's own version, his poetical works amount to not more than nine i.e. Khosrove Nāmah or the Khosrove-wa-Gol, Ikhtiyār Nāmah or Mukhtār Nāmah, Asrār Nāmah, Musibat Nāmah, Diwān, Jawāhir Nāmah, Ilāhī Nāmah, Macāmāt-i-Tuvūr or Mantiq-ul-Tair, Shawh-ul-Qalb.

In addition to these poetical compositions, the Tazkirat-ul-Auliā i.e. the Biographies of the Saints' in prose is also a very renowned work of Attār. Attār considers himself too verbose. In Khosrove Nāmah he says :

کسی کو چون منی را تبجوی است
عین گوید کہ از بسیار گوی است

(He, who is a fault-finder of a person like me, will simply say that I am a verbose).

But in his Mantiq-ul-Tair, he justifies his verbosity in the way: "I told my heart" Oh verbose one, say little, and seek the truth", and his heart answered "Do not blame me, I am in flames and shall be burnt if I do not speak"⁹⁸.

The verbosity of Attar is proved by his works. His mystical expressions have been repeated by him so vehemently and time and again that one is made to think that the pen of the poet is uncontrollable through ecstasy. A kind of relief is sought by repetition of the same ideas.

Garcin De Tassy and the authors of Majma-ul-Fusahā and Atash Kadeh, following Daulat Shah, state that the total number of the verses of Attar as contained in his Ghazals, qitas, Qasidas, Rubais and Masnavis etc. amount to more than one hundred thousand. The author of Haft Iqlim exceeds this limits and records the total number of the verses as more than one lakh and twenty thousand.

The modern writers, however, are more accurate. According to Prof. Farnzānfar who has personally counted

98. Kulliyāt-i-Attār. Page 1160.

and verified all the poetical works of 'Attār, is of the opinion that the total number of 'Attār's verses as contained in his Diwān and the Masnavi, is exactly fortyfour thousand and five hundred and ninety.⁹⁹

As already stated, with the exception of the Tazkirat-ul-Auliya and a brief introduction to the Mukhtar Nāmah, all the works of 'Attār are in verse. Some of his works have been sometimes confused with one another. Thus, a part of a book may be detached and regarded as an independent work, like Haft Vadi which is actually the second part of the Mantiq-ut-Tair.

Here is a brief account of the works of 'Attār together with a short account of some other famous books which have been actually composed by others and very wrongly ascribed to 'Attār.

(1) Musibat Nāmah : This long poem is known as Jawab Nāmah and Nuzhat Nāmah also. Maulānā Rūmī definitely kept in mind some of the mystical ideas of this poem while composing his own great work. Husain ibn Mo'īn-ud-Dīn, the annotator of the Diwān-i-Amīr (890 A.H.) has referred to this poem and counted it as one of the works of 'Attār¹⁰⁰.

99. Shayh-i-Ahwāl-o-Naghd-i-Asār 'Attār, Tehran 1339 Solar, Page 76-77.

100. Shayh-i-Diwān-i-Amīr, Tehran Edition 1285 Solar, Page.96.

The Musibat Nāmah has been published at Tehran in 1354 A.H./1935 A.D.

(2) Ilāhī Nāmah : This very famous Hasnavi containing more than six thousand seven hundred verses has been published at Tehran in 1355-56 A.H./1936⁻³⁷ A.D. and is full of glaring mistakes. Some portions of it which serve as eulogium of the first Islamic Caliph Abu Bakr have been changed. This poem is definitely by the pen of Attār as the references to the famous Saint Rukn-ud-Din Iskāfī occur at many places.

(3) Aṣṣar Nāmah : This book has been claimed as his own work by Attār in Khosrova Nāmah and Makhtār Nāmah. As already discussed this famous book was presented to Maulānā Rūmī by the poet personally when the former visited Nishābūr in 618 A.H./1221 A.D. while migrating from Khurāsān to Baghdad with his father. Many of the anecdotes of the great Hasnavi of Rūmī have been adopted from it viz "Hikāyat-i-Basargan-va-Tutī", "Hikāyat-i-Bāz-i-Shāh", "Dāstān-i-Shikvāh-i-Hashshah" etc. It comprises about three thousand and one hundred verses and has been published in 1298 A.H./1880 A.D. at Tehran. A selection from it has also been compiled¹⁰¹.

101. Wladimir Ivanow : A concise descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Page 166, Calcutta 1924.

(4) Mukhtār Nāmah : This poem has also been styled as Ikhtiyār Nāmah and comprises fifty chapters on various poetical topics along with an introduction in prose. This is a collection of the poet's quatrains, compiled and selected by him at the request of some of his friends and admirers. Originally the total number of the verses was six thousand, out of which about one thousand were discarded by the author himself. The present Tehran Edition (1359 A.H./ 1934 A.D.) contains not more than four thousand and two hundred verses. The book is also famous as the Diwān-i-Rubāiyāt.

(5) Khosrove Nāmah : This poem is based on the love story of Khosrove and Gol and has been styled as Khosrove and Gol also. It comprises about eight thousand verses and 'Attār calls it Khosrove Nāmah, at the end of the poem in the following verse :

نام خسرو روی زمین را
نام دم نام خسرو نام این را

(After the name of the Lord of the world, I have named it Khosrove Nāmah). As it is evident from its various verses, the poet's mother passed away during its composition. Hence it seems to have been composed during the youth time of 'Attār. The poem was published in 1879 A.D. at Lucknow by the famous publisher of India, Munshi Nawal Kishore of Lucknow.

(6) Diwān : A Diwān-i-Attār, comprising seven hundred and fifty four Ghazals and many gasidas, has been edited and published by Prof. Sa'eed Nafici at Tehran in 1319(Solar). The total number of verses in this diwān is nine thousand and nine hundred and forty three.

(7) Jawāhir Nāmah : This book has been included in the list of Attār's works in his introduction to Mukhtār Nāmah and Khosrova Nāmah. But, hitherto, no manuscript of it has been found anywhere. Probably this book has disappeared now and another book namely, Jawāhir-ul-Zat has been forged in its place by a later Attār.

(8) Shash-ul-Qalb : This poem has also been lost, like the fore-mentioned Jawāhir Nāmah.

(9) Maqāmāt-i-Tuyūr or Mantiq-ul-Tair : This is probably the best poetical work of Attār and contains four thousand four hundred and fifty eight verses¹⁰². The book has been so popular since its composition, down to the present day that many a poet has tried to copy its style and subject-matter. One such poet is Zaid-ud-Dīn Umar Bin Muzaffar Bin Alwardī (Died 749 A.H./1348 A.D.) who composed a similar book and named it Mantiq-ul-Tair-Ba-irādāt-ul-Khair. Another is Shihāb-ud-Dīn Ahmad (Died 777 A.H./1375 A.D.) who entitled his book exactly Mantiq-ul-Tair.¹⁰³

102. Prof. Fārnaznfar : Shash-i-Ahwāl-o-Nagd-i-Asar. Page 313.

103. Su-i-Simorg. Page 83-84.

The following editions of Mantiq-ul-Tair are noteworthy:

1. First Tehran Edition in 1857 A.D.
2. Paris Edition, with French Translation in two volumes by Garcin De Tassy in 1857-1863 A.D.
3. Bombay Edition in 1880 A.D.
4. Lucknow Edition in 1288 A.H./1871 A.D.
5. Kanpur Edition in 1891 A.D.
6. Second Edition Lucknow in 1338 A.H./1918 A.D.
7. Lahore Edition in 1933 A.D.
8. Second Edition Bombay in 1280 A.H./1863 A.D.
9. Third Edition Lucknow in 1352 A.H./1933 A.D.

Selection from Mantiq-ul-Tair by Sheikh Saiyid Ali Hamadani, has also been compiled in the 15th Century A.D.

Mantiq-ul-Tair has been translated into various languages of the world as follows :

Turkish :

1. Golshehri the famous Turkish Sufi poet who lived in the 14th and 15th Centuries A.D. composed a versified Turkish translation of Mantiq-ul-Tair in 717 A.H./1317 A.D. The photostat copy of this Turkish version has been published by the authorities of the Turkish Language Society in 1957 A.D. at Ankara.

2. Another Turkish writer, namely Mauli Shāmi' (D. 1005 A.H./1596 A.D.) annotated it in Turkish language.

French : The best known French translation of Mantiq-ut-Tair has been published by Garcin De Tassy in 1863 A.D.

Swedish : Baron Erik Hermlein translated the book from French and published it in 1929 A.D.

English: 1. The first English translation of the Mantiq-ut-Tair seems to be an Indian Parsi, Mr. Rustam P. Masani. He published the book in 1924 A.D. from Oxford, under the title "The Conference of the Birds".

2. Another, word by word, translation of one thousand one hundred and seventy verses has been done by Gulam Mohd. Ubaid-i-Hindi.

3. A compendium of the book in a very brief and lucid English prose has been published by Edward Fitzgerald, the renowned translator of the Rubaiyat-i-Khayyām.

4. The last translation of the Mantiq-ut-Tair, as known to me, is by S.C. Nott, who has summarised the French version in English and published it in 1954^{A.D.} from London.

Urdu : The famous Indian Sūfi poet Wajidī, presented an Urdu version of the book in verse styled as Panchi Bāchā (Bhāsa)

i.e. "The language of the Birds".

(10) Tazkirat-ul-Auliya : The best known book of Attār in Persian prose, is the "Biographies of the Saints" which according to Attār's own statement, was completed in the year 617 A.H./1220 A.D. during the reign of Mohd. Khwārazm Shāh. The book comprises the biographies, sayings and interesting anecdotes of seventy two leading sūfī saints from Imam Jafar-i-Sādiq to Husain bin Mansūr-i-Hallāj. The language and style except the beginning of some biographies where it has become a little pedantic, is simple and spontaneous and could be styled as the best specimen of the 13th Century Persian Prose. In view of the wide publicity and the popularity which this book has enjoyed through the centuries, it has been translated into many languages. One of the sūfī saints, picked up the sayings of the saints from this book and compiled a separate volume out of it. In 821 A.H./1418 A.D. one of the famous Shirazi poets, namely Hafiz Alaf, versified the Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, under the title of Wali Nāneh and presented it to his patron Prince Abu'l Fath-i-Ibrāhīm Sultān, the son of the illustrious Shah Rukh. Wali Nāneh comprises twenty four thousand verses and it took the author six complete years to complete it. A good manuscript of it is extant in the Asian Museum Library, Leningard¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴. Baron Victorozan : Persian Manuscripts of Eastern Studies Library, 1986, Page 210-215.

Tazkirat-ul-Auliya has been printed a number of times at different places. First two editions were published from Lahore in 1306 A.H./1888 A.D. and 1308 A.H./1890 A.D. respectively. In 1905-1907, it was printed at London in two volumes, edited and compiled by the renowned orientalist Mr. Nicholson and with a forward by the most learned Iranian Scholar Allāma Qazwīnī. Again a photo-stat copy of the London Edition was published in 1931-32 at Stockholm.

In addition to the above-noted works, definitely written by Attār, the following books have, repeatedly, been ascribed to him very incorrectly :

Bisar Nāmeḥ : This small poem, containing two hundred verses only is said to have been composed under very curious circumstances. It is stated that, on being murdered, Attār, took his head, into his both hands and started reciting these mystical verses, the collection of which, later, came to be known as Bisar Nāmeḥ. As it is quite evident, the story itself is too preposterous to be believed. Moreover, its style and language are so worthless and weak that they cannot claim their origin from the mighty pen of the illustrious Attār. In fact the real author of this poem and many others like Shutur Nāmeḥ or Ushtur Nāmeḥ, Bulbul Nāmeḥ, Jawāhir-ul-Zāt, Lisān-ul-Ghaib, Nazhar-ul-Aḥsāb, Mirāi Nāmeḥ, Halālī --

Nāmeḥ or Hailai Nāmeḥ or Mansūr Nāmeḥ and Waslat Nāmeḥ, is Farīd-ud-Dīn Mohd. Attār Tūnī Mashhadī, who is believed to have lived in the city of Mashhad in the 15th Century A.D. A brief account of this fictitious Attār will not be out of place here.

This impostor, as is evident from his following verses in the *Mazhar-ul-Ajaib*, was born at Nishābūr and his full name was Mohd. Farīd-ud-Dīn.

اصل من از تون محوآمده
مولد من شهر نیشابور آمده

(My origin is from Tūn, My birth place is the city of Nishābūr)

مست نام من محمد ای صید
شیر فرید الدین لقب از اصل دیر

(O auspicious one, my name is Mohd. My epithet Farīd-ud-Dīn is from the people of vision).

In the same book, he records his years in these lines:

اندرین سالی که لطم گشت یار
بود سال با نصد و هشتاد و چار

(This year, when my disposition has favoured me (in the composition of this book) is 584 A.H.).

سال عمر من ز صد گشته بود
مهم اغضا تم بر درد آغشته بود

(The years of my age are past hundred. My all limbs are moistened with pain).

According to this date, the poet was born about 484 A.H./ 1095 A.D. which is highly improbable in view of the following reasons. In the same Mazhar-ul-Ajaib, the following verse occurs, which tells us that the first eighteen years of his young age were spent at Mashhad.

وقت کودکی من هیجده سال
ممشید و دره ام خوشوقت و شحال

(At the time of my childhood, I have been very happy and prosperous at Mashhad for eighteen years).

Now it may be asserted here with some authority, that the city of Mashhad took its name in the 15th Century A.D. and came into the full blaze of history only after the annihilation of the city of Tū^h. Hence the afore-mentioned date i.e. 584 A.H./1188 A.D. is a concocted one.

Again, the fictitious 'Attār, in order to show his miraculous and spiritual powers, has tried to pose as a fore-teller of the events to follow him. Thus he records a prophecy about the famous Maulānā Rūmī in these lines :

عارفی واقف از اصل علوم
بعد من پیدا شود گویا بروم

(A knower of the Divine Secrets, acquainted with the origin of all Sciences, will be born after me at Rūm .)

او بو شد او بو شد از یقین
از کف منی سلطان شمس الدین

(Surely, he will wear as well as drink from the spiritual palm of the King Shams-ud-Dīn).

از همان جرعه که من نوشیده‌ام
از همان خرقة که من پوشیده‌ام

(From the same draught that I have drunk, of the same coarse garment that I am wearing).

مرد شرع‌بنی او را بدان
وین سخن را هم ز اهل حق کنان

(Know him to be a Traveller of the Path of the Prophet and conceal this thing from the stupid).

Again, he forecasts the Mongol catastrophe in the same book.

بعد ازین آیند ترکان در جهان
آید این عطار ز ایشان در جهان

(After this, the Turks will appear in the world. 'Attār will lament at their hands).

بعد من بنید از ترکان عذاب
عالم از ترکان شود یکسر خراب

(After me, there will be torture from the Turks. The world will be ransacked by the Turks).

Similarly, having come to know about the anecdote connected with the "headless walk" of 'Attār, the impostor predicts it in the following verses :

تو چه دانی حال اهل راز را
نبستی همچون شهید بر بلا

(What do you know about the secret-knowers ? You are not like the Martyr of Karbala).

هر که از خود رفت بیرون راه یافت
در حقیقت وصلت الهی یافت

(He who became selfless, found his way out : in reality he obtained the Union with God).

نزد حق این راه بی سر رفته اند
فرشتن فردای ملا رفته اند

(They have traversed this Way upto God "headlessly", They have covered the distance of to-morrow's misfortunes).

از سر بی تن شنو اینجالیسان
تا ره یابی بسوی نمازیان

(Listen to the speech of the bodyless head. The friend should be seen in 'Ana'l Haq').

از سر بی تن سخن باید شنید
در انا الحق دوست را باید دید

(Listen to the language of the head that has no body, so that you may find a way to the heroes).

The later Attār in his introduction to the Lisān-ul-Ghaib, says that he was compelled to run for his life at his old age when he composed his book the Mazhar-ul-Adāib (Display of the Marvels) in which he praised the fourth Caliph 'Alī very lavishly to the exclusion of the first three Caliphs and thus proclaimed his unequivocal Shi'istic predilections.

It happened in the reign of Burāq Khān Turkomān who was famous for his orthodox views. A certain jurist Faqihī Samarqandī by name, accused him of heresy, incited the mob against him, charged him before the ruler Burāq Khān, who gave a legal verdict that he deserved the punishment of death. The people attacked the poet's house and ransacked it. But, he luckily escaped unhurt. After this he took refuge at Mecca and composed his Lisān-ul-Ghaib, in which he mentions what happened to him at that critical time, and curses the man who roused the people against him. In the same book, he says that he has now decided to follow the example of Nasir Khosrove shutting himself away from the people.

Burāq Khān Turkomān has been identified by some of the scholars, as Qutlugh Sultan Burāq-i-Hajib, a Chieftain of the Khwarazm Shāhis, who conquered Kirman in 619 A.H./1222 A.D. But this Burāq Khān appears to have lived in a much later period as this type of conflicts and riots among the Shi'ites and their rivals Sunnites were not known to the people of Kharānsān before the advent of the 15th Century A.D.

However the following lines from Mazhar-ul-A'laib, very clearly establish the date of the later Attār and no further proof of his age need be required.

شعر حافظ خوان و با قاسم کشین
نزد انده ایشانند باموی قوین

(Recite the poetry of Hāfiz and sit with Qāsim, because there are very near to the Lord).

بعد من اسم ار ايشان گوش کن
روز خم شفقشان می نوش کن

(After me listen to their secrets. Go and drink from the jar of their love).

Although, the imposter has tried to identify himself perfectly well, with the real 'Attār, yet he has most unprudently, let the cat out of the bag in these lines : It is a well-known fact that Hāfiz, the celebrated poet of Shiraz died in 791 .A.H./1388 A.D. and Qāsim-i-Anwār lived upto 837 A.H./1433 A.D. Hence the later 'Attār, the author of Lisān-ul-Ghaib, Mazhar-ul-A'āib and Bisar Nāme etc. definitely outlived them to forecast most surreptitiously their arrival in the world.

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Prof. Nafīcī, in his Justujū Dar Ahwāl has fixed up the age of 'Attār in another convincing way : According to him the earliest manuscript extant of the Lisān-ul-Ghaib has been transcribed by Nizām-ul-Mulk Khwafi, the Minister of the celebrated Sultān Husain Baiqra of the 15th Century. Another manuscript possessed by Prof. Fārnzānfar of the Tehran University bears the date 912 A.H./1506 A.D. Consequent upon this the book Lisān-ul-Ghaib appears to have been composed not later

than the 15th Century A.D.

Another glaring difference between the real 'Attār and the later imposter is the strikingly opposite views of the both. As we know, the real 'Attār was a renowned Sūfī-saint and made his mark as a great exponent of the mystical doctrines, having inclinations towards the Shafīī branch of the Islamic Theology. In most of his compositions we find him lavishing extravagant praise on all the four Caliphs, respectively¹⁰⁷.

On the contrary, 'Attār of the 15th Century A.D. has been a staunch Shi'ite. The following verses from his Lisān-ul-Ghaib bear full testimony to this fact.

بنده اشقی عشر از جان منم
در بیان ز آن که ایشان ی زعم

(I am a slave to the Twelve Imāms from my heart. That is the reason why I am talking about them in my book Lisān).

ما حسینی مذ عبیدیم و حیدری
بر دل دشمن چون پیش خوری

(We follow the Husaini religion and we are Haiderites. We are like the point of dagger on the enemy's heart).

At another place, in the same Lisān-ul-Ghaib, he says :

شیعه پاکست عطار ای پسر
جنس این شیعه بجان خود محرز

107. See his Introduction to Mantiq-ul-Tair, Ilahi Nameh, Asrār Nameh etc.

(O boy, Attār is a pious Shi'ite. Purchase the kind of this shi'ite in exchange for your soul).

لو صیفم را از دست بجزار تو
خود برو اندر می کرار تو

(Give up Bū Hanīfah and follow the Karrār (one of the names given to Ali on account of his impetuosity).

Lisān-ul-Ghaib : This poem, from which I have already quoted liberally comprises five thousand four hundred verses and is considered to be the master-piece by its author, the fictitious Attār of the 15th Century. The author claims to have composed it during his pilgrimage to Mecca and enumerates his thirteen other works, besides it viz., Jawāhir-ul-Zāt, Mazhar-ul-Ais'ib, Waslat Nāmeh, Mirāj Nāmeh, Bulbul Nāmeh, Ushtur-Nāmeh, Asrār Nāmeh, Ilāhī Nāmeh, Musibat Nāmeh, Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, Mukhtār Nāmeh, Jawāhir Nāmeh and Shayh-ul-Galb.

Suffice to add here that only the first six owe their origin and composition to the impostor Attār and the latter seven decidedly belong to the great Attār of the 13th Century. The style, language, religious views and ————— above all the fictitious prophecies of the former books clearly disclose their author to be poles apart from the real Attār who is head and shoulders above his impostor in all respects. The impersonation was perhaps intended to secure a grand

stature in the eyes of the public. But the facts do not warrant it and the gold is clearly discernible from the copper.

In the end it is pointed out that most of the scholars working on 'Attār, have based their conclusions regarding the biography and the mystical views of this great Sūfī, on the books like Lisān-ul-Ghail and Mazhar-ul-'Ajāl etc. Under the circumstances most of the qualities and events related to the impostor have been ascribed to the real one. Hence, it is the time to reverse these decisions and take up the study of 'Attār afresh taking only those works in view which are definitely his own and which do not misguide the reader and lead him to the wilderness of confusion.

* * * * *

مرا از شاعری خود عار ناید
که در صد قرن چون عطار ناید
مجموعه شبیری

*My poetry does not put me to shame
because the like of Attār cannot be
produced in centuries*

Mahmūd Shabistārī

CHAPTER - II

SŪFISM

(Its Development Unto Attar)

1. Derivation and Meaning :

Tasawwuf or Sufism, as known to the Europeans, is one of the very famous branches of Islamic philosophy and is represented in the European literature by the word 'Mysticism'. Among the various derivations that have been proposed to explain the word 'Sūfi', the oldest and the one, which can be etymologically defended as well, is the three lettered word 'sūf' which literally means 'Wool', a 'Fleece' or 'Goat's' hair'. According to Nicholson¹, Abū Nasr Al-Sarrāj, the author of Kitāb-ul-Luma', the oldest extant Arabic treatise on Sūfism, declares that in his opinion (which naturally is not based on philological grounds) the word 'Sūfi' is derived from 'Sūf' for the woollen raiment is the habit of the prophets and the badge of the Saints and elect, as appears in many traditions and narratives². This derivation from 'Sūf' is confirmed by the authority of oriental tradition and Nöldeke, strongly supporting this view, has cited many passages, in order to show that in the first two centuries

1. Hastings : Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol XII, Page 10.

2. Nicholson: Kitāb-ul-Luma'. Page 20, London 1916.

of Islam, garments of coarse wool were worn by those who followed an ascetic view of life³. Prof. Browne corroborates this view and writes that it is now quite certain that it is derived from the word 'Suf' (wool) which view is confirmed by the equivalent 'Pashmina-Pūsh', 'Wool-wearer' applied to these mystics in Persia⁴. Such garments were perhaps originally used by the Christian monks and were styled as Ziyy-ul-Ruhbān i.e. the dress of the Christian ascetic⁵. The early Sūfis or ascetics, following in the footsteps of the Christian monks and priests, started wearing them in order to make the simplicity of their apparel a silent protest against the growing luxury of their coreligionists.

Another word which has been suggested as the root of the term 'Sūfī' is 'ṣafā', which means 'purity' or 'cleanliness'. Jāmī, in his famous work Bahārīstān⁶ favours this etymology and explains that when one of the elect becomes purified from all worldly defilement, he is called 'Sūfī'.

Another view is that the 'Sūfis' are 'the followers of' (Ahlul Suffa) i.e. 'People of the Bench'. 'Suffa' in Arabic means a 'bench', a 'dais' or a 'raised floor'. It also means a

3. ZDMG. XIVIII (1891) 45, Quoted on Page 10 in the above-noted Encyclopaedia.

4. A Literary History of Persia Vol I, Page 417, Cambridge, 1951.

5. Shā'irānī, Lawāqih-I. 45.

6. Bahārīstān Page 119, Tehran Edition.

'covered place for reclining on,' built before the doors of Eastern Houses or mosques. A number of Companions of Mohammad's flight, who, having neither friends nor calling at Madinah, lived on the donations of the faithful and lodged in the 'Suffa' of Mohammad's mosque, were called 'Ahlu's Suffa' and were famous for their simplicity and austerity. These people were peerless in piety and purity and other such qualities. Sufis are said to have borrowed all these qualities and attainments from 'Ahlu's Suffa'.⁷

The derivation of 'Sufi' from the word 'Saff' i.e. 'Rank' has also been suggested by some of the writers. A 'Sufi' according to this view is one who is in the First Rank (Saff) before God i.e. His special favourite or as though the Sufis were spiritually in the first rank in virtue of their communion with God⁸. The famous Iranian Scholar, Prof. Sa'eed Nafisi of the Tehran University differs from all the above-quoted views⁹. In his opinion the Arabic word 'Tasawwuf' comes from the Greek terms 'Theos' (God) and 'Sophia' (Knowledge) meaning collectively 'The Knowledge of God'. Since Sufism implies the same meaning it came to be known as 'Tasawwuf'.

7. Herman Frank : Beitrag Zur Erkenntnis des Sufismus pp 8-10, (Leipzig 1884).

8. Hastings : Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol XII, Page 10.

9. Justun-Dar-Ahwāl, Page 'Yeh'.

Of all the views quoted and explained above, the derivation from 'Sūf', is the only explanation which is considered to be etymologically defensible and has received general acceptance at the hands of the renowned European scholars. But, to me, the view of Prof. Nafīcī appears to be more meaningful and suitable as it bears a double meaning. Firstly 'Tasawwuf' is theosophic mysticism and a system which requires its followers to acquire the Knowledge of God. Secondly this word, based on the collateral formation 'Tafsauf' literally means 'to wear Sūf (wool)'. Hence it conveys the both meanings, temporal as well as spiritual. Consequently the term 'Sūfī' could mean, one who wears 'Sūf' as well as acquires the Knowledge of God.

The Sūfis themselves have defined a 'Sūfī' in various ways. According to Zun Nūn Misrī, a Sūfī is one whose speech accords with his behaviour and whose silence indicates his state and who discards worldly connections. Abūl Hasan-i-Nūrī defines it as renunciation of all carnal pleasures thus emphasising on asceticism. Further a Sūfī is one who neither owns (property) nor is owned i.e. one who is not in limitations. Abū Bakr Shiblī has said Tasawwuf is renunciation i.e. guarding oneself against seeing 'other than God' in both the worlds. Khafī defines it as an observance of the existence of God at the time of neglectfulness. Abū Saʿeed Fazlullāh thinks it is concentrating the mind on God.

2. Beginning :

The beginning of Sūfism may be placed at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th centuries A.D. and according to Jāmī¹⁰ the title 'Sūfī' was first borne by Abū Hashīm (D.778 A.D.) of Kūfa, who is reported to have been a contemporary of Sufyan-ul-Thauri and is credited with the foundation of a monastery for Sūfis at Ramla in Palestine. But the earliest Sūfī writer known to the author of the 'Fihrist' was probably Yahya bin Muazz of Ray, near Tehran, whose death he places in 821-22A.D.

Early Sūfism was essentially exoteric in character, and as we shall presently discuss it in detail, tended to become esoteric at a later stage. Hence still earlier Sūfis who were thoroughly exoteric, and are claimed to be perfect mystics by their followers, could be traced in the persons of Ibrāhīm bin Adham (777 A.D.), Daud-u-Tāi (781-82 A.D.), Fazayl Iyād (803 A.D.) and the accomplished lady Rabia'-ul-Adawiyya (801 A.D.) a contemporary of the above-mentioned Abū-Hashīm. However Qushairi¹¹ is of the view that the term 'Sūfī' came into vogue before 200 A.H./815 A.D. and Al-sarraj¹² thinks it to be an invention of the people of Baghdād. Prof. Nicholson¹³ is of a different view and considers Jāhiz of Basra (869 A.D) to be

10. Edited by W.N. Lees : Nafahāt-ul-Uns. Page 34, Calcutta Edition 1859.

11. Risālatu l-Qushairiyya. Page 9, Cairo edition 1318 A.H.

12. Kitāb-ul-Luma' page 22. ✓A¹²

13. Hastings: Encyclopaedia. Page 10, Col. II.

the first Arabic writer, using the word 'Sūfi' and enumerating the Sūfis amongst the priests (al-Sūfiya min al nussāk). The same writer draws a detailed list containing the names of several who were esteemed as eloquent Sūfis¹⁴.

3. Origin and Development :

The origin of Sūfism in Islam has been rendered very obscure and divergent views have been expressed in an effort to trace it. Different theories viz The Spontaneous origin, the view of the Esoteric Doctrine of the Prophet, the Aryan Reaction theory and the Neo-Platonic origin etc. are so oft-repeated that they may not be retold here. Perhaps it may suffice to remark, at this stage, that this movement does not owe its origin to a single cause, it was a long process continually influenced by the ever-changing political, social and intellectual environments of the countries and creeds where it made itself felt. Nicholson is right when he tries to trace the growth of Sūfism in the circumstances leading to "the devastating civil wars of the Umayyad period, the sceptical and rationalistic currents that ran in the early Abbasid age and particularly the bitter sectarianism and barren dogmatism of the Ulamā"¹⁵.

14, Kitāb-ul-Bayān, Page 138, Cairo 1313 A.H.

15. Hastings : Encyclopaedia, Page 11, Col. II

The main features of early Sūfism may be summed up as follows :

The Sūfis in the early stage, come under the heading of the exoteric Sūfis or 'Bā-Shara Sūfis' i.e. those who observed the rules and regulations of the religion and they resemble strikingly the European mystics like St. Anselm, St. Bernard, ^{Hugo of} St. Victor of Hugo and Wicliffe. The lives of the general run of these Sūfis were based on the teachings of the Prophet, for they maintained as Sādi expresses in his didactic Bustān;

درین راه جز مرد دانی نرفت
گم آن شد که دنبال رایی نرفت
خلاف پیغمبر کسی راه نگیرد
که طریقت بمنزل خواص درسیر

(In this path none but the devotee entered

Astray was he who left the trail of the Shepherd
Who sought a path contrary to the Prophet's
He will never reach the desired goal).

These early Sūfis were chiefly content with a way of life, by which the carnal self (Nafs) could be purified from its sins and weaknesses and the soul could enter on the path which led to God. The main stages and stations, on this path, with their resultant qualities included Tauha (Repentance), Sabr (Patience), Shukr (Gratitude), Rajā (Hope), Khauf (Fear), Faqr (Poverty), Zuhd (Asceticism or Renunciation), Tawhīd

(The merging of the personal will with the Will of God), Tawakkul (Dependence on and trust in God), Mahabba (Love), including Shauq (Longing for God), Uns (Fellowship with God) and Riza (Satisfaction with whatever He desires). But, by far, the most pronounced features of the early movement were Asceticism and Quietism. "An overwhelming consciousness of sin, combined with a dread of Judgement Day and the torments of Hell-fire, so vividly painted in the Quran", drove them to seek salvation in flight from the world. It was stressed that if they were destined to be saved by fasting, praying and pious works, then they would be saved. Their fate was inscribed on the Eternal Tables (Loh-i-Mehfuz). Such beliefs ended, most naturally in the renunciation of the worldly pleasures, and quietism which meant complete and unquestioning submission to the Divine Will. The poet Hafiz, beautifully elucidates this point in the following verse :

رضا براده بدو در جبین گره پیشانی
که برین دو در اختیار کشادست

(Submit to what you have been given and open the knot of your forehead, because the door of Will is not in our control).

The early ascetics believed that the best attainment on the earth was the religious perfection which, in turn, could not be achieved without a contemplation of God and a complete abandonment of the human will, to the Supreme Will of God.

They expressed their ideas in a language very close to that of the qurān and looked to the towering personalities of Islām for guidance. The Prophet himself was considered to be the spiritual Master (Murshid) and is reported to have possessed the mystical qualities. Thus, on one occasion, when he was in such a state, he asked his wife Āyesha "Man Anti" (Who art thou?), she said "Ana Āyesha" (I am Āyesha); again asked "Man Āyesha ?" (Who is Ayesha ?) the reply was "Ibnnatus Siddiq" (Daughter of Siddiq). Again "Manis Siddiq" (Who is Siddiq ?) "Saharut Muhammad (Father-in-law of Mohammed). Again "Man Muhammad" (Who is Mohammed)? Here Hazrat Āyesha stopped short, thinking that the Prophet was in another state¹⁶. Similarly some other traditions were constantly cited by these mystics as the basis of their doctrine, such as God's alleged declaration, "I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known, therefore I created creation that I might be known", or "God was, and there was naught beside him" or "Whosoever knoweth himself knoweth his Lord" etc.

Besides the tradition, some texts of qurān itself were mystically interpreted in order to show the qurānic origin of the movement. One such utterance is to be found in the words addressed to the Prophet in connection with his victory

16. Preliminary discourse to Kanzal Asrār, Page 5 quoted by Khwāja Khān in Studies in Tasawwuf, Page 123-34, Madras Edition 1923.

over the infidels at the battle of Badr¹⁷. "Thou didst not shoot when thou didst shoot, but God shot". It was deduced from this that God is "Fa'āl-i-Mutlaq" (The Absolute Agent) and man but a pen in the fingers of the scribe who turns it as he will.

Further, 'Alī, the Caliph and the Imāms of his House are regarded as to have possessed in a superlative degree the "Inward Knowledge". Junaid, as quoted in the Kitāb-ul-Luma', says, that had 'Alī not been occupied in so many wars, he would have imparted to the world the vast measure of the ʿilm-ul-Ladunni (العلم اللدني), with which he was endowed¹⁸. Similarly in the Tazkirat-ul-Auliya of Attār, the first place in the list of the mystic-saints is given to Jafar-ur-Rāḍī, the sixth apostolical Imām. Another interesting thing, in this connection, as suggested by Amīr 'Alī, is that in the case of almost every Sūfī-saint, the line of spiritual descent is traced back to 'Alī and through him to the Prophet¹⁹.

So strong were the ascetic desires of the early mystics, that in a short time many a distinguished personality was definitely suggesting and writing to systematize its steadfast rules and regulations. The ascetics were seen going to and fro accompanied by their admirers and supporters, holding

17. Qurān VIII, 17.

18. Page 129.

19. The Spirit of Islam, Page 460, London 1955.

prayer-congregations, discussing Qurānic verses. Grand ascetics like Hasan of Basra (728 A.D.) devoted themselves so thoroughly to devotion and piety (Zuhd and Taqwa) that they became proverbial and exemplary for their pupils. Regular schools came into existence and we have the portraits of the holy men, acting like teachers, composing their fundamental works in reply to questions put to them by their pupils. "The structure of Al-Muhāsibī's books", according to Prof. Arberry, "especially his masterpiece al-Ri'aya li Huquq Allah fully confirms this description"²⁰.

But, on the whole, there does not appear to be any organised monastic life during the early period. The early champions look more of puritanic hermits than devout mystics and, at this stage, the only difference between the mystic and the Orthodox Mohammedan zealot seems to be that the former attached extraordinary importance to certain Qurānic doctrines and developed them at the expense of others which other Orthodox Coreligions might think equally important²¹.

With the passage of time the early ascetics were divided into two distinct parties. One of them, describing asceticism as an internal desire emphasized the higher values of it. They

20. A.J. Arberry : Sufism, Page 47.

21. Nicholson, Mystics of Islam, Page 5.

asserted that it consisted more in humility and a humble attitude of mind and was not simply a matter of wearing humble dress and eating scanty food²². This party was under the influence of Hasan-ul-Basri and most of its adherents were stationed at Basra. The other group comprised some ascetics of Syria who attached more importance to the outward forms and ^{the} ritualistic aspect of the Qurānic religion was everything for them.

The fanatical exaggeration of Islamic rites and Qurānic dogmas, as already stated, was based on the fear of God and His Hell-fire. The ascetics observed fanatically the religious rites in order to be saved from His Wrath who was inscrutable. God was worshipped more for His Wrath than for His Love. These feelings ultimately led to the really spiritually minded to the view that it was nothing short of a bargain to worship God for securing salvation. In other words "True asceticism is incompatible with any selfish desire, even with the desire to undergo the utmost privations and austerities, for the sake of winning Paradise²³.

Thus there came into existence, a great revolt of the Soul against formality in religion which gave way to a doctrine that came out with a view that all ritualistic observances were

22. Qūt-ul-qulūb, Page 129, Cairo 1310 A.H.

23. Nicholson: Article in Hastings's Encyclopaedia, ^{vol 12} Page 11, Col. I.

useless and that God was not to be regarded as a callous and All-Powerful Ruler of the destinies of mankind, but as a Friend and Beloved of the Soul : This attitude was not formed immediately. It was a gradual evolution which took at least two centuries to manifest itself completely and the people living during this period can best be styled as quietists. They appear to be getting a slightly higher than the stage of Asceticism but do not reach the goal of Gnosis (i.e. Marifa). "Self-abandonment, rigorous self-mortification, fervid piety, and quietism carried to the verge of apathy form the main features of their creed"²⁴.

The most important members of this group, all of whom died between the middle and the end of the second century of Hijra (767-815 A.D.) were Ibrāhīm-bin-Adham, Abū Ālī Shāqīq, Fudayl bin Iyād and Rabīa'.

Ibrāhīm bin Adham²⁵, a prince, belonging to the royal family of Balkh, was brought up in a fabulously rich atmosphere; but, one day, while hunting, he heard a voice which cried "Awake ! Wert thou created for this ?" Hereafter he renounced the world and following in the footsteps of Lord Buddha became a Shikāfiyya or Cave-dweller, near Nishābūr,

24. Nicholson : A Literary History of the Arabs, Page 231, Cambridge 1953.

25. For details, see article "Adham bin Ibrāhīm in EI; Goldziher in JRAS, 1904 p.132 F., Nicholson in SA XXVI 1911, 215 F.

in Khurāsān. After a long period of self-mortification, Adham came out of his retreat and lived a life of poverty and asceticism, living on the works of his hands. His teaching was concerned mainly with Asceticism. He concerned himself especially with meditation (Murāqaba). His customary prayer is reported to have been : "O God, uplift me from the shame of disobedience to the glory of submission unto Thee."²⁶ Adham is said to have died in 160 A.H./777 A.D.²⁷.

Shaqīq, also from Balkh, was an extremist. He developed the Doctrine of Trust in God or (Tawakkul) and indirectly preached Passivity. In his opinion "The Mutawakkil (i.e. one who trusts) must make no effort to obtain the barest livelihood, he must not ask for anything or engage in any occupation. According to him nine-tenths of devotion consist in flight from mankind, the remaining tenth in Silence. Shaqīq is recorded to have been a fervent pupil of Ibrāhīm bin Adham. But his conversion shows clearly the contacts between Islām and other religions. He, like his teacher, gave up the worldly pleasures, due to the sarcastic remarks of a certain Turk, belonging to the tribe of Khusūsiya, who worshipped idols. In his teachings we discern the beginning of a formal system of self-discipline such as the Sūfis of the 3rd century A.H. (i.e. 9th Century A.D.) developed much further. Shaqīq died in 810 A.D.

27. Margaret Smith; Readings from the Mystics of Islam, Page 9, London, 1956.

Fuzayl bin 'Iyād was also a Khurāsānīan by birth, who lived for a long time at Kūfa and died at Mecca. A converted captain of banditti, he believed—"To abstain for man's sake from doing anything is hypocrisy, while to do anything for man's sake is idolatry". His remarks on the death of his son 'Alī, show clearly his attitude towards God. When asked, by a pupil, who had accompanied his teacher for over thirty years and had never seen him laughing or smiling, about the reason of his smile on the death of his son, he replied "Almighty God desired a certain thing, and I desired what God desired".

But, by far, the most prominent Ṣūfī-saint of this period with whom ecstatic and enthusiastic element first makes its definite appearance, is the celebrated lady Rābi'a, who belonged to the tribe of 'Adī, whence she is generally known as Rābi'a-ul-Adawīyya. Born at Basra, she is described by her biographers as "that woman who lost herself ⁱⁿ union with the Divine, that one accepted by men as a second spotless Mary"²⁸. Kidnapped as a child, she was set free soon by her master, due to her saintly qualities. A number of pious men desired to marry her, but she declined all offers, declaring "The contract of marriage is for those who have a phenomenal existence. But

28. Margaret Smith : Readings from the Mystics of Islam,
Page 10.

in my case there is no such existence; for I have ceased to exist and have passed out of self. I exist in God and am altogether His. I live in the shadow of His Command. The marriage contract must be asked from Him and not from me"²⁹.

This extract strikingly reminds us of the Indian woman-saint Mīrā Bāi and the renowned Roman Catholic mystic women like St. Teresa, Madame Guyon, Catherine of Siena and Juliana of Norwich. With the name of Rābī'a is generally associated the first manifestation of Sūfism of the Doctrine of Divine Love. Many of the sayings and verses attributed to Rābī'a, are of doubtful authenticity, yet a good idea of the actual character of her devotion, may be found from them. She is reported to have composed the following verses :

Two ways I love thee : selfishly
And next, as worthy is of Thee.
'Tis selfish love that I do naught
Save think on Thee with every thought.
'Tis purest love when thou dost raise
The veil to my adorning gaze.
Not mine the praise in that or this;
Thine is the Praise in both, I wis"³⁰

"Whether genuine or not", remarks Nicholson, "These lines

29. Attar : Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, P.66, quoted by M.Smith in her Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East, P. 186; Arberry; Sufism, P.42.

30. See next page.

with their mixture of devotion and speculation - the author distinguishes the Illuminative from the Contemplative life and manifestly regards the latter as the most excellent way - serve to mark the end of the Ascetic School of Sufism and the rise of a New Theosophy, which under the same name and still professing to be in full accord with the Qurān and the Sunna, was founded to some extent upon ideas of extraneous origin - ideas irreconcilable with any revealed religion, and directly opposed to the severe and majestic simplicity of the Mohammedan articles of faith.³¹ This point can be further buttressed by the following dialogue passed between Rābi'a and one of her admirers. She was asked, "Do you love God Almighty?" "Yes", "Do you hate the devil". She replied, "My love of God leaves me no leisure to hate the Devil".

Similarly, when asked in a dream by the prophet, "O Rābi'a do you love me?" She replied, "who does not love you, O Apostle of God, but love of God has so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of anything remains in my heart". The mood of Rābi'a's celebrated prayer is also very close to the afore-mentioned extracts. She says, "O God if I worship Thee

^{you mean page}
 30. Nicholson; Legacy of Islam P. 213-14, Nicholson : A literary History of the Arabs. P.234, Arberry, Sufism P.43.
 31. Nicholson : A literary History of the Arabs, P.234.

for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell and if I worship Thee for hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine Everlasting Beauty".

Rābi'a had many disciples and admirers who sought her counsel and guidance in the path of Divine Love. She is recorded to have died in 185 A.H./801 A.D. and according to Ibn Khallikān (D 1282 A.D.) her tomb at Jerusalem was an object of pilgrimage in the middle ages.

As we have seen in the previous pages, the early ascetic movement laid the greatest stress on self-denial (Zuhd) and sought to bring every word, act and thought of the ascetics into harmony with the Divine Will, thus representing God as a Transcendent Personality, which could be attained by means of Asceticism only.

This joyless and negative attitude to the universe, tended to become lifeless without the spiritual emotion which could convert it into an ^aardent fervour, and produce rejoicing in hardship.³² Ascetic exercises were meaningless without ecstasy.

With the advent of Rābi'a, both these ends were achieved and the 'Sūfism' manifested itself in its true colours for the

first time in the history of Islam. Asceticism and quietism, perpetually for over two centuries, had been applauded by the most Orthodox of Mohammadan theologians. But with the passage of time, the resultant effects of them, produced some thing extremely different. This was a very natural process. In the words of Prof. Arberry "A total disregard of worldly wealth and ambition is exalted into an entire absorption with the fear, and then the service and finally the love of God"³³.

This religion of Love and Ecstasy soon came into conflict with Islam. The old barrier between the Creator and the creatures, now having broken down, the true Sufi declared that the fear of Hell or hope of Paradise could no longer frighten or please him. For the love of God, even the love of Prophet was to be sacrificed. But, by far, the most important change manifested itself in the definition of 'Tawhid' (Divine Unity) by the end of the same century (9th A.D.). The pantheistic element now made its definite appearance and ere long the Unique Personality of God hitherto far above and beyond human reach, ^{was} transformed into 'Al-Haq' (the Real Being), revealed in all created things. The Sufi's efforts were now concentrated on self-abandonment, which in turn, was to be obtained through ecstasy, leading to the attainment of Sufi's true self.

33. Ibid. p. 45

Asceticism, it must be clarified, was not altogether abandoned. It was still practised but with a different motive. It was now regarded as only the first step to the higher spiritual ideal of the Union with God.

These developments of the 9th and the 10th centuries A.D. require a very careful analysis and cannot be traced back to a single definite cause. Various Islamic and non-Islamic influences may be seen at work for a very long time to bring about these evolutions. The definition of a Sūfī goes on changing from saint to saint and the Sūfīs under the influence of various movements and forces, continue to mould Sūfism in different forms.

Before considering the external and internal forces leading to the striking changes in the new Sūfism, we propose to have a glance at the personalities introducing them and their behaviour in relation to them.

Among the pioneers of this new movement, the name of Ma'rūf-i-Karkhī comes next to Rābī'a. He was the teacher of Sarī-Saqtī, who in turn, was the instructor of Junayd³⁴. Born in Irāq of parents who were originally Christians and were converted to Islām later, he lived near the Karkh quarter of

34. Qasim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islām, Vol. II Page. 48
Tehran Second Edition. 1340 Solar

Baghdād, and commanded a great respect as a saint. Ma'rūf gave expression to the gnostic and theosophical ideals of the new movement and claimed a direct communion with God in this uttering, "When you desire anything of God, swear to Him by me". His definition of Sūfism as "the apprehension of Divine realities and renunciation of human possession" clearly brings out the new trends of his times. According to him "the saints of God are known by three signs. Their thought is of God, their dwelling is with God, their business is in God". According to Attār, when Ma'rūf died in 200 A.H./815 A.D., Jews, Christians and Muslims gathered round his dead body and claimed him to be one of them³⁵. This event, if true, clearly shows the wide popularity of this Sūfī-saint.

The next great Sūfī of the 9th century A.D. who was considered to be the head of this Sect (the Sūfis) claiming that they all descended from and were related to him³⁶, was Abu'l Fayd, Dhu'l Nu'n, the Egyptian (D.246 A.H./861 A.D.). This man was a Copt or Nubian by race and had travelled widely in the study of Sūfism, and was condemned for his public teaching of it. His admirers considered him to be one of the "hidden saints" and the apiritual head (qutb) of the Sūfis of his time.

35. Qāsim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf, Page 48.

36. Jāmi : Nafahāt-ul-Uns, Page 36.

"Dhu'l Nūn", as Prof. Arberry very well says "is represented in Sūfī biographies as an almost legendary figure, half mystic half alchemist, he is said to have known the ancient hieroglyphs, and to have been familiar with the Hermetic Wisdom"³⁷.

On account of his free thinking, Dhu'l Nūn was called 'Zindīq' in his life time.

Dhu'l Nūn's teachings were systematised and compiled by the celebrated Junayd of Bistām and have been recorded by some of the early Sūfī authors like Hujwīrī (in Kashf-ul-Mahjūb), Kalābādī (in Al-ta'arrūf), Attār (in Tazkirat-ul-Auliya) and others.

Dhu'l Nūn possessed of great insight into the Divine mysteries and the Doctrine of the Unity. According to some of his biographers, he was the first to introduce the conception of 'Ma'rifa' (Gnosis) into Sūfism. But this is not perfectly true. This Sūfī, no doubt, perfected this conception in the new movement, This idea can be certainly traced in the utterances of his predecessors. For instance Abū Sulaiman Al-Dārānī, a native of Irāq, migrating to Daraya, near Damascus, who lived before him, had already stressed the intuitive knowledge of God through spiritual insight. According to Al-Dārānī "When the

37. Sūfism, Page 52.

gnostics spiritual eye is opened, his bodily eye is shut. They see nothing but God."

Dhu'l Nūn, however, emphasized the conception of Gnosis in such a wonderful way that it became a tradition which is thereafter so prominent a characteristic of the subsequent ṣūfīs.

Dhu'l Nūn conceived the Ṣūfī's supreme experience as a super-intellectual God-given knowledge, peculiar to those, who "see God with their hearts". He says "The more a man knows God, the more is he lost in Him". The gnosis or higher knowledge, can be taught with safety only to the perfect or fully initiated. But, in the eyes of Dhu'l Nūn, the true disciple should be more obedient to his master than to God Himself³⁸.

Dhu'l Nūn believes that knowledge is of three kinds. First the knowledge of the Unity of God and this is common to all believers. Second, knowledge gained by proof and demonstration and this belongs to the wise and the eloquent and the learned, and third, knowledge of the attributes of the Unity, and this belongs to the saints, those who contemplate the Face of God within their hearts, so that God reveals Himself to them in a way which He is not revealed to any others in the world³⁹.

38. 'Aṭṭār : Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, I, Page 131.

39. M. Smith : Readings from the Mystics of Islam, Page 22-23.

Explaining the qualities of a gnostic, he says "The gnostics see without knowledge, without sight, without information received, and without observation, without description without veiling and without veil. They are not themselves but in so far as they exist at all, they exist in God. Their movements are caused by God and their words are the words of God, which are uttered by their tongues, and their sight is the sight of God, which has entered into their eyes"⁴⁰.

Distinguishing between knowledge and certainty, Dhu'l Nūn explains, "Every thing which the eyes see is related to knowledge and that which the hearts know is related to certainty."⁴¹

In his poetry Dhu'l Nūn appears as devoted a Lover of God as his predecessor Rābi'a of Basra, when he sings:

I die, and yet not dies in me
 The ardour of my love for Thee,
 Nor hath Thy Love, my only goal,
 Assuaged the fever of my ^{soul} goal.
 To Thee alone my spirit cries;
 In Thee my whole ambition lies,
 And still Thy Wealth is far above

40. Ibid Page 23.

41. Kalābādī : Ta'arrūf, P. 140.

The poverty of my small love,
 I turn to Thee in my request,
 And seek in Thee my final rest,
 To Thee my loud lament is brought,
 Thou dwellest in my secret thought.
 A fever burns below my heart,
 And ravages my every part;
 It hath destroyed my strength and stay,
 And smouldered all my soul away⁴².

Dhu'l Nūn, the Egyptian, has given a definite and distinctive turn to Sūfism by giving a very lucid and convincing definition of 'Ma'rifa', 'the mystical knowledge of God', and explaining its merits over 'Ilm', the 'intellectual knowledge'. His stress on the 'theory of Divine Love' (Mahabba) as propounded by Rābi'a, as the means to God, is equally valuable.

Dhu'l Nūn, the Egyptian and his followers were regarded to be the members of the 'Sahw'^{or} (Sober) School of Sūfism, but his contemporary Abū Yāzīd or Bāyāzīd Bisṭāmī, (D.875 A.D.) far more bolder than him, was the first of the 'Sukr' or the 'Intoxicated School', who using very immoderate language declared "God is within my own soul. How great is My Majesty".

42. Arberry : Sufism , Page 53.

He was a native of Persia and came from Bistām, in Khurāsān, where he spent most of his life. His great grand father is recorded to have been a Magian and his grand father Adam is said to have been the first of the family to embrace Islam. Hujwīrī describes Bāyazīd as the greatest of the Sheikhs in state and dignity. Junayd, according to Hujwīrī, also said ⁴³ "Abū Yāzīd holds the same rank among us as Gabriel among angels².

Although Dhu'l Nūn had elaborated the idea of complete unconsciousness, but he had not made use of the term 'Fanā', which is associated with the name of his contemporary Bāyazīd. This term could be best rendered by 'passing away', it may be applied to the disappearance of evil qualities, or in its pantheistic sense, to the 'passing away of the whole individual self in Union with God'.

Bāyazīd is reported to have learned this mystical Doctrine of 'Fanā', 'passing away in the Divine Unity,' from Abū 'Alī of Sind, and had also known the Indian practice of watching the breath 'Pās-i-Anfās' which he described as the gnostics' worship of God⁴⁴. The following ecstatic utterances (Shathiyat) show clearly the character of Bāyazīd's pantheism."

'I went from God to God, until they cried from me in me,
"O Thou I"

43. Tr. by Nicholson : Kashf-ul-Mahjūb, Page 106, 1936.

44. 'Attar : Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, I , Page.162.

'Verily, I am God, there is no God except me, so worship me. Glory to me! How great is My Majesty! 'Nothing is better for man than to be without aught, having no asceticism, no theory, no practice. When he is without all, he is with all'. 'Creatures are subject to states, but the gnostic has no state, because his vestiges are obliterated and his individuality (Huwyiat) passes away in the individuality of Another and his traces are effaced by Another's traces'.⁴⁵

"Some one asked him why he did not pray during the night. He answered "I have no leisure to pray : I am roaming the spiritual world and whenever I see any one fallen, I help him to rise"⁴⁶. Thus he meant that he was at work within.

"They asked his age. "Four years", he replied. "How is that " ? He answered "Seventy years I was shrouded in the veils of this world, but since four years I have been holding him - ~~At~~, do not ask me how ! Time without vision is not a part of life"⁴⁷. According to 'Attār "When his words waxed great, so that the formalists could not stomach them, seven times in succession they thrust him forth from Bistan". Yet he remarked on one occasion "Should I speak of my greater

45. Hastings : Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, P.12, Col.2.

46. Nicholson : Translations of Eastern Poetry & Prose, P.141, Cambridge 1922.

47. Ibid Page 141.

experiences, you could not bear to hear them; therefore I tell you only somewhat of the lesser ones"⁴⁸.

The Mirāj or the Prophet's Ascension to the heaven has also been used by Bāyazīd to express the sublimity of his own mystical experience. The best illustration of this experience is given by him in the words quoted by Prof. Arberry:

"I saw that my spirit was borne to the heavens. It looked at nothing and gave no heed, though Paradise and Hell were displayed to it, for it was freed of phenomena and veils. Then I became a bird, whose body was of Oneness and whose wings were of Everlastingness, and I continued to fly in the air of the Absolute, until I passed into the sphere of Purification, and gazed upon the field of Eternity and beheld there the tree of Oneness. When I looked I myself was all those. I cried: 'O Lord, with my egoism I cannot attain to Thee and I cannot escape from my selfhood. What am I to do?' God spake 'O Abū Yazīd, thou must win release from thy thouness by following my beloved (Sc. Mohammed). Smear thine eyes with the dust of his feet and follow him continually"⁴⁹.

This Doctrine of 'Fanā', though a source of great embarrassment to the contemporary Sūfis who constantly tried to

48. Browne : A Literary History of Persia, Vol I, P.427.

49. Sufism, Page 54-55.

interpret it as innocent of blasphemy, assumed, with the passage of time, a central structure of Sūfī theory. The subsequent Sūfīs like Ahmad bin Isa al-Kharraz (D.899 A.D.) succeeded in reconciling this daring development with the orthodox doctrine of 'Tawhīd' (Divine Unity).

We have already stated that Bāyazīd, styled later as Imām-ul-Ulamā, by his followers was the founder of the 'Sukr' i.e. Intoxicated School of Sūfism. This term needs some explanation. 'Sukr' (Intoxication), according to Bāyazīd is a state of ecstasy, a dream-like state, with the difference that in dream the senses are closed and in 'Sukr' they are active. "In Sukr one enters the world of similitude (Ālam-i-Misāl), with his physical senses active and responsive to the Causal world, while in a true or veridical dream, the avenues of his senses are closed"⁵⁰.

In 'Sukr' of a lower kind again, one is lost in the observation of the manifestation of attributes and names, (that is the attributes that he observes in and around himself) and thus loses the sense of materiality. In this state 'Namāz' is not incumbent on him and this perhaps is taken to be the esoteric meaning of this Qurānic injunction.

50. Bahr-ul-Ma'āni, Letter 15th, quoted in Khwaja Khan's Studies in Tasawwuf, Page 126.

(Do not approach Prayer, when you are in Intoxication).

For the 'Intoxicated ones' the futility of visiting holy places is stressed by Bāyazīd in this way :

"On my first pilgrimage, I saw only the temple; the second time I saw both the temple and the Lord of the temple; and the third time, I saw the Lord alone". For them, all that exists is attained in two steps "One step away from self-interest and the other step firmly planted on the commandments of God".

Abū Sa'īd Ahmed Bin Īsa Al-Kharrāz (D.286 A.H./899 A.D.) is perhaps the first to interpret the Doctrine of 'Panā' of Bāyazīd in conformity with the Islamic Orthodoxy and assert that all the prophets of old, followed the kind of life which the ṣūfīs sought to attain.

This man came from Baghdad and was known to have been a prolific writer. His 'Adab-al-Salat' (What is fitting in Prayer) and 'Kitāb-al-Sidq' (the Book of Sincerity) are very famous. The former is lost and the latter survives. According to Prof. Arberry "This book is full of interest and significance to the student of mysticism."⁵¹ Perhaps this is one of the earliest Treatises on ṣūfism, written by a ṣūfī.

51. Sufism, Page 55-56.

According to Kharrāz :

"The gnostics are the treasure-houses of God: He deposits in them the knowledge of Mysteries and information concerning wonderful things, and they speak of them with the tongue of eternity and interpret them with an interpretation which is everlasting. If God desires to be united with a servant of His, He opens to him the gate of worship, and if he delights in worship, He opens to him the gates of proximity, then He raises him to the station of fellowship, then He seats him on the throne of Unification (Tawhid)"⁵².

Unlike Bāyazīd, Kharrāz emphasized the importance of Prayer. But he desires the prayer to be offered with the true heart. In the Adab-al-Salāt he says "When entering the prayer, you should come into the Presence of God as you would on the Day of Resurrection, when you will stand before Him with no mediation between, for He welcomes you and you are in confidential talk with Him and you know in Whose Presence you are standing, for He is the King of kings."

Another great Sufi of this period namely Ahmad Bin Mohd. Abu'l Hosain Al-Nūrī was born at Baghdād and lived at Bagra between Harat and Merv, in Khurāsān. He was called Nūrī, because by the light (nūr) of intuition he was able to interpret mysteries. He had the faculty of reading the thoughts of the

⁵². Margaret Smith : Readings from the Mystics of Islam,
Page 30-31.

people, wherefore he was styled as 'Jasus-ul-Qalb' (Spy of the heart).

Nūrī (D.295 A.H./907 A.D.) was a disciple of Dhu'l Nūn, but was far more bolder than him. Many miracles are also ascribed to him. He was perpetually persecuted for his adherence to Sūfism, but his firmness was a continuous source of inspiration for his fellow-Sūfis. Ultimately, the Orthodox Caliph of Baghdad ordered Nūrī and his two friends Ruqām and Abū Hamza to be beheaded, but it was Nūrī who stepped forward to be beheaded first.

In the words of Nūrī⁵³ "Sufism is enmity to the world and friendship with the Lord". "The Mystic ecstasy is a flame kindled in the heart by longing for the Beloved and whether it arises from joy or grief, it brings remembrance of Him". "Love is the rending of the Veil and the revelation of what is hidden from the eyes of men." "I looked one day at the light and I did not cease looking at it, until I became the light". The cardinal principle of Nūrī is self-sacrifice. According to him, the world was a place for sacrifice, "You can not reach happiness, until you give up the best of what you have"⁵⁴. Like Hobbes, Nūrī also felt that the property was God's, nobody has a title in it, let it change hands without a demur.

53. M.Smith : Readings from the Mystics, Page 32-33.

54. Suratul-Ali-Imran, III. 89.

Again like the former, the latter also believed in "turn thy cheek, whenever thy right one is slapped", for the abuser as well as the blesser are but the manifestation of God"⁵⁵.

Abū ḡasim Junayd (D.909 A.D.), according to Jāmī, a Persian, was given many titles, because of his lofty position among the contemporary Sūfis, viz., 'Tawus-ul-Ulamā'' (The peacock of the learned), 'Saiyidu t-Ta'ifa'' (The Chief of the Community) etc.

A pupil of Al-Muhāsibī, he became one of the most famous Sūfī teachers, due to his most original and penetrating intellect, though he would talk with only a small number, as few as ten. In the words of Prof. Arberry, "Whereas others before him, and his contemporaries, had by brilliant flashes of intuition, grasped one or another of the spiritual heights now following to their mastery, he, standing as it were upon the supreme mountain-peak of analytical thought, look within his ranging vision, the whole landscape of mystical speculation stretching below him, and with an artist's eye, brought it to comprehension and unity upon a single canvas"⁵⁶.

Unlike Bāyazīd, Junayd was ^a follower of the 'Sahw' (Sober)

55. George: Progress and Poverty, Page 262.

56. Sufism, Page 56-57.

School of thought and discarded 'Sukr' (Intoxication) School by saying "We have no need of the company of those who are unsound". In order to develop and systematise the Sūfī Doctrines, Junayd wrote many books⁵⁷. Among them Kitāb-ul-Fanā (The Book of Annihilation), Kitāb-ut-Tawhīd (The Book of Unification) and Kitāb-i-Dawā-ul-Arvāh (Book on the Remedy for Souls) are the most famous.

The Doctrine of 'Fanā', no doubt, was developed by Bāyazīd and interpreted, according to the Orthodox Islamic views, by Kharrāz, but this theory of passing away in God, was propounded and fully illustrated as "an integral part of a well-coordinated theosophy" by Junayd. In his 'Kitāb-ul-Fanā' he has exercised his ingenuity in defining and explaining the term 'Tasawwuf' as meaning "God should cause thee to die from thyself and to live in Him"⁵⁸. This living in Him, is termed 'Baqā' (Eternity) by Junayd. For the perfection of one's individuality it is necessary to pass away from self. This leads to eternalization through God and in God.

According to Junayd, 'Fanā' means the destruction of the creaturely life of the flesh and participation in the Divine. This process involves three stages. First the soul

57. Listed by Massignon, 'Al-Hallaj', Page 36.

58. Qushayir, Page 126.

is chosen by God, then it is voided of 'Self' and 'isolated' in its commerce with God (Tagallubi-hi la-ka). This twin operation is the first step of all which annihilates all traces of succession in time (matarādafa)⁵⁹. At this stage, then, the Soul leaves the temporal world and enters into the eternal Now, after this, God isolates the Soul in itself in what Junayd calls "the first stage of utter isolation". Junayd, according to Sarraj,⁶⁰ while writing to a friend has clearly described these stages, in the following words:

"May God encompass thee as He encompasses those of His lovers whom He claims as His own; may He confirm thee and us on the paths of His good pleasures; may He conduct thee into the pavilion of His Intimacy, and exalt thee in the gardens of the riches of His bounty. May He guard thee in all circumstances as an embryo in its mother's womb. Then may He perpetuate for thee the life that is appropriated (for thee) from eternal (timeless) life for ages everlasting, and may He isolate thee in Himself (Hi-hi) from what is thine and in thyself from what is His, until thou art isolated through Him/ (Bi-hi) for all eternity. Then there shall be neither thou nor thine, nor knowledge of Him, but God will be alone".

Thus, as Zaehner, remarks⁶¹, like Rāmānuja, the eminent

59. Sarraj : Kitāb-ul-Luma, Page 241.

60. Kitāb-ul-Luma, Page 242-243.

61. Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, P. 143, London 1960.

Indian saint, Junayd sees the human soul in eternity as having its own pre-ordained share of eternal life.

Junayd's theory of 'Fanā', as explained in his Kitāb-ul-Fanā⁶², recently published by Abdul Qadir, like his other writings, is purposely difficult and obscure, for he knew that his doctrines, if clearly formulated, could never be acceptable to the orthodox theologians.

Junayd's definition of Tawhīd (Divine Unity) may seem surprising as it is used to mean its precise opposite. In Islam the word 'Tawhīd' means 'Uniting' or 'affirming unity'. With Junayd 'Union means 'to isolate eternity from origination'⁶³ or in other words, the isolation or separation of two distinct and incompatible elements. Commenting upon one of Bayazid's sayings, Junayd is reported to have said, "All creatures whatsoever are totally absent from God Most High, and He is isolated in His Majesty from his creation"⁶⁴.

Bayazid, in his saying, had actually used the word 'Arif' (The mystic) and had said that it was the 'Arif and not God, from whom all things were absent. Junayd applied to God what others had applied to the Mystic's soul in ecstasy. In this

62. Page 137.

63. Qushayri, Page 3.

64. Hiriyanna : The essential of Indian Philosophy, Page 123, London 1948.

way, he, in order to look more orthodox than the orthodox themselves and escape their wrath and the accusation of blasphemy which was so common a characteristic of his age, raised an insuperable barrier between God and the human soul.

According to Junayd, the supreme aim of the man was "to be as he was before he was", that is, as an idea in the mind of God. Consequently he views the entire course of history as the quest of man to fulfil that preternatural covenant sworn by man with God and referred to in the Qurān (represented by the word 'Mithaq') and return to the state in which he was before he was".

Mr. A. Abdul Qadir, in his article 'Al Junayd's theory of Fanā',⁶⁵ has very aptly, summed up Junayd's doctrine in the following words: "The worshipper loses the characteristics of his worldly individuality, returning into his eternal primeval self in God".

Junayd's theory of 'Tawhīd' has a parallel in the Indian tradition also; for the word 'Yoga', which means 'joining' or 'uniting', comes to mean in the philosophy of the Sāṃkhya Yoga, the 'disjoining' or 'disuniting' of 'Purusa' from 'Prakṛti'. In other words it means the isolation of the eternal soul from

65. Islamic Quarterly, I, Page 219-28.

the psycho-physical apparatus to which it is temporarily attached. In Buddhism also the word is used in a paradoxical sense, that is, although it still means 'Conjunction', yet more specifically it hints at the four fetters of Craving, 'False views', Becoming, and Ignorance, which enslave the immortal spirit to the body and the world⁶⁶.

The dual sense of union and separation that Junayd refers, can best be, illustrated by one of his own poems, translated very precisely, by the celebrated European scholar Prof. Arberry :

Now I have known, O Lord,
What lies within my heart;
In secret, from the world apart,
My tongue hath talked with my Adored.

So in a manner we,
United are, and One ;
Yet otherwise disunion
Is our estate eternally.

Though from my gaze profound
Deep awe hath hid Thy Face .
In wondrous and ecstatic Grace
I feel Thee touch my inmost ground.⁶⁷

⁶⁶. T.W.Rhys Davids : Pali-English Dictionary; William Stede
S.+V. Yoga.

⁶⁷. Sufism, Page 59.

Among his contemporary and the subsequent Sūfī circles Junayd's prestige has been unchallenged, for it was he who was considered to have formulated the Sūfī Doctrine in terms, that could not give offence to the Orthodox. He was a man of retiring disposition and wished to develop his Doctrine out of the public eye. His teacher, Muḥāsibī, had the greatest difficulty in getting him to go out at all⁶⁸ yet, despite all this, he became a founding-father of all the Sūfī brotherhood and, Zaehner⁶⁹ is right, when he says that "There is scarcely a spiritual pedigree that is not traced back to him, and this is true not only of the avowed exponents of his Doctrine, the orthodox Sarraḥ, Qushayrī and Hujwīrī, but even of so wild a follower of the 'Intoxicated' discipline of 'Abū Yāzīd' as Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l Khayr⁷⁰.

The beginning of the 10th century A.D. was a time of crisis for Sūfism. Dhū'l Nūn, the Egyptian, had already been arraigned before the Caliph Mutawakkil on the suspicion of blasphemy. The illustrious Nūrī, believing in self-sacrifice, had escaped execution narrowly, while trying to save the lives of his fellow Sūfis like, Ruqām and Abū Hamzā, and just succeeded in postponing the hour of their imminent death. Bāyazīd

68. Abū Nu'aym : Hilyat-al-Auliya. P.255, quoted in the Zaehner's: Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, Page 137.

69. Ibid, Page 137.

70. Ibn Munawwar : Asrar-ul-Tawhid, Page 27.

of Bistām, too, had scandalised the Orthodox by ejaculating "Glory to me", and harping on the greatness of "My Majesty". But hitherto, the climax had been averted through the indefatigable efforts of the Sober Sufis, like Kharrāz and Junayd, who believed Sūfism, being an essentially esoteric Doctrine, which it was not lawful to divulge to the uninitiate.

It was Mansūr, the wool-carder, who divulged the secret, indulged in the language of deification, refused to accept the advice of his teacher Junayd and started to preach the most secret doctrines in public⁷¹. The prophecy made by Junayd in the words "What a gibbet you will befoul (with your blood)"⁷², came out to be true at last, when he is reported to have cried out, in one of his ecstasies 'Ana'l-Haqq' (I am the Truth i.e. God).

Abu'l Mugith al-Husain Bin Mansūr-al-Hallāj-i-Baizavi was born at the village of Baiza, near Shirāz, in the province of Fars in Iran, in 224 A.H./838 A.D. and was put to death for heterodoxy, during the Caliphate of al-Muqtadir, in 309 A.H./922 A.D. on the right bank of the river Tigris, near Baghdad⁷³.

71. L. Massignon : Al-Hallaj, Martyr Mystique de l'Islam, P. 52.

72. Ibn Mansour al-Hallaj, P. 45. Paris, 1914.

73. Saeed Nafisi : Justu'u Dar Ahwal, Page "Nun".

Orthodox historians have painted Hallāj in the blackest of colours as a wily conjurer and heretic. According to the author of the Fihrist⁷⁴ he knew something of Alchemy, and was an ignorant pushing, headstrong fellow, over-bold against authorities claiming divinity amongst his disciples, preaching the Doctrine of Incarnation, pretending to kings that he was of the Shi'a, and to the common folk that he held the opinions of the Sūfis claiming that the Deity had become Incarnate in him, and that he was God (Mighty and Holy is He and for above what such as these assert).

According to Tabarī, "he was totally ignorant of the Qurān and its ancillary Sciences of Jurisprudence, Tradition etc. and of Poetry and Arabic philosophy"⁷⁵. The Sūfis, however have venerated him as a great Saint and a Martyr of a very high rank in the path of Truth. Hujwiri is all praise for him in his Kashf-ul-Mahjūb⁷⁶, the first great book on Sūfis and Sūfism, in Persian. "He was an enamoured and intoxicated votary of Sūfism. He had a strong ecstacy and a lofty spirit". Hujwiri defends Hallāj against the charges of heterodoxy and infidelity by pointing out that "the offence (of uttering Ana'l Haqq) lies in expression, not in the meaning, "But nevertheless, he is of the opinion that Hallāj's doctrine may not be accepted

74. Pages 180-182, quoted by Browne in "A Literary History of Persia, Vol I. Page 428-429.

75. Ibid, Vol III, P. 228-229.

76. Kashf-ul-Mahjāb, Tr. by Nicholson, Page 106, 1936.

by all. In Hujwiri's words "you must know that the sayings of Al-Hallāj should not be taken as a model, in as much as he was an ecstatic and not firmly settled, and a man needs be firmly settled before his sayings can be considered authoritative." Hallāj is reported to have Shī'ite inclination in the beginning of his career, when he worked as one of the missionaries of 'Alī-ar-Rizā, the 8th Imam of Shī'a of the Sect of the Twelve, and for which offence he was punished by scourging in Kohistan, in Persia. He is also accredited with some miracles, such as stretching out his hand into the air and getting it filled with musk or coins, which he scattered amongst the onlookers.

Similarly, on one occasion, according to Al-Hamadani⁷⁷ he produced an apple for a sickman, which he claimed to have gathered from the gardens of Paradise. The same writer states that the name of Hallāj was metaphorical, and was given to him because, "he could read man's most secret thoughts, and extract from their hearts the kernel of their imaginings, as the wool-carder separates the cotton grains from the cotton.

Hallāj is said to have travelled widely in India, Khurāsān, Transoxiana and Turkistān and gathered a large number of disciples around him. To these disciples, according

77. Browne : The Literary History of Persia, Vol IV Page.432-433.

to 'Arib, he would say to one, "Thou art Noah;" to another, "Thou art Moses"; to another, "Thou art Mohammad", adding, "I have caused their spirits to return to your bodies".

Hallāj, was arrested for the first time in 911-12 A.D., according to the author of the Fihrist, at Sūs, when a woman reported against his "blasphemous practices" and the irreligious assemblies which frequented his domicile. He appears to have been released after a severe punishment until, he was re-arrested in 921-22 A.D., on charges of rank blasphemy worthy of death. His execution is stated to have taken place on Tuesday March 26, 922 A.D. At the time of death, he recited the following verses:

My Friend doth unrelated stand to aught of ruth or
clemency.

From His own cup He bade me sup, for such is hospitality,
But when the wine had circled round, for
Sword and Carpet⁷⁸ called He

Who with the Dragon drinketh wine in Summer,
Such his fate shall be.

Thus, came to an abrupt end, the life of the most famous and the remarkable man, who later came to be known as

78. Executioner's carpet which is called the 'Nat'.

one of the favourite heroes of the Sūfīs, in general, and the mystical poets, in particular. Abū Sa'id bin Abī'l Khair, Farīd-ud-Dīn, Aṭṭār, Ḥafiz and Jāmī, with a galaxy of other Sūfī-poets speak about him in glowing terms of admiration, regard him as the most towering personality in the history of Sūfism and trace in him the culmination of the ideals of the Sūfī path of self-annihilation.

Hallāj was a prolific writer and forty six of his books and treatises have been listed by the author of Fihrist⁷⁹. Similarly Hujwīrī, says that he has been fifty works of Hallāj⁸⁰. However, the most celebrated work of Hallāj is Kitāb-ul-Tawāsīn or The Book of 'Tā' and 'Sīn'. The work is so called because it contains eleven sections, and each section, except the last, is styled as the 'Tā' 'Sīn' which are, in fact, the two unexplained letters found in the beginning of certain chapters in the Qurān.

Hallāj may be considered as the greatest champion of the Intoxicated School of the Sūfīs, which was founded by the great Abū Yāzīd (Bāyazīd) of Bistām. Like Bāyazīd, he also sees the reunion with God as the supreme mystical experience. But, he goes many steps further and declares that man may

79. Page 192.

80. Kashf-ul-Mahjūb, Page 106.

be regarded as very God Incarnate.

The utterance (Ana'l-Haqq) 'I am the Truth' which led to his execution, at the hands of the Orthodox, is contained in the following extract from his 'Kitāb-ul-Tawāsīn : "If ye do not recognise God, at least, recognize His signs. I am that sign, I am the creative Truth (Ana'l-Haqq), because through the Truth, I am a Truth eternally. My friends and teachers are Iblis and Pharaoh. Iblis was threatened with Hell-fire, yet he did not recant. Pharaoh was drowned in the sea, yet he did not recant, for he would not acknowledge anything between him and God. And I, though, I am killed and crucified and though my hands and feet are cut off - I do not recant". In fact Hallāj was so completely absorbed in serving the Will of God, that he totally ignored the disastrous results of it.

As it is well-known, the doctrines of 'Intizāj' (Commixture) and 'Hulūl'⁸¹ (Incarnation), are altogether opposed to the views of Orthodox Islām. An attempt has been made by the majority of the later Sūfis, to prove that Hallāj never taught these doctrines. Hujwiri holds that the attribution

81. 'Hulūl', means 'Tawhīd' (Union) between God and Man which takes place in the present life. God enters the human soul in the same manner as the soul enters the body at birth. This Union of the Divine and human natures is styled as 'Hulūl' (Incarnation) and this commixture of these two is called 'Intizāj'.

of the doctrines of 'Naskh-i-Arvā' (Transmigration of souls) 'Imtizāj' (Commixture) and 'Hulūl' (Incarnation) to Hallāj is very erroneous.

Modern writers like, Massignon and Nicholson interpret the 'Ana'l-Haqq' of Hallāj in a different way. According to Massignon 'Hulūl' was not understood by Hallāj as the actual appearance of God in the form of a visible, eating and drinking man. "All that Hallāj means", says Nicholson, "is that the personality in which the eternal is immanent has itself a part of eternity"⁸².

But, in any case, it may be quite certain that Hallāj did propound some type of the doctrine of incarnation, as the following quotations very well show:

For Thy sake I haste over land and water,
over the plain, I pass, and the mountain I
cleave and from everything I meet, I turn my
face, until the time when I reach that place
where I am alone with Thee.

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I,
We are two spirits indwelling one body.

When thou seest me, thou seest Him,

*And when thou seest Him, then thou dost see us both⁸³.

82. Mystics of Islam, Page 154.

83. M. Smith : Readings from the Mystics of Islam, Page 37.

4. Analysis :

Sūfism, a "transition from Semitism to Mysticism, and from theism to idealistic pantheism" was largely influenced as we have already said, by external as well as internal forces which led to its gradual evolution.

Qurān is a code of external commandments of Law and ritualistic religion for the Literalists and the Traditionalists. But, to the more fervent and more liberal, it could be interpreted liberally as an interior religion containing the seeds of real Mysticism, which prefers the inner authority of love to externalism and refers to the direct experience of God.

The early development to some extent ^{was} based on the later interpretation; but it owes its rapid manifestation largely to the external influences, among which the Christian influence is the most conspicuous. The early Christian Mystics were held in high esteem even by the Orthodox Caliphs of the Muslims. To quote one example, when Abū Bakr, the first Caliph, was about to invade Syria, he made this proclamation to his army, "You will find people who have secluded themselves in cells. Let them alone for they have secluded themselves for the sake of God".⁸⁴

The following words written in 649 A.D., by a Nestorian

84. Jacques De Marquette : Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, Page 162, New York.

Bishop, further bear testimony to this fact, "These Arabs fight not against the Christian religion, ⁷may rather they defend on Faith, they revere our priests and saints and they ^{ma}make gifts to our Churches and monasteries⁸⁵". The Christian hermits were highly praised by the Moslem writers, as the following extract from an early writer Al-Nābigh^a clearly shows.

"A nature is theirs, God gives the like to no other men, a wisdom that never sleeps, a bounty that never fails. Their home is in God's own land. His chosen of old, their faith is steadfast, their hope is set on aught but the world to come"⁸⁶. This sense of appreciation for the Christian monks is not a superficial tribute. In fact the influence of the Christian asceticism on the Moslem mind was extremely intense and deep from the very beginning.

There were a large number of convents and monasteries in the middle Eastern countries where the Christian monks abounded. In Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia, they were looked upon as holy men and respected for their scholarship and knowledge. Between 610 A.D. and 630 A.D. Northern provinces of Persia were peopled with hermits and coenobites, and at the time of the Arab invasion at least sixty monasteries are reported to have existed there.

85. Ibid Page 162.

86. Ibid Page 162.

Even in the pre-Islamic poetry of Imr-al-Qays⁸⁷, a mention is to be found of the Christian hermits, dwelling in their cells, with their lamps serving as a guide to the lonely traveller. Some lines go like this:

"O Friend, see the lightning there / it flickered
and now is gone.

As though flashed a pair of hands in the pillar of
crowned cloud,

Nay, was it its blaze, or the lamps of a hermit
that dwells alone

And pours over the twisted wicks the oil from his
slender cruse ?

The Easter-lamp in the chapel of the monks was also very well known to the early Moslems⁸⁸. They were well acquainted with the prayer-life of the monks and their copying of the Scriptures.⁸⁹

As a result of the interest and the deep admiration which the Moslems had developed for the lives and character of these Christian monks who were unflinching sincere and devout in the practices of their Faith, we come across a number of cases, where there were friendly relations between the Moslem rulers and the Christians' ecclesiastics.

Mr. Smith : Readings from the History of Islam, Page

87. Lyall : Imr-al-Qays, Page 103.

88. L. Cheikko : al-Nasrāniyya, Page 216.

89. Ibid, Page 392.

Al-Kindi, in his famous Risāla⁹⁰, has recorded this passage about the Nestorian Christians, pointing out the privileges accorded to them by the Moslems and their Prophet.

"Among all the Christians, they are the most sympathetic to the Moslems and the most closely allied to them in their beliefs. The Prophet has praised them and is bound to them by solemn agreements. He wished to recognize in that way the help which the Nestorian religious leaders gave him in predicting the high mission to which he was called. Therefore Muhammad felt a most sincere affection for them and loved to have intercourse with them".

The Nestorian monks made a great head-way during the Umayyad period and were allowed to build many new churches and monasteries in the reign of Abd-ul-Malik. However, it was during the Abbasid times that the Nestorian hermits attained to their greatest development. At that time "the Church included about one hundred dioceses, grouped into twenty-five metropolitan districts"⁹¹.

Similarly the Coptic abbots and Matthias, the founder of the great monastery of Esneh, in Egypt, used to be in high favour with the Moslem governor, who also sent them many present

90. Al-Kindi : Risāla, Page 6.

91. Labourt, Page 349, Quoted by M. Smith in the Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East, P.121. London, 1931.

as a mark of favour⁹².

The Moslem rulers, out of their appreciation for the sacred atmosphere of the churches, visited such places and sometime laid out gardens, wells and water-wheels for the comforts of the inmates⁹³.

The discussions regarding the theological matters with Christians were very common. The qurān and the Christian doctrines were freely debated. John of Damascus in his book Heresies, allotted a section of Islam and included a dialogue with a Saracen, given as a guide to the Christians in their arguments with Moslems⁹⁴.

The Moslems, on their part, took pleasure in studying the various Christian Sects and the New Testament. Scholars like, Al-Kindi, show their thorough acquaintance with the Christian views of Theology and Philosophy and know fully well what Christian doctrine and the Christian system of ethics really represented⁹⁵.

The woollen dress, namely ṣūf, worn by the Christian anchorite, was taken to be a symbol of purity and saintliness

92. Abū Sālīh 79a, quoted in M. Smith's Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East, London, 1931, P.121.

93. Abū Sālīh, 61(b).

94. De Haresibus, Liber, Par 101, quoted Ibid P.122.

95. Al-Kindi : Risāla, Page 6.

and denoted an ascetic way of life. The words "Labisa'l sūf (لبس الصوف), occurring frequently in the early Arabic literature, were applied to the person who renounced the world in order to become an ascetic. In later period this term (i.e. Labisa'l sūf) meant he became a Sūfi.

As late as 784 A.D., the coarse woollen dress (i.e. sūf) was regarded as a Christian dress. When Hammad bin Salama came to Basra, he said to Farqād al-Sanji, who presented himself before him in a woollen garment, "Put off this (emblem of) Christianity".⁹⁶ Such garments were labelled as Ziyy-al-Ruhbān i.e. the garments of the Christian ascetics⁹⁷.

According to Nicholson, a 'Hadith' put in the mouth of the Prophet states that Jesus Himself used to wear them.⁹⁸

Another pronounced influence of the Christian hermits on the early Moslem ascetics too may be noticed in the shape of their abstinence from eating animal diet⁹⁹. An apparently fictitious 'Hadith' was quoted against it saying that "who-soever abstained from eating animal diet, was destined to face the deterioration of intellect". However, this was challenged by no less a person than Malik Dinar who said, "I have

96. Id., Cairo edition Vol III, P. 348, 1293 A.H.

97. Sha'rani : Lawā'ih, Page 45, Vol I.

98. Hastings : Encyclopaedia of religion and Ethics, Page 10.

99. Talbis-i-Iblis, in the chapter 'Nagd-o-Masalik i Sophia, also see Ihya-ulum-ud-Din, Page 36.

not eaten the animal diet for twenty years and yet my intellect is on the increase daily"¹⁰⁰.

The Christian influence made itself felt in yet another way. In Islamic observances, prayers (Namāz) were offered at a fixed time and according to a well-disciplined system. The early Islamic mystic attached much importance to the 'Zikr' (The recital of His Name) and considered it to be of utmost importance in the path of God¹⁰¹.

Similarly 'Tawakkul' i.e. 'Trust in God' was very essential for the 'true believer'. He was to act "as a dead body in the hands of a washer of the dead bodies" (Ghassal) in his relations with God. In other words, he was not to have any desire or intention of his own and was required to bid farewell to all links and attachments.

According to Dr. Qasim Ghani, both the above-noted views are typically Christian¹⁰² and may be traced back to the teachings of the Bible.

The monastic life of the hermits and other Christian solitaries seems specially to have struck the imagination of the early Moslem mystics. As informed by Jami, in Nafahāt-

100. Ex 'Attār : Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, Vol I, Page 44.

101. Maulana Rumi says:

اینقدر تفکیم باقی فکر کن
فکر اگر جامد بود در ذکر کن

ul-Uns, the first monastery ever built for the congregation of the Sūfis, was erected by a Christian rich man, at Ramla in Syria when he came across two unknown Sūfis, who had no place as their rendezvous.¹⁰³

The doctrine of Divine Love, which assumed so great an importance with the advent of the great Sūfis like Rābi'a and her junior contemporary Ma'rūf-i-Karkhī may be considered as the all-pervading spirit of the Christian doctrines. The words of the Christian hermit, in answering the Syrian Sūfi Ahmad Ibn-al-Hawārī, beautifully explain it. On being asked, "what is the strongest command that ye find in your Scriptures?" He replied "We find none stronger than this " "Love thy Creator with all thy power and might."¹⁰⁴

We have mentioned this much, the rest you may contemplate. If your thought is stagnant, go and recite His Name :

ذکر آرد فکر را در اعظم راز
ذکر را خورشید این افروز ساز

The recitation (of His Name) leads the thought to exultation. Make the recitation a 'sun' for (the resuscitation) this withered (thought)

ذکر گو تا فکر تو بالا آید
ذکر گفتن فکر را بالا آید

Recite His Name, so that your thought may be exalted. Recitation makes the thought sublime.

102. Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islam, Vol II, Page. 70-71, Second Edition, Tehran 1340 A.H.

103. Ibid, Page. 75.

104. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 11.

Another Christian monk was asked by the Moslem ascetics, "When is a man most persevering in devotion"? "When love takes possession of his heart", was the reply, "for then he hath no joy or pleasure but a continual devotion"¹⁰⁵.

An anecdote reproduced here, may further illustrate this point :

"Jesus passed by three men with pale faces and lean bodies. He inquired, "What hath brought you to this plight"? "Fear of the fire of Hell", they replied. Jesus said, "Ye fear a thing created, and it behoves God that He should save those who fear".

When he proceeded further, he came across three more men whose faces were paler and bodies leaner. Jesus repeated His question, "What hath brought ye this plight"? "Longing for paradise" was the answer. He said, "Ye desire a thing created and it behoves God that He should give you that which ye hope for".

Then he went on and ran into three others of exceeding paleness and leanness, so that their faces resembled the mirrors of light. Jesus said, "What hath brought ye to this"? They answered, "Our love of God" Jesus replied "Ye are the

105. Ibid, Page 11 : Qasim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islām, Page, 72.

nearest to Him, ye are the nearest to Him"¹⁰⁶.

The parents of Ma'rūf-i-Khazakhi and Junayd of Nahavand the two great Persian Sūfis, were Christian. The latter has been regarded by 'Attār, as one of the five great leaders of Sūfism. Hence their influence on the evolution of Sūfism implies a direct influence of Christianity.

"In conclusion", in the words of Dr. Smith, "it is evident that Islam during the first centuries of its existence, at a time, when its theological doctrines were being formulated, and which is more important for our purpose, at a time, when its mystical doctrines were developing, found itself almost everywhere in a Christian environment, in close contact with Christian forms of worship and Christian ^{culture} worship". Naturally this intercourse sowed the seeds of that element in the religion of Islam which was to blossom into a fair flower. "Sufism, with its strange unlikeness to that faith in which it had its origin, and its still stranger likeness to the faith which Islam sought to supersede and destroy"¹⁰⁷.

The influence of the Christian example, as we have discussed above, was no doubt quite intense on the early mystical

Nicholson :

106. Margaret Smith: The Mystics of Islam, P. 10-11;
Qāsim Ghani: Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf, P. 71-72.

107. M. Smith : Studies in early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East, Page. 123-124.

Thoughts of the Moslems. But, it was not the only exterior factor which led to the intellectual and sentimental evolution of Sūfism in Islām, perhaps the Greek influence was to be even more profound.

The early Christian Mysticism itself, from the time of St. John and St. Paul onwards, had absorbed a great deal of Hellenistic and Neo-Platonic conceptions and ideals. It had long ago adopted the languages of Plotinus and the Neo-Platonic school. Consequently, it may not be improbable to think that Islamic Sūfism, in its earliest development, derived its most obviously Neo-Platonic elements through Christian Hellenism. The Christian Solitaries had acquired great fame as the practisers of the Neo-Platonic ideas. There being no Arabic versions of Greek Philosophy available at the early stage, the early Sūfis such as Ḥabī'a of Basra, might have been influenced by the oral discourses with the Christian ascetics who preached a Christianised form of Neo-Platonism.

The Greek philosophy influenced profoundly the Moslem mind, in the early times, at two stages. First at the time of the conquest of Syria, the Arabs contacted the Syrian syncretism, consisting chiefly in the legacy of decadent Hellenism. The Arabs borrowed their first knowledge of Greek thought from the Aramean translation of the Syrian syncretism.

At a later stage when they had developed some scholars, after the first flush of their conquest was over, they came under the direct influence of Alexandrian thought in Egypt. Here they gained their first knowledge of Aristotle from his Neo-Platonist commentators. Curiously enough, the Arabs, for quite a long time, labelled the principles of Neo-Platonism as the theology of Aristotle. The book carrying the wrong name of the Theology of Aristotle, of which an Arabic Version appeared in the 9th century A.D., was actually a manual of Neo-Platonism compiled and annotated by Porphyry and Proclus, the famous successors and pupils of the great Plotinus.

The name of Plotinus, although unfamiliar in the beginning, came to be known, with the subsequent Moslem writers, as the Greek Master or 'Al-Sheykh-al-Yūnānī' and this leader of the Ionians, became such a great source of inspiration to the Arab mind that Prof. Blochet has gone to the extent of declaring that "The productions of Arabic¹⁰⁸ philosophy are merely a continuation of Alexandrianism."¹⁰⁸

Alexandria, the cradle of Neo-Platonism, was, contrary to the quiet University town of Athens, a great intellectual centre, where above all others, East and West, rubbed ^lshoulders. The wisdom of Asia was particularly in high repute. Great

108. Jacques De Marquette : Comparative Mysticism, P. 162-163.

philosophers like Philostratus held the learning of the Indians in highest esteem. Another scholar Appellonius of Tyana went to India to consult the Brahmins on the philosophical aspects of life. Plotinus himself, accompanied the plundering Roman army to Persia to gather wisdom while his Roman comrades searched for booty. Similarly the name and teachings of Buddha were well-known to the Christian ^Clement.

Keeping in view this atmosphere of Alexandria, the possibility, of the presence of a deep Oriental influence in Neo-Platonism, and, analysing it as a fusion of European and Asiatic philosophy, may not be altogether ruled out. This influence was particularly great during the disintegration of the Western Empire. However, this was not the only influence leading to the evolution of the Neo-Platonistic ideas. Neo-Platonism in fact, is a legitimate and historical development of the ancient Greek thought, and of the great Plato's own speculations. It was, in many ways influenced by, the Jewish Alexandrian School, as represented by Philo and New Pythagoreans. The influence of the later is much more pronounced and deserves special attention.

The Pythagorean School, as a religious society, and not as a system of philosophy, was very active in the beginning of the Christian era. The members of this School were strict

vegetarians and celibates, and practised the simplest life on a diet of vegetables and water. The Pythagorean life was a recognised and standardized discipline. A typical example of this School is represented in the person of the famous saint Apollonius, who was a strict ascetic and a perfect model of piety and devotion. In addition to possessing miraculous powers with which he could cast out devils and raise the dead, the saint is reported to have kept holy silence for at least five years.

According to this School, the 'Monad' is the beginning of all things, and ultimate ground of all things and of all the order of the universe. It is the sign of the God-head, of Spirit, and Form. The 'Dyad' on the contrary, is the ground of all imperfections and disorders. God is both immanent and transcendent. The rift between the world and God is explained by the idea of a World-soul. The unsubstantial and ever-changing phenomenal world, derives all the reality which it possesses from the Divine Idea.

It was asserted that the universe is eternal and the human soul imperishable. They believed in the Transmigration of Soul also. The soul is a microcosm, with affinities to every grade of existence.

New Pythagoreanism was consciously eclectic and tried

to bring together the systems of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa, consecrating the whole under the name of Pythagoras, whose doctrines, they claimed to have inherited through oral tradition.

Plotinus, the greatest champion of Neo-Platonism, though claiming to follow his master Plato's teachings, adopts Pythagorean eclectic tendencies most unintentionally. He considers himself a conservative Platonist, yet he appears to be combining the systems of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics.

He himself maintains that his three hypostases, the Absolute One, ^{the} Spirit and ^{the} Soul are to be found in Plato. Similarly Aristotelian conceptions influence the fundamental ideas of this great philosopher. So much so that, to his successors Plotinus seems to have achieved in principle the unification of the philosophies of these two great masters i.e., Plato and Aristotle. To Stoicism and its materialism, Plotinus holds a hostile attitude. Still his dynamic pantheism, the doctrine that the living forces of the Deity permeate all nature exhibits, at least in part, the Stoical influence.

Born at Lycopolis in Egypt, as reported by Eusebius and Suidas, the life of Plotinus, probably extended from about 205 to 270 A.D. In early life, he lived at Alexandria, learning philosophy from Ammonius Saccas, about whose doctrines next to

nothing is known. At the age of thirty-eight he accompanied the Roman Emperor Gordian on his ill-fated expedition against the Persian king Shāpūr, the son of Ardshīr of the Sasanian dynasty. Gordian was murdered and Plotinus whose chief object in visiting the East was to gain a personal acquaintance with the Eastern philosophy, had to return to Europe with great difficulty. He spent the rest of his life at Rome, where, according to his famous disciple Porphyry, his mode of living was the ideal of the philosophic character. He, following the New-Pythagoreans, lived on ascetic life, eating no meat and sleeping but little.

It was at Rome, that the Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salomna came under the influence of Plotinus and with their help, a scheme was prepared by Plotinus to found a city on a deserted site in Campania, to be constituted on the model of Plato's Republic. The idea could not be put into practice somehow.

Plotinus died at the age of sixty-six. His last words are very important from the Sūfic view-point. He is recorded to have said, "I was waiting for you, before the divine principle in me departs to unite itself with the divine in the universe".

The Enneads, a collection of the lecture-notes of

Plotinus, compiled and edited by his friend and disciple Porphyry, are divided into six books, each containing nine chapters, a fanciful arrangement in view of the sacred numbers. The style of this collection is very obscure, enigmatic and, at times, unintelligible.

According to Plotinus, Materialism, Scepticism and Dualism are the three great heresies and the Reality is Spiritual, Knowable and Single. Keeping before him the superstitious reverence for the symbol Three, Plotinus propounds two fundamental Trinities in his system. One is named the 'Trinity of Divine Principles', consisting of the Absolute or God-head, which he calls One and the Good, Spirit, and Soul. The other one is the 'Tripartite division of man' into Spirit, Soul and Body.

The power of spiritual perception or intuitive knowledge, the highest faculty of human nature, is possessed by all but used by a few. When this power is exercised, the human beings come into contact with the Reality and themselves becomes completely real.

The world of appearance may be described either as the real world seen through a glass darkly or as an actual but imperfect copy of a perfect original. The sensible world is a reflexion of the eternal world in the mirror of matter. Further,

the sensible world is the creation of the Universal Soul, through the medium of nature, which is its moving power. Nature is sleeping spirit. All its activity comes from Soul. It casts upon matter a reflexion of the forms which it has received from above. At one place, Plotinus clearly says, "All things that are in heaven are also on earth"¹⁰⁹.

The parallelism with regard to the doctrines of Plotinus and Sūfism may be illustrated easily. The idea of Emanation or the particular shape of it, so ardently incorporated in Sūfism, may be said to have originated from this mint.

"Sūfi metaphysics naturally the product of mature speculation - ~~are~~^{are} cast throughout in the mould which Alexandria aptly contrived to satisfy at once the despaking credulity and devotional enthusiasm of the time"¹¹⁰. Here the statement of the author of Dabistan¹¹¹ deserves a special reference who declares that the belief of the pure Sufis is the same that of the platonists.

The chief aim of Plotinus is to achieve perfect Union with God. According to him, the Soul is a part of the world-

109. Plotinus : Enneads Tr. by Maclean, V, IX 12.

110. Nicholson : Introductions to the selected poems from the Divān-i-Shams-i-Tabrizi, P. XXXI, Cambridge Press, 1898 A.D.

111. Vol III, Page 281.

-soul. She enters the realm of matter in obedience to an instinctive necessity. What Plotinus means is that every perfect being desires to create another. This is like the process of the sap coursing through a tree or to the sun beams which illumine the atmosphere. The redundant energy streams over and manifests itself into different bodies. The entry of the soul into matter is not by an act of will and the return to the original source lies open if she will go back to it.

The body has a contaminating effect on the soul and the latter could achieve her original purity and perfection if she shuns the worldly lusts and passions. The love is a yearning to the Good and Fair (God) and even the love of earthly beauty kindles a holier flame. The soul has to ascend many stages, while travelling upward. The highest stage where the returning soul rises beyond reason and knowledge is a stage of unconscious rapture. This is at this stage that the lover and the beloved, the seeker and the sought are unified. The soul putting off her humanity, "assumes the God". The above conceptions, needs hardly be said ^{to} have a striking resemblance with the views of the great Sūfis; rather the 'Fanā' theory of the Sūfis has nothing more to propound.

Another work of this School, which is of great importance, needs a special mention here. This comprises the writings of a

theologian who professes to be St. Paul's Athenian convert, Dionysius, the Areopagite. He proceeds to justify his claim with a historical background. But, as Mr. G.E. Reit remarks "the claim collapses beneath a considerable weight of anachronisms, by far the chief of which is the later Neo-Platonism in almost every paragraph"¹¹². The author of these Dionysian writings, names a certain Hierotheus as his teacher and this man who figures so largely in them, has been identified with Stephen Bar Sudaili, a prominent Syrian gnostic and a contemporary of Jacob of Sarūj (451-521 A.D.).

The tone of the writings of Proclus who next to Plotinus is the greatest among the Neo-Platonists, is clearly discernible in the Dionysian writings. Since Proclus began lecturing at Athens after 430 A.D., it may be presumed that these writings date back to the latter half of the 5th century A.D.

The real name of the author is entirely unknown. But, from his views, it seems pretty certain that he was an ecclesiastic of some sort, possibly a monk or a bishop. Regarding his home, there are some scattered hints, to prove that he came from Syria "where speculative theology was daring and untrammelled".

Dionysian writings appear to have secured currency very soon. They were widely read in the Eastern Church, being

112. Dionysius, the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology, Page 1, London, 1951.

elucidated by the commentary of St. Maximus in the 7th century. Turned into Latin, by John Scotus Erigena, these writings founded Medieval Christian Mysticism in Western Europe. In the words of the old Chronicler "The mystical divinity ran across England like deer"¹¹³. They are more than often quoted, by the religious personalities, with reverence and appear to be the chief of the literary forces moulding the mystical theology of Christendom.

The influence of the Dionysian works on the Eastern thought was not less important. They were immediately translated from Greek into Syriac. Later, these doctrines were zealously propagated through a large number of commentaries written in the same tongue. About 850 A.D. Dionysius was known from the Tigris to the Atlantic¹¹⁴.

The cosmic theory of Dionysius is based on Plotinus. According to him, all beings flow from God and are returning to God. The first hypostasis is the Son, the Logos of St. John, from whom proceeds the multiplicity of the universe.

All beings are one in God yet preserve their individuality. "The ultimate God-head, brimful with its super-unity,

113. Holt : Dionysius, the Areopagite, on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology, Page 3, London 1951.

114. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 13.

must overflow into multiplicity, must pass from Indifference into Differentiation, and must issue out of its Super-Essential state to fashion a world of Being¹¹⁵. Consequent upon this, although the God-head in its ultimate nature is beyond all relationships, and dwells in a region where there is nothing outside of itself, yet on another side of its nature, it is manifested under the form of Differentiation and Relationship. The God-head, thus, belongs concurrently to two worlds, that of Ultimate Reality and that of Manifested Appearance. Hence, therefore the possibility not only of Creation, but also of Revelation.

The evolutionary process is accomplished by a sublimation in which beings return to God by transcending their personal limitations, enabling their awareness to soar to the level of the higher Soul.

Contemplation can be achieved by prayer and purification. The process of purification is three fold ; Detachment from worldly objects, detachment from sensuousness, detachment from images of the mind.

The three stages in the path of Contemplation have been described in this manner¹¹⁶. At first stage, the soul enters the Divine Darkness (Darkness of Nescience), the Inaccessible

115. Ibid, Pages 22-40. Tr by Rdt : Diogenes, the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology, P.6.

116. Ibid. Pages. 33 40

Lights in which God lives, according to Scriptures. The second stage is the mystical silence, the control of evil powers of the soul. Finally, access is gained to the Vision of God and Union with Him, in which, the soul although absorbed in God does not lose its personality. The last conception has a striking resemblance with the Aristotelian Individualism as taught by St. Thomas.

The Dionysian theory of "Union with God" is clearly reminiscent of the Platonist and Hindu theory of a plurality of souls - which tells us that "it is in the supreme part of the soul that the mystical operation takes place. To that portion of the soul which no passion can reach, is to be assigned the contemplation of the pure and profound verities".

Union with God is salvation and this conception has been illustrated in the following lines "The assimilation by Union with God is deification" (Ecclesiast Hierarch). Coming very close to the Hindu ideas that reality is beyond being and non-being and also that the highest form of consciousness is void of any perception, Dionysius (to name him as he desired himself to be named) writes, "And thou, dear Timothy, in thy intent practice of mystical meditation, leave behind both thy senses and thy intellectual operations and all things known by senses and intellect, and all things which are not

and which are, and set thyself as far as may be, to commune, in unknowing, with Him, who is above all beings and knowledge, for being purely free and absolute out of self and of all things, thou shalt be led up to the ray of Divine Darkness, stripped of all and loose from all¹¹⁷.

The above-noted conceptions of Dionysius are really sublime and their influence can be observed on all the great Western Mystics and the noted Eastern Sufis.

Among the Sufis, Dhu'l Nūn, the Egyptian, who has been described as a philosopher and an alchemist or a profound scholar of Hellenistic Science, appears to have been thoroughly influenced by the Dionysian writings and practices. Most of his speculative theory of gnosis seems to have been derived from Dionysius. Since Dhu'l Nūn was supposed to be the 'head of the tribe of the Sufis' and was one of those who bore the chief part in the development of Sufism, the effect of Dionysius on the Sufic conceptions needs no elaboration.

In the end it may suffice to say that "Greek mystical ideas were in the air and easily accessible to the Moslem inhabitants of Western Asia and Egypt, where the Sufi Theosophy first took shape"¹¹⁸.

117. Jacques De Harquette : Comparative Mysticism, Page 147-148.

118. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 13.

Nicholson is right when he says that "Neo-Platonism poured into Islam a large tincture of the same mystical element in which Christianity was already steeped".¹¹⁹

The importance of the 'Theory of Gnosis' in the evolution of the Sūfism suggests a regular contact with the gnostic system of the West, through Christianity. Gnosticism is an admixture of Eastern Greek and Christian philosophies which made a speedy progress in the first centuries of the Christian era. It was looked upon as an important branch of the Christian theology in the later centuries and occupied the same place in the Christian belief as allotted to Scholasticism in the Islamic Theology. The cardinal principle of Gnosticism, as already discussed in the previous pages while dealing with Dhu'l Nūn, the Egyptian, is to know God through ^{intuitive} knowledge. Here the definition of Sūfism, as given by the famous Sūfī Ma'rūf-i-Karkhī, appears to be an exact reproduction of the gnostic conception, when he says, "Sūfism is the apprehension of divine realities". It is interesting to note that the parents of this Sūfī saint were Sabians or Mandeans, coming from the Babylonian Fenland, between Basra and Wasit¹²⁰ and gnosticism was freely practised by the Sabians.

119. Nicholson : Mysteries of Islam, Page 13.

120. Ibid, Page 14.

The mystery of the 'Great Name' which was discovered by the great Sūfīs, according to Nicholson¹²¹, is a gnostic conception. The gnostics practise litany and the repetition of the Great Name in order to drive away the evil spirits and invoke the help of God. 'Attār in his 'Biographies of the Saints' (Tazkirat-ul-Auliya) records an anecdote wherein he relates that when Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham, in order to keep away from the thronging public, was travelling in the desert, he came across a pious man who communicated to him the Great Name (Ism-i-Āzam). As soon as Adham pronounced the Great Name, he saw the Prophet Khazir (Elias)¹²².

The fundamental conception of Gnosticism is based on the dualistic view of good and bad, light and darkness and spiritual and material worlds. The M^essiah and the Satan are two struggling forces and are compared to the right and left arms of God respectively. Satan holds his sway on this world and the M^essiah is the governor of the next world.

Needless to say that these ideas owe their clear and absolutely undoubtful origin from Manich^eism, which religion, in turn, was a synthesis of Zoroastrian, Christian and Buddhist philosophies.

121. Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, Vol I, p. 269

122. Qasim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islam, Page 153.

Nicholson¹²³ and A. Bevan¹²⁴ are of the opinion that the term 'Siddiq', originally applied by the Manicheans was borrowed by the ancient Sufis and meant 'an adept Sufi'. Later another Sufi School, adopting the dualism of Mani, held the view that "the diversity of phenomena arises from the admixture of light and darkness. In the words of Sir Mohd. Iqbal "The ideal of human action is freedom from the taint of darkness; and the freedom from darkness means the self-consciousness of light as light"¹²⁵.

Nicholson is of the view that the Sufic term of "The Seventy Thousand Veils" is definitely from gnostic origin. The following extract from a modern Rifai dervish, according to Nicholson is noteworthy in this connection. "Seventy Thousand Veils separate Allah, the One Reality, from the world of matter and of sense. And every soul passes before his birth through these seventy thousand. The inner half of these are veils of light; the outer half, veils of darkness. For every one of the veils of light passed through, in this journey towards birth, the soul puts off a divine quality; and for every one of the dark veils, it puts on an earthy quality. Thus the child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from Allah, the One Reality. And when the child cries in its sleep, it is

123. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 14.

124. Qasim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islam, page 154.

125. Iqbal : The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Page 150, 1908

because the soul remembers something of what it has lost. Otherwise, the passage through the veils has brought with it forgetfulness (Nisyan), and for this reason man is called 'Insān'. He is now, as it were, in prison in his body, separated by these thick curtains from Allah"¹²⁶.

Jāmī, in the 13th Lam'a of his Ashiat-ul-Lama'at has elaborated this journey through the darkness and the light in detail.

As explained by Mr. W.H.F. Gairdner, "the whole purpose of Sufism, the way of the dervish, is to give him an escape from this prison, an apocalypse of the seventy thousand veils, a recovery of the original unity with the one, while still in this body. The body is not to be put off; it is to be refined and made spiritual -- a help and not a hindrance to the spirit. It is like a metal that has to be refined by fire and transmuted. And the Sheikh tells the aspirant that he has the secret of this transmutation. 'We shall throw you into the fire of spiritual passion', he says 'and you will emerge refined'"¹²⁷.

Gandhāra, the region representing the territory where modern Peshawar is situated, may be considered as the birth-place of Buddhism as a world religion¹²⁸. From here, the monks,

¹²⁷. The way of a Mohammedan Mystic, Page 9 F. Leipzig, 1912.

¹²⁸. Edward Conze : A short History of Buddhism, Page. 45-48. Bombay 1960.

¹²⁶. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 15; Qasim Ghani:

mostly Mahāyānists gradually filtered into Eastern and Central Asia where, within a considerably short period, they established their religion and occupied the great silk routes. This was an event of decisive importance as, with the passage of time, it was from here that the monks found their way, very conveniently, for the future propagation of Buddhism in Eastern Persia and Transoxiana.

Before the Moslem conquests of Persia, Buddhism had definitely established its profound influence on the Persian mind and the presence of a large number of monasteries in Balkh and Bukhara, the famous cities and cultural centres of the ancient Bactrian kingdom bears testimony to the fact that a large number of the natives had accepted it as the most continuing Faith of the times.

As late as the 8th century A.D., a leading Buddhist family of Transoxiana commanded a considerable influence in the court of the Caliph of Baghdad and we find the members of the family, (going by the name of the Barmaks, a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word 'Pramukha'), occupying high positions in the Moslem Court.

The famous Arab writer Jāhiz¹²⁹ (D.255 A.H./866 A.D.)

contd. from page...

Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islām, Page 154-155.

129. Kitab-ul-Haiwān, Page 146, Part IV.

speaks of the wandering ascetics who, possessing holiness, truthfulness, poverty and cleanliness, travelled from place to place preaching asceticism and mortification. They were the followers of non-violence and some of the stories connected with these ascetics clearly show that they had a hearty dislike for the blood-shed and preferred to undergo severe hardships in order to avoid such situations.

If these ascetics, according to Prof. Goldziher¹³⁰, were not Indians or Buddhist monks, they were at least their followers. The story of Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham, the wealthy Prince of Balkh who abandoned his throne in order to achieve peace of mind and subsequently became one of the most famous Sufi-ascetic, is the story of Prince Siddharatha retold. In the words of Prof. Goldziher, this also proves the influence of the Buddhist ideas on the early Sūfism.

Similarly, a large number of books, pertaining to the Buddhist and Hindu religions were translated into Arabic in the second century of Hijra (8th century A.D.). Some of these books appear to have exerted a deep influence on the eclectic mind probably through a Manichean medium¹³¹. In addition to the various versions of 'Barlām and Josaphat' the celebrated

130. Zuhd-o-Tasawwuf Dar Islām; Tr. by Mohd. Ali Khalili, Page 73. Tehran 1330 Solar.

131. D.M. Lang : The wisdom of Balahvar, Page 24-29. London 1957.

Buddhist story of the blind man and the elephant from the Udāna was adapted by Tawhīdī¹³² and Ghazzālī¹³³ and later by Sanā'ī¹³⁴ and Rūmī¹³⁵. The central idea of this Buddhist story is that just as a blind man, feeling only a part of the elephant, declares that his partial experience is the whole truth, so do the various religions possess only partial truth, yet all claim, in their blindness, to possess the whole truth.

The story, which according to Zaehner¹³⁶, probably passed through the Buddhists of Central Asia, directly condemns all dogmatism, and thus represents the fundamental principle of Buddhism. This spirit of eclecticism suited the taste of the Sūfis very well. With the passage of time they became increasingly indifferent to the dogmatics of the Orthodox Theologians of Ishām.

Further, among the sayings of Bāyazīd of Bistām, we come across certain passages which have a striking resemblance with Buddhist texts. The following extracts provided by Zaehner,

132. Kitāb-ul-Mucābasāt, Cairo 1929, p. 259-60.

133. Kimya-i-Sa'adat, I, p. 50-51.

134. Hadīqat-ul-Haqīqa, p. 69, Tehran 1229 Solar.

135. Masnavi III, 1259.

136. Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, Page 101.

bear a close likeness to each other and speak of a common origin. Bāyazīd is reported to have said :

"You see how rivers flow, with a splashing, chattering sound, but when they draw near to the sea, and mingle with it, their splash and chatter is stilled, and the sea has no experience of them nor do they increase in it; nor if they were (again) to merge from it, would they have the slightest effect on it. Man is like the torrent and the sea; for the torrent, so long as it is alone, bustles along in its course and makes loud its chatter, but when it draws near to the sea and mingles with it, its bubbling and chatter are stilled, and the sea has not experience of it, nor does it increase or decrease though (the torrent) were turned back (again)¹³⁷."

The above-noted idea appears clearly to be based on Uḍāna, which reads as follows :

"Just as whatsoever streams flow into the mighty ocean and whatsoever floods fall from the sky, there is no shrinkage nor overflow seen thereby in the mighty ocean, even so.... though many monks pass finally away into that condition of 'Nirvāṇa', which has no remainder, yet there is no shrinkage nor overflow in that condition of 'Nirvāṇa' seen thereby¹³⁸."

137. sahla-11, P.124, quoted in Zaehner's Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, Page 101-102.

138. Ibid, Page 102.

The influence of Buddhism on Sūfism can be traced in the shape of external forms and beliefs also. Buddhist monks' rosary has been undoubtedly borrowed by the Sūfis in the 9th century A.D.¹³⁹ and was adopted by the Orthodox Moslems subsequently.

The eight stations in the Buddhistic theory of 'Nirvāna' have very close parallels in Sūfism, in the shape of different stages leading finally to 'Fanā'.

The concept of 'Dhyāna' in Buddhism, is the eighth term of the Noble Eight-fold Path and finally ends in a sublime union with the indescribable glory of the Supreme, which the Buddhists generally allude to as being "the fulness of the Void". This practice is universal among all orders of the Buddhist monks and occupies a very important position in the doctrines. Beginning with a simple discipline of the mind and control of the emotions, it leads to states of felicity and universal enlightenment. In 'Murāqabat' of the Sūfis, a form of self-concentration, the influence of this Dhyāna or Samādhi of Buddhism may be traced very clearly.

The Sūfī theory of 'Fanā', viewed as a moral state, is clearly influenced by the Nirvāna theory of Buddhism. Fanā,

139. Goldziher : Zuhd-o-Tasawwuf, Page 83.

in its ethical aspect, means the passing away of all evil qualities and evil actions and this state may be achieved by the continuance of the corresponding good qualities and actions. The definition of Nirvāna, as given by Prof. Rhys Davids, agree almost word for word with this. He writes :

"The extinction of that sinful, grasping condition of mind and heart, which would otherwise according to the great mystery of Karma, be the cause of renewed individual existence. That extinction is to be brought about by, and runs parallel with, the growth of the opposite condition of mind and heart; and it is complete when that opposite condition is reached"¹⁴⁰.

Leaving aside the doctrine of Karma, which has no affinity with Sūfism, the definition of Nirvāna in the above-quoted passage definitely points to a common origin of the both conceptions (i.e. Fana and Nirvāna).

With the advent of Abū Yazīd of Bistām, we observe a striking change in the tones of the Islamic Sūfīs. Dhu'l Nūn and Muhāsibī speak of God's love for man and man's love for God, but they do not favour the term 'the Mystical Union.' It is Bāyazīd, a native of Western Khorānān, who appears on the scene and changes the whole tenor of Sūfism by saying "I am He"

140. Nicholson : The Mystics of Islam, Page 19.

A critical analysis of this ṡūfī's biography and sayings undoubtedly leads us to think that he did not say this of himself, it was rather suggested to him by another who came from a different country with different ideas.

Prof. Arberry's¹⁴¹ argument that Abū 'Alī al-Sindī, the spiritual teacher of Bāyazīd, came from Sind, a village in Korāsān, as recorded by the geographer Yaqūt, is not very convincing. As suggested by Zaehner¹⁴², theoretically, of course, it might, but it is rather difficult to believe that the Sind referred to, is any other than the famous province of that name, in the pre-partitioned India. Abū 'Alī, the Indian, was certainly a convert to Islam, and was well-versed in the Yogic exercises of 'Pās-i-Anfās' i.e. 'Watching of the breath' technically called Prāṇāyāma. Bāyazīd received, from him, instructions in the divine unity and in the ultimate truths¹⁴³. These instructions are clearly reflected in the following words of Bāyazīd, recorded by Sarrajī:

"Onee (God) raised me up and placed me before Him and said to me "O Abū Yāzīd, verily my creation longs to see thee" And I said "Adorn me with thy unity and clothe me in thy I-ness and raise me up unto thy Oneness, so that when thy creatures

141. Arberry : Revelation and Reason in Islam, Page 90. London 1957.

142. Zaehner : Hindu and Muslim Mysticism, Page 93.

143. Sarrajī, Page 177.

see me, they may say "we have seen thee (i.e. God) and "Thou art that". Yet I (Abū Yāzīd) will not be there at all"¹⁴⁴.

In the above passage, the expression "Thou art that" (takunu anta dhaka) appears to be a literal translation of the famous phrase "tat tvam asi", occurring in the Chāndogya Upanishad¹⁴⁵, meaning "Thou art the Ultimate Reality". Zaehner's stress on the point that it is foreign to anything Islam had ever taught and that in Hinduism it is so common place, sounds very plausible. In fact the phrase bears a clear impact of the teachings of the great Śaṅkara almost a contemporary of Bāyazīd, who had just revived the extreme type of Vedānta.

At another place, the influence of the Vedānta on the sayings of Bāyazīd has been pointed out in the following two extracts from Bayazīd and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad. The Sūfī says :

I sloughed off myself as a snake sloughs off its skin; then I looked into myself and lo ! I was He¹⁴⁶.

In the Vedānta text we read :

"As the sloughed off skin of a snake lies on an ant-hill, dead, cast off, so does this body lie. But this

144. Ibid, Page 382.

145. Chāndogya Upanishad, 6.8 FF.

146. Sahlajī, Page 77.

incorporeal, immortal spirit is Brahman indeed, is light indeed If a man should know himself (his ātman) and say "I am He", what could he possibly wish for or desire that would make him cling to the body"¹⁴⁷.

The same simile and the same conclusion in both the extracts very clearly disclose the close resemblance between Sufism and Vedānta.

Bāyazīd's famous saying "Subhānī, a 'Zama Shānī", recorded by Sahlajī¹⁴⁸ and meaning "Glory be to me, how great is my glory", is absolutely blasphemous from the quranic view-point and is untraceable in Islamic Sufism before Bāyazīd. Its equivalent occurs only in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad where we come across the expression "Mahyam eva namo namaḥ i.e. Homage, homage to me"¹⁴⁹.

The conception of 'Māyā', representing that the world of phenomena and of the senses is a mere illusion, is unmistakably reflected in the following saying of Bāyazīd :

"And I went on flying until I reached the expanse of eternity and in it I saw the tree of oneness". Then (says Sarrāj) he described the soil (in which it grew) its root and branch, its shoots and fruits, and then he said, "Then I

147. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.7, 12

148. Page 78.

149. Zaehner : *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, pp. 98 - 99.

looked and I knew that all this was 'deceit',¹⁵⁰. The word 'deceit' here appears to have been used to convey the sense of 'Māyā'. The two words according to Zaehner, could scarcely correspond more exactly.

At the end of this brief survey, in which we have tried to analyse, at some length, the various un-Islamic influences, moulding, in general, the main characteristics of the real Sūfism, we may sum up, that the development, from quietism to pantheism, and dogmatism to eclecticism, was the product of diverse forces working together. Thus the speculative developments of the Moslem monotheistic ideas, Christian and Buddhist, asceticism and mysticism, Gnosticism, Greek and Indian philosophies, all constituted the environment in which this important Islamic movement became un-Islamic at a later stage. Under the circumstances, those who advocate one definite source of Sūfism may not be perfectly true in their contentions and their claims may be taken as half truths only.

5. Reconcilers :

The indulgence in the language of deification and other un-Islamic practices had brought the Sūfīs under the fire of the Orthodox Moslems for some considerable time, and most of their prominent teachers could not escape the accusation of

¹⁵⁰. Sarrāj,

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being 'Zindiq', a term, applied to cover a multitude of suspected heresies. An urgent need to save the movement from extinction, made it imperative for the earnest sūfīs to keep their mystical theories in close touch with the religion which they professed. "The need produced the men and the men produced the books eminently suitable for the purpose"¹⁵¹.

The first systematic and general works on Sūfī doctrine were the famous 'Kitāb-ul-Luma' and Qūt-ul-Qulūb. The former was written by Abū Naṣr-al-Sarrāj (D. 378 A.H./988 A.D.) and is decidedly a great treasure house of much valuable material, drawn from sources that have been lost. The book abounds in quotations, ecstatic utterances, the terminologies of the Sūfīs, the doctrines and practices of the lovers of God and deals, at length, with the differences of doctrine, dividing certain schools of Sūfism. The author appears to be a great master of the theosophy and is comparatively less concerned with the discipline of Sūfism.

Abū Tālīb-al-Makkī (D. 386 A.H./996 A.D.) the author of Qūt-ul-Qulūb, an extremely orthodox contemporary of al-Sarrāj, has tried to prove, in a very logical tone, the orthodoxy of the Sūfī doctrines, linking them with the tradition of the Prophet's teachings, passed on by Hasan of Basra and other great teachers.

¹⁵¹. Arberry : Sufism, Page 66.

The influence of these two books (i.e. Kitāb-ul-Luma' and Qūt-ul-Qulūb) appears to be quite considerable on the writings and the mode of thought of the great al-Gazzālī, whom we shall discuss presently.

The third fundamental book, written towards the end of the same century is al-Kalābādhi's brief mystical treatise, styled al-Ta'arruf Li-Wadhhab ahl al-tasawwuf. This book, according to Nicholson¹⁵², is held to be one of the eight books whose study is the foundation for history of Sūfism, when that history comes to be written. The author while compiling a good number of the sayings of many great Sūfī teachers, has endeavoured to prove that Sūfism is wholly consistent with the Orthodox Islāmic views. This manual was soon accepted as an authentic authority on Sūfism and was regarded to be a great landmark in the history of Sufism. Suhrawardī-i-Maqtūl, the great Sūfī author (D. 1191 A.D.) observes, "But for Ta'arruf, we should not have known Sūfism". Many commentaries, the famous among them being by Ansārī (D. 1088 A.D.) and Qonawī (D. 1329 A.D.) have also been written on this work.

The next author, in chronological order, al-Sulamī, (D. 1021 A.D.), composed a number of treatises on Sūfism; but the most important of his works, which is of immense value

152. Preface to Ta'arruf, P. XVIII.

from the religious point of view, is his commentary on the Qurān from the Sufic standpoint. His Tabaqāt-us-Sūfiyān, containing the biographies of the celebrated Sūfī-saints, may be considered as the fountain-head of Maulānā Jamī's famous work Nafahāt-ul-Uns. Another tract of al-Sulamī, on the ¹⁵³errors of the Sūfīs deals with the beliefs and practices of the notorious 'Malāmatīyas', an extremist Sect of the Sūfīs, who disregarded the commandments of the religion and committed the most outrageous sins in order to incur the contempt and displeasure of the society, firmly believing in the view that the most trodden in the worldly sense is the most elevated in the eyes of God.

Abu'l qāsim al-qushairī (D.1074 A.D.) was born at Nishābūr and had made a special study of the Sūfī doctrines. While Hilyat-ul-Auliya of Abū-Na'im of Isfahān (D.A.1038 A.D.) is more of a biographical dictionary, qushairī's celebrated Risālat-ul-qushairiyya, upon which his fame chiefly rests, is the most authentic record of the theoretical structure of Sūfism in the 10th and 11th centuries. Being a reliable and conscientious writer, qushairī, tried to establish Sūfism as an important branch of the Islamic philosophy. In fact his Risāla has always been a source of definite information on

153. Ghalaṭāt-us-Sūfiyā.

Sūfī theories, for his successors. Qushairī's other works include, a commentary on the Qurān and a monograph on Shab-i-Ni'ra i.e. 'The Night of the Prophet's Ascension to Heaven'.

Abu'l Hasan Al-Jullābi Al-Hujwiri, the last of the great theorists of the 11th century A.D., was a senior contemporary of Qushairī. Born at Ghazna, in the modern Afghanistan, and died and buried at Lahore, West Pakistan, Hujwiri had travelled a great deal coming into contact with the towering personalities of the Sūfī orders of his day. From the "blessed company" of these saints Hujwiri obtained a deep knowledge of the doctrines and practices of Sūfism which enabled him later to compile his peerless book, styled Kashf-ul-Mahjūb i.e. 'The unveiling of the Veiled' which is perhaps the oldest, unique, and the best-known treatise on the Sūfī theories, in the Persian language. Kashf-ul-Mahjūb, differs slightly, in pattern, from Hisālat-ul-Qushairiyya, "containing a full account of the Sūfī doctrines, including the author's own personal views on various disputable theories. Hujwiri's views are in conformity with the Islāmic standards. He condemns the extremists by declaring that his contemporaries give the name of Law to their lusts and call senseless fancies 'Divine Knowledge', the motions of the heart and affections of the animal soul, 'Divine Love', heresy, poverty and scepticism 'Purity' and disbelief

in positive religion, 'Self-abandonment'.¹⁵⁴ Hujwiri's breadth of outlook and great illuminating style is commendable.

While the Sūfī theorists and saints were thus busy, with their innumerable followers and worshippers, trying to draw into the movement a strong and fairly tolerant body of conservative opinion, the Orthodox party on the other hand, divided against itself, and clinging fanatically to the Qurānic dogmas, was fast losing touch with the inward spirit and life, which makes religion a reality. The dry light of intellect was rapidly becoming intolerable and the most earnest Moslems, were naturally, anxious to find means of preserving, what was vital to the faith, without rending the community asunder.

The situation was, luckily saved by the appearance of one of the greatest men Islām has ever produced. Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazzālī was born at Tus, in Khorāsān in 450 A.H./1058 A.D. and was educated at Nishābūr under the strict supervision of al-Juwainī, the Imām-ul-Haramain, with whom he remained until the Imām's death in 1085 A.D. From Nishābūr, he went to join the court of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the celebrated Saljūq Minister and formed part of his retinue of canonists and theologians until 1091 A.D., when he was appointed a teacher in the Nizamia School at Baghdad. Up to this time, he had become an absolute sceptic,

154.

The Legacy of Islam, Page 220, London, 1952.

which he never overcame so far as philosophy was concerned. When intellectualism had thus failed him, Ghazzālī turned to ascetic and contemplative life. Leaving Baghdād, as a wandering Darvīsh, he turned his attention to the mystic way revealed in the writings of Harith-al-Maḥasibī and the other old masters of the 9th century A.D. This is, in his own language, how the truth dawned upon him ; " I saw plainly that what is most peculiar to them (i.e. the Sūfis) can not be learned from books, but can only be reached by immediate experience and ecstasy and inward transformation"¹⁵⁵.

From that time, Ghazzālī became convinced that a purely philosophical structure could endure no longer and the intellect should only be used to destroy trust in itself. The only reliable knowledge, according to him, was that gained through ecstatic experience². In other words he recommended clearly the mystical way of life for the peace of mind and soul.

Henceforward, the Sūfis were definitely brought into the fold of Islam, for, according to Ghazzālī and the majority of Moslems after him, the saints also receive revelations like the Prophets. The difference is that only the prophecy could lead to sainthood. Mohammad's supreme authority is unquestionable and his law must be obeyed both in letter and spirit.

¹⁵⁵. The Legacy of Islam, Page 221.

¹⁵⁶.

Ghazzālī strongly advocated the love of Prophet as God's Vicegerent on earth. Since long the ṣūfīs had been finding it difficult to resolve the problem of reconciling a transcendent God of Orthodox Islam, with a theistic universe of the eclectic saints. The doctrine of 'Hulūl' (Incarnation), preached by Hallāj, to solve this mystery, was at once taken to be an extreme heresy, by the orthodox. The indiscreet saint has to pay for it with his life; but all the same, he had shown the way to his successors.

Hallāj presented Jesus, after whose fashion, he was himself crucified, as the example of a perfect holy man in whom God was Incarnate. thus showing and proving the man's union with God. His more discreet followers refrained from such utterings, for fear of their lives. It was Ghazzālī who came to their rescue and found out a via media to satisfy the Orthodox. Substituting Mohammad for Jesus, he gave Hallāj's theory a perfect Islāmic colouring. Now it was asserted that the perfect knowledge of the Absolute, requires union with the 'Idea of Mohammad'. This was the only course to lead mankind

156.

با حو کمال اندکی آشفته‌گی خوشست
 هر چند عقل کل شده ای بی جون بهایش

Even high proficiency (in any art or Science) is graceful only with a little madness. Even if you attain so much knowledge as the angel Gabriel possesses, let not yourself be deprived of this (divine) madness.

back to Him. Thus glorifying the Prophet, Ghazzālī succeeded to a large extent, in making Orthodoxy mystical. But it was impossible, however, in the nature of things that equal success should attend his efforts to make mysticism Orthodox. Consequently most Sūfis think and with justice that Ghazzālī belongs not so much to themselves as to the Catholic Church of Islām.

Ghazzālī deposed Fiqh (Jurisprudence) from the position it has usurped, lashed its casuistry and refused it a place as a part of Islamic religion. He dealt similarly with 'Kalam' (Scholastic Theology) and especially denounced the tendency, to make the faith of the masses, a structure of logically demonstrated articles (Aqā'id). These reforms were accepted by the majority of Moslems and he has been reckoned as not only the Mujadid (renewer) of his century, but as the great restorer of his faith. In fact his services to Islamic Orthodoxy were so great that the title 'Hujjat-ul-Islām' (The Proof of Islam) was bestowed upon him. On the other hand, in the words of Prof. Levy¹⁵⁷, "to Ghazzālī, more than to other doctors, is due the credit for analysing, formulating, and classifying the teachings, which the Sūfī poets decorate and illumine in the imagery of their verses".

Upto the time of Ghazzālī, the Sūfis had been representing

157. Levy, Persian Literature, Page 40, London, 1945.

mainly the conception of an intimate personal relation between God and the soul as opposed to that of a formal worship based on Qurān and Tradition. Ghazzālī's interpretation of Sūfism created an atmosphere of reconciliation. His idea of a system of speculative theosophy was further elaborated and developed by his illustrious successor Muḥi-ud-Dīn, commonly known as Ibn 'Arabī, the most celebrated mystical genius of the Arabs. He was a descendant of Hatim al-Tai, the famous philanthropist of Arabia, and was born in 1165 at Murcia, in Spain. For thirty years he lived at Seville and Cordoba and devoted himself to the study of Hadīth (Tradition) and Fiqh (Jurisprudence) ardently. In 1194 A.D., he was initiated into Sūfism at Tunis. In 1202 A.D. he set out for the East from where he never returned. Wherever he went, his fame reached ahead of him. Many a person of means, offered him pensions and stipends, which he bestowed in charity. Finally he settled down at Damascus and passed away in the year 1240 A.D.

Ibn 'Arabī's writings have been numerous, but the most famous of his works are 'Futuhāt-ul-Makkiya' and 'Tusūḥ-ul-Hikam'. The former is a veritable Sūfī encyclopaedia in four volumes, while the latter is a compendium of the former. Ibn 'Arabī was a poet as well. In 1214-15 A.D., he composed a small collection of love poems, celebrating the beauty and erudition

of his beloved Nizām, the most beautiful and accomplished daughter of Makin-ud-Dīn of Mecca. Later, in order to convince his critics he wrote a commentary on these poems, explaining them in a mystical sense and emphasizing that they dealt with intellectual love rather than sensual pleasures.

Ibn 'Arabī is a great speculative genius, but nevertheless, most of his enormous works are abstruse and fantastic. The main doctrine of this ṣūfī is essentially a Logos doctrine. Adam was the first incarnation of Divinity which is objectified and made manifest in the true idea of humanity. According to Ibn 'Arabī, Mohammad is the 'Insān-i-Kāmil' (The Perfect Man), represented as the Perfect Image of God. This 'Perfect Image' is the mediator of divine grace and the cosmic Principle by which the world is animated and sustained.

Al Insān-ul-Kāmil, literally means "The Perfect Man". This expression occurs, perhaps for the first time, in the writings of Ibn 'Arabī, in the first chapter of his famous work "Fusūs-ul-Hikam". The phrase denotes the highest type of humanity. In other words it represents a ṣūfī who has realised his essential oneness with God. Ibn 'Arabī bases his theory of the "Perfect Man" on a pantheistic monism which regards "the Haqq" or the Creator and "the Khalq" or the Creature as complimentary aspects of ^{the} Absolute Being.

According to Ibn 'Arabi, "Man unites in himself both the form of God and the form of the universe. He alone manifests the Divine Essence together with all its names and attributes. He is the mirror by which God is revealed to Himself and therefore the final cause of the Creation. We ourselves are the attributes by which we describe God; Our existence is merely an objectification of His Existence. While God is necessary to us in order that we may exist, we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself" 158

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158. Brill : Shorter Encyclo. of Islam, Page 170.

عطار روح بود و سنائی دو چشم او بود
ما از پی سنائی و عطار آمدیم
روحی

Attar was the spirit and Sanaii the
two eyes (of the Doctrine), we have
come after Sanaii and Attar

Rumi

CHAPTER - III

MYSTICAL DOCTRINES OF 'ATTĀR

(With reference to Mantiq-ut-Tair)

Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār did not venture to explain the mystical theories and the Sūfī doctrines in a well-planned order. He never wanted to show his erudition from the academic point of view. He was a great practical Sūfī and had learnt and felt the mystical practices and experiences through his personal efforts, and contacts with the dominating Sūfī-Sheikhs of his times. The authors of Khazīnat-ul-Āsafiya, Safīnat-ul-Auliya and Tarā'iq-ul-Haqā'iq consider him to be a follower of Uwais-i-Qaranī, who was a native of Yemen and was alive during the life-time of the Prophet. But this is highly disputable because most of the Sūfīs do not accept the aforesaid Uwais as one of them. Uwais was, in reality, an ascetic, known for his mortification, and belonged to the Tabi'īn group of the 7th century A.D.

As we have already discussed under the biography of 'Attār, the circumstantial evidence definitely goes to prove

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1. Plural of 'Tā'ibī', meaning a follower, dependant, one who has been any of the associates of Mohammad, who are called 'Ashāb'.

that our poet attained the 'Divine Knowledge' at the feet of the great Sheikh-i-Walī Tarāsh (a friend-carver for God) known as Majm-ud-Dīn Kubrā of Khawārazm. At the culmination of his Divine career, he followed the Kubrūyeh or Zāhabiyeh School, founded by his saint-teacher and consequently attached great importance to the different stages of the Divine Path for the attainment of the gnosis. He, following his guide, believed in manifestation and revelation.

Attār was an exponent of Sūfism and did not propound any fresh theory in the subject. His conceptions are not original and may be traced to other sources. The most outstanding features of his mystical ideas are his untiring zeal and spontaneous verbesity with which he explains the indelible Sūfī impressions of his mind. We notice a continual process of evolution in his mystical doctrines. This leads, at times, to many inconsistencies in his ideas, a close examination of which certainly reveals that these apparent contradictions are due to the dynamic state of the Sūfī's mind. There could be another reason for this. Attār chose poetry as the vehicle of his expression. His works contain most of his mystical experiences and Sūfī teachings. But his versification of the subject, adds tremendously, to its obscurity. He does not follow a rational order while illustrating his points. One has to build up a logical link while picking up the scattered

points of his doctrines. He is found discussing the same ideas under different captions. There is no definite limit between the subjects of his various works. As if in an ecstatic frame of mind, he goes on emphasizing the same mystical injunction, in an endless chain of verses. From book to book and chapter to chapter, the same tone of his songs, clearly brings before us the picture of a poet who is uncontrollably carried away by his mystical sentiments. The lack of a proper system creates confusion and the reader experiences drudgery.

Attār belonged to the Sober School of the Sūfīs. He praised Hallāj as a hero, but did not like his utterances and styled him as 'Duzd-i-Rāh' i.e. a 'thief of the Divine Path'. The violation of Shar'a (Qurānic law) and the disclosure of the Divine secrets was an unpardonable crime committed by him. "One or two cups of the wine of gnosis must not lead a man of the path astray. A Sūfī should be Sober and self-contained even if he drinks all the casks of the wine shops"². Hallāj, although a champion of the great saints, deserved the gallows because he did not behave in conformity with the Qurānic law.

From his various works, it could be deduced, without any shade of doubt, that our poet was a staunch Sunni in his religious practices. In the preface to his Khosrove-o-Gol,

2. Jawāhir Nāmeh, Kulliyāt, Page 68.

he showers praises on the three Imāms viz Abū Hanīfeh, Mohd. qarshi and Shāfi'ī. Similarly in most of his Masnavīs he begins with the encomium of all the four Caliphs. His best work Mantiq-ut-Tair also contains such verses³.

Prophet, according to 'Attār, was the teacher of law and the law was an expression of the Divine Truth. Hence it must be obeyed with absolute submission.

Like most of the other Sūfis, 'Attār interprets the Qurānic law (Shari'at) in an allegorical way. In his opinion Shari'at and Haqiqat are one and the same thing. Some Sūfi practices may not conform with the Islāmic law apparently, but in reality, they are perfectly justified. In his Tazkirat-ul-Auliya he says, "The people of intimacy might utter in their prayer things which are considered by the masses to be signs of infidelity, but whatever they say is to be tolerated⁴".

This further means that after passing a certain stage, the religious practices and bindings could be relaxed in the cases of the travellers who traverse the path of truth. The relation between Sūfi and God then becomes direct and no outward observance remains obligatory. This point has been fully illustrated by 'Attār in the anecdote of Loqman-i-Sarakhsi.

3. Paris edition, Pages 16-18, 1857 A.D.

4. Nicholson's Edition, Vol I, Page 122.

wherein God asks the saint to free himself from reason and religious duties in order to establish a direct Union with Him⁵.

A true Sufi relies very little on reason. According to 'Attar, reason is "too afraid to unveil the beloved's face. It was the first creation but it never saw the beloved's charm. It has no knowledge of the incomparable essence because it fell out of itself"⁶. In his Jawāhir Nāmeh, the poet declares "God is incomparable and therefore unknowable to any but Himself and when reason endeavours to know God it only imagines itself"⁷. Explaining the futility of reason, he compares it to a fishing net thrown into the well. In his words, "Reasoning is useless, it could bring to you what a seine could draw up from a well of water".

Reason, in the opinion of 'Attar, can be fruitful in special circumstances only. It may be united with love whose level is incomparably higher than reason. It is advisable to cross the level of reason to climb up the immeasurable heights of love.

In his book Jawāhir Nāmeh, the poet has devoted a full one chapter to the importance of reasoning against the folly

5. Mantiq-ut-Tair : Paris edition, Page 148.

6. Mukhtar Nāmeh, Pages 964, 975, 973, 1007.

7. Page, 4.

of 'Taqlid' or 'Imitation'. Following without reason is to remain a parrot. 'Taqlid' renders a foal not even worthy of barley or straw. In the Musibat Nāmah, the poet becomes very critical of the different types of people, including even Sūfīs who indulge in 'Taqlid'⁸. But, nevertheless, he attaches great importance to the spiritual guidance of the 'Murshid' (spiritual teacher), who must be followed in order to reach the desired goal of union with God.

'Attār is a staunch follower of that speculative theosophy wherein Mohammad the Prophet is being spoken of in terms of highest veneration "only just short of cult-worship," Mohammad is God's vicegerent. Controlling the material universe rests upon "al-haqiqat al-Mohammadiya" i.e. idea of Mohammad. Union with God could be possible only through achieving union with the idea of Mohammad. This conception was probably developed in order to avoid the charge of forbidden 'Incarnationism' i.e. 'Huḥūl', and its early exponents were Imām Ghazālī and Ibn al-Farīd. The Islamic conception of a transcendent God never allowed the idea of a theistic universe. The great Almighty has nothing to associate with the universe. He is far above the creation. In other words "He is not to be considered the father of His children". The very word "Islam"

8. Musibat Nāmah, Page 192. B.M. MSS. add 16, 788.

means 'submission' or 'obedience to the Will of God'. An adherent of Islām was called Moslem only because he resigned to the Will of the Supreme God who was All-Powerful. This theory, very naturally, could not fit in the conceptions of the Sūfīs who up to the 9th century A.D. had developed extremely pantheistic tendencies, resulting most unfortunately in the persecution and execution of some of their leading teachers and exponents. The need to reconcile the Creator with the creation in such a way that it could be acceptable to the Orthodox as well as the liberal, was imperative. Ghazzālī became the 'proof of Islam' (Hujjat-ul-Islām) when he rendered this service. His own secret doctrines, no doubt, if plainly formulated, are clear infidelity. The doctrine that the soul is identical with God and that God indwells the soul⁹ is nothing different from the conception of 'ittihād' and 'ḥulūl'. To illustrate this point more fully we quote below some extracts from the Imām's Mishkāt-al-Anwār, which may clearly show what Ghazzālī's secret doctrine was and how he rationalized it along more or less the Orthodox lines. At one place he writes: "The mystics, after their ascent to the heavens of reality agree that they saw nothing in existence except God, the One. Some of them attained this state through discursive reasoning, others reached it by savouring it and experiencing it. From

9. Rimīyā-i-Sa'ādāt, Page 745.

these all plurality finally fell away. They were drowned in pure isolation; their reason was lost in it, and they became as if dazed in it. They no longer had capacity to recollect aught but God; nor could they in any wise remember themselves. Nothing was left to them but God. They became drunk with a drunkenness in which their reason collapsed. One of them said, "I am God (the truth)!" Another said, "Glory be to me / How great is my glory". While another said, "Within my robe is naught but God."

After delineating the experience, the Imām proceeds to give it a colouring of rationality in the following manner :

"But the words of lovers when in a state of drunkenness must be hidden away and not broadcast. However when their drunkenness abates and the sovereignty of their reason is restored - and reason is God's scale on his earth - they know that this was not actual identity, but it resembled identity as when lovers say at the height of their passion:

I am he whom I desire, and he whom
I desire is I;
We are two souls
Inhabiting one body.

For it is not impossible that a man should be confronted by a mirror and should look into it and not see the mirror at all,

and that he should think that the form he saw in the mirror was the form of the mirror itself and identical with it; or that he should see wine in a glass and think that wine is just coloured glass. And he gets used to this way of thinking and becomes fixed in it, and it overwhelms him so that he says :

Thin is the glass and clear is the wine

The two are alike - mutual resemblance

It is as if there were only wine and no glass at all,

Or as if only glass, and no wine there.

But there is a difference between saying "The wine is the wine-glass" and saying "It is as if it were the wine glass". Now when this state prevails, it is called 'Annihilation' with reference to the person who is experiencing it, or even the 'Annihilation of Annihilation', for, the Sufi is annihilated so far as he himself is concerned, and annihilated too, so far as his own annihilation is concerned. He is not conscious of himself in this state, nor is he conscious of his own unconsciousness; for were he conscious of his own unconsciousness, he would be conscious of himself. This condition is metaphorically called 'Ittihad', with reference to the man who is immersed in it, but in the language of truth, it is called 'Tawhid' (Union)¹⁰.

10. Nishkāt-ul-Anwār in Sabri-al-Jawāhir al-Ghawālī, PP 122-3 Tr.W.H.T. Gairdner ; Al-Ghazzālī : Nishkāt-ul-Anwār, PP 106-8, Lahore 1952 (Reprint); Zaehner: Hindu and Muslim mysticism Pages 163-1265.

After interpreting these un-Islamic ideas in a most Islamic way, the Imām, very dexterously, proceeded to allot Mohammad a very definite place in the Sūfī set-up. Mohammad who had been given a cold shoulder by the early Sūfīs like Rābiʿa, now occupied the position of a Logos and became the Vice-gerent of God who could lead mankind back to Him.

This notion was fully developed, after Ghazzālī by the enigmatic poet Ibn-ul-Farīd of Cairo (1181-1235 A.D.) who, at times, pretended union with the spirit of Mohammad; but actually talked of his union with God. The following passage selected by Prof. Arberry¹¹, shows the extremely pantheistic taste of the poet, although he brings in Mohammad to avoid the charge of infidelity:

" My degree is of such a height that a man who has not reached it may still be deemed happy; but the state for which I am deemed happy transcends thy degree.

All men are sons of Adam, (and I am as they) save that I alone amongst my brethren have attained to the sobriety of union. My hearing is like that of Kalīm (Moses) and my heart is informed (about God) by the most excellent (Ahmad) vision of an eye like that of him who is most excellent (Ahmad is equal to Mohammad).

11. Sufism, Page 96.

And my spirit is a spirit to all the spirits (of created beings); and whatsoever thou seest of beauty in the universe flows from the bounty of my nature.

Leave then, to me (and do not ascribe to anyone else) the knowledge with which I alone was endowed before my appearance (in the phenomenal world), while (after my appearance) amongst created beings, my friends knew me not (as I really am)!"

The last great mystical genius of the Arabs, Muhyī-ud-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, perfected the theory of Logos in Sūfism by declaring that the Logos of God is Mohammad who is the head of the hierarchy of Prophets. He emphasized the conception that all the individual Logoi are united in the Reality of Mohammad who is the creative, animating and rational principle of the universe or the first intellect and should be regarded as the 'Perfect Man'.

'Aṭṭār, following the theory of Logos, as propounded by the above-noted mystics explicitly declares that "the lamp that proceeds from the light of the unseen" is the pre-existent and eternal light or Reality of Mohammad. This light is more eternal than eternity itself i.e. (aqdam min al-qidam اقدام من القدم)
In his preface to the Mantiq, he says :

فرد مقصود مخلوقات بود اصل معدومات و موجودات بود

(His (Mohammad) light was the purpose of the creatures. It was the root of the unseen and the seen).

✓ Maqsūdi Kun Fakān مقصود کن فکان, is an epithet of Mohammad, meaning, the purpose of (Him who said) "Be, and it was".

حق جو دید آن نور مطلق در حضور آفرید از نور او صد بحر نور

(When God saw that independent light in front of Him. He created a hundred seas of light from that light).

بهر خویش آن پاک جان را آفرید بهر او خلق جهان را آفرید

(He created that pure spirit for Himself. He created the creatures of the world for him).

اول آنچه شد پدید از حبیب غیب بود نور پاک او بی هیچ ریب

(The first thing that became manifest from the unseen pocket, was undoubtedly, his sacred light).

بعد از آن آن نور عالی زد علم گشت عرش و کرسی و لوح و قلم

(Afterwards that magnificent light set up the standard and became the throne, the chair, the tables and the pen).

یک علم از نور پاکش عالیت یک علم از تیت و آدمیت

(One standard of his sacred light is the world. Another one is Adam and the offspring).

Thus identifying Mohammad with the force which is the active creator of the universe, 'Attār eulogizes him as the Chief of the Prophets and declared his injunctions to be peerless. At one place, he actually declares him to be as high as God.

تاابد شرع تو و احکام تست همسر نام الہی نام تست

(Your way and your injunctions are eternal. Your name is like the Name of God).

After this deification of Mohammad, 'Attār invokes his help to reach the shore.

طفل راه تو منم غرقه شده گرد من آب سیه حلقه زده

(I am a drowned child of your path. The waters of the deluge have surrounded me).

چشم آن دامن زیر آب بیاہ دست من گیری و باز آری براہ

13

(I am hopeful that you may take hold of my hand in this black water and show me the right path again).

Mohammad, according to 'Attār, gained perfect relationship with God and reached the highest degree in this sphere through

God's best favours. Consequently, a true and genuine Sūfī will never be led astray and is supposed to revolve within the sphere of Islām to discover its deepest hidden treasures. In the Jawāhir Nāmeh, we come across the following extract, in this context :

"You find your way open through the Qurān, in which you find thousands of secrets - thousand of secrets you see in every breath"¹⁴. This proves, very clearly, that 'Attār claims to be a true Moslem as well as an Orthodox Sūfī. But after all an orthodox Sūfī is that who prefers eclecticism in place of dogmatism and estimate the various things by their intrinsic significance and not by their external forms. 'Attār is not wanting in these qualities. His eclecticism is proved beyond doubt. The following verses of Asrār Nāmeh bear¹⁵ ample testimony to this fact.

الای در تعصب جانت رفتہ گناہ خلق با دیوانت رفتہ

(Beware, you have lost your life in bigotry. The sin of the world has made you mad).

ولی از ابلیس پر زرق و پر کمر گرفتار علی ماندی و بوبکر

But due to stupidity, hypocrisy and cunningness, you have remained confined to 'Alī and Bū-Bakr).

14. Kulliyat, Page 582, Lucknow edition.

15. Nafis : Justujū Dar Ahwāl - Page Faj.

گاهی این یک بود پیش تو معقول گاهی آن یک بود از کار محروم

(Sometime this (Ali) is reasonable for you. At times that (Bū Bakr) one is useless).

گرای بهتر و آن بهتر ترا چه که تو چون حلقه ای بر در ترا چه

(What to you if this one is better or that one. You are simply like a ring of the door).

همه عمر اندرین محنت نشستی ندانم تا خدا را کی پرستی

(You have spent all your life in this affliction. I do not know as to when you worshipped God).

یقین دانم که فردا پیش حلقه ییگی گردند هفتاد و دو فرقه

(I am sure, tomorrow (the day of Judgement) in front of the circle, seventy two sects may be united into one).

چه گویم که همه زشت از نمکینند چه نیکو بنگری جویم ای ابد

(I am least concerned whether they are bad or good; If you observe minutely, all of them are searching for Him.).

الهی نفس سرکش را زبون کن فضولی از دماغ ما برون کن

(Oh God/make the rebellious senses weak. Take out the preposterousness from our mind).

دل ما را بنحو دشمن گردان / تعصب جوئی را معزول گردان

(Turn our heart to yourself. Dismiss the bigot).

At another place, in Mantiq-ut-Tair, he rejects the claims of both the infidel and the Moslem and desires for him the pain of Divine Love.

کفر کافرا و دین دیندار را / ذره ای در دلت دل عطار را

(Infidelity for the infidel and religion for the religious.
A little pain (of your love) for Attār's heart).

Opposing the efforts of the Arab philosopher Ibn-al-Rushd (Averrôes) who tried to reconcile religion with philosophy, Imām Ghazzālī though himself an outstanding philosopher of the Moslem world, had challenged the usefulness of philosophy in the attainment of the Divine Knowledge. Philosophy, according to him, diverted the attention of man from religion.

(Attār, on his turn, declared both philosophy and religion, as poles apart from each other. He saw a complete rupture between both and favoured a crusade against philosophy. In his opinion Avicennā's works, containing philosophical ideas are worthless and a philosopher is a follower of Zoroaster (i.e. an Infidel) philosophy and religion are incompatible. A

philosopher remains distant from the religion. Religion is obedience to the Prophet. Dust be on the philosopher's head¹⁶!

In the same book (i.e. Musibat Nāmeḥ) he prefers the 'Amr-i-Kul' (Divine order) of the Sūfis to the 'Aql-i-Kul' (Universal mind) of the philosophers. Divine command has no comparison with the universal minds. In fact the latter is dependant upon the former. In Mantiq-ut-Tair he prefers infidelity to philosophy in these verses.

چون توانستم ندانستم چه سود چونکه دانستم ندانستم بنود

(When I could do, I did not know it and it was in vain. When I came to know, there was nothing unknowable for me).

کاف کفر ای دل بحق المعرفه خوشترم آید ز فای فلسفه

(In connection with the knowledge, Oh my heart, I like the "kaf" of Kufr (Infidelity) more than the "fa" of Falsafa (Philosophy)).

زانکه این علم سرخ^{لر} چون ره زند بیشتر راه دل آگه زند

(Because when this sticky knowledge is (bent upon) plundering, mostly it plunders the informed heart).

Greek philosophy is still more condemnable. Because you cannot know the spiritual realm through this.

After outlining the general ideas of Attār, now we proceed to discuss his mystical doctrines with special reference to his famous work Mantiq-ut-Tair, a book which represents him as a great Sūfī as well as a remarkable poet of the Persian language.

MANTIQ-UT-TAIR

Of all the five Masnavīs of Attār viz Musibat Nāneh, Ilahī Nāneh, Asrar Nāneh, Khosrove Nāneh and Mantiq-ut-Tair the last one i.e. Mantiq-ut-Tair or 'Speech of the Birds' is, decidedly the best. Down through the ages it has been considered as a masterpiece of Attār representing his great poetical and spiritual qualities. This long poem was perhaps composed by the poet at the culmination of his spiritual career as it contains, and explains all the Stages and Stations which a true Sūfī has to cross and achieve during his spiritual flight towards God.

The poem was sometimes styled as Maqāmāt-i-Tayūr as in the following verse of Khosrove Nāneh.

مقامات طيور ما چنانست که مرغ عشق را سحر جانست

(Our Maqāmāt-i-Tuyūr is. 'Stations of the Birds', is such that it is a spiritual ascent for the bird of love).

But this name could not be popular. In its stead Mantiq-ut-Tair, gained fame and added considerably to the celebrity of 'Attār.

The name of the book, has been, apparently, derived from the following 16th verse of the "Naml" Sura of the Qurān wherein this line occurs.

ورث سليمان داود وقال يا ايها الناس علمنا منطق الطير

(And Sulamān became the inheritor of David and said "Oh ye people | We have been taught the 'speech of the birds').

'Attār, as we shall be discussing in detail, comparing and symbolizing different birds as the worldly people of different nature and character, it describes their spiritual flight towards God. As the birds assemble and discuss their problems, representing allegorically the spiritual difficulties facing the travellers of the true path (Tarīqat), the book has been named Mantiq-ut-Tair or the 'Speech of the Birds'.

The comparison of the human soul to a bird is not an original idea of 'Attār. Probably the first great thinker who symbolized the flight of the birds to the spiritual ascent of

the human souls was Avicenna (370-428 A.H./980-1036 A.D.). He composed a treatise entitled Risalat-u-Tair, and compared the philosophers and wisemen to free birds. Other human beings who run after the sensuous pleasures are the birds in cage, who may seek the union with the Shāh-Murgh, symbolizing the 'Āql-i-Kul' or the 'Universal Mind', only after learning the wisdom of the philosophers. The story, in brief, runs like this. A bird in cage, sees a flock of free birds and expresses his sincere wish to learn the art of setting himself free from the cage. The free birds tell him the secret of freedom and the imprisoned one, attaining freedom, joins the free-lancers in their search for the Shāh-Murgh i.e. the chief-bird. The most interesting feature of the situation is that all the birds, inspite of their apparent freedom, have their feet in fetters and are flying to the Shāh Murgh to attain perfect freedom from these fetters which symbolize the worldly attachments and afflictions of the human souls. The birds cross seven high-peaked mountains, representing seven difficult stages, and reached the eighth peak to discover some beautiful birds who guide them to a nearby city where they find the Shāh Murgh, the chief guide. On a request from the birds, the Shāh Murgh shows his helplessness; but tells them very explicitly that their fetters could be removed only by Him who tied them to their feet. Thus guiding them finally to the union with God.

The central idea of this symbolic story, as may be very clearly understood, is that the souls are to remember their home, the place they come from, and strive to regain it¹⁷.

Prof. Fārnzāfar¹⁸ of the Tehran University, is of the opinion that the above-quoted Risālat-u-Tair of Avicenna has been written on the patterns of a chapter styled Mamnat-ul-Mutanwāq i.e. collared pigeon, occurring in the Kalīla-o-Dinnā. Another tract, which appears to have inspired 'Attār is Risālat-ut-Tair, in Arabic, compiled by the great Ghazzālī. This tract also has a striking resemblance with 'Attār's work in so much as it depicts the same assembly of the birds and their journey for the union of the Si-murgh.

According to Prof. Jawwad-i-Mushkūr¹⁹, both the above-named tracts have greatly influenced the thought of 'Attār while composing his own Mantiq-ut-Tair.

Another source of 'Attār's inspiration, which appears to me very definite, is the mystical poem of Sanai entitled

17. Hafiz says :

ترازنگره عرش نیزند صغیر ندانمت که در این دام که چه افتاد

They are whistling to you from the battlement of the throne (calling you to return) I do not know what has befallen you in the net of this world.

18. Bisul Si-murgh, Page 82.

19. Introduction to the Mantig-ut-Tair, P.25, Second Edition Tehran.

Sair-ul-abād il l Ma'ād. The same spiritual ascent of the soul, which is Attār's theme, has been very fully but enigmatically discussed by sanāī, culminating in the final communion with God.

The "Mantiq" is mainly divided into parts. The first part opens with a very copious hymn to God, followed by an encomium of His Prophet and the praise for the four Caliphs²⁰. The rest of it is devoted to the ^{assembly} of the birds under the Chairmanship of the Hoopoe (Hud Hud) who, giving a grand description of the Simurg, the great king of the birds, exhorts them to accompany him (Hoopoe) to his Court which is situated in the back of the mount Caucasus. Their presence in the court of the Simurg is sure to remove all their afflictions and miseries. The birds becoming impatiently eager to accompany the Hoopoe, are somewhat discouraged by the distant situation of the Simurgh and come forward with excuses and personal difficulties in traversing this long and perilous way. Thus, the Nightingale, the Parrot, the Peacock, the Duck, the ^{Partridge}, the Phoenix, the Falcon, the Heron, the Owl, the Sparrow, come forward, one by one, and explain their innate, constitutional, and environmental hurdles in setting out on their adventurous errand. The Hoopoe, then, clears their doubts and relates many didactic anecdotes including the

20. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Pages 1-23. Paris edition.

story of the grand Sheikh San'an, bringing home to the birds, the fact, that enormous gains were waiting for them enroute the court of the Simurgh.

The birds, then, get ready and draw lots to select their leader. The lot falls in favour of the Hoopoe and thousands of birds set out, under his guidance, to perform their hazardous journey towards the Simurgh. But at the very first stage, they are terrified to note the seemingly unsurmountable difficulties of the journey. Once again, different birds express their inability to continue their travel.

In the second part, the Hoopoe, describes the Seven Valleys in which the birds are required to travel. Thus he gives description of the Valleys of Search, Love, Knowledge, Independence, Unity, Amazement, Poverty and Self-annihilation. Almost all the Valleys are defined to be extremely hard to cross so much so that one finds hardly any appreciable distinction between the hurdles and difficulties of one Valley and another. In brief they are full of fears and tears and it requires a lion's heart to traverse this path, otherwise the object remains unattainable. A traveller should equip himself with all the good qualities, including love, set forth in the first part of the Mantiq, and then step into these Valleys.

Out of hundreds of thousands ^{of} birds, only thirty birds reach, at long last, the presence of the Simurgh and are asked by the guard of the Divine Court to explain the reason of their visit. The birds express their desire to see the Simurgh and describe the dreadful experiences of their journey in a weeful manner. But the guard is adamant ^a and would not admit them to the court of the great Divine Majesty. The birds feel proud at their humiliation and pray for the Divine Mercy. Then comes the moment of the great manifestation. Simurgh personally appears on the scene and all the veils of separation are lifted to the greatest pleasure of the birds. Now comes a strange phenomenon. The birds, looking at the Simurgh, find the thirty birds (Simurgh literally means 'thirty birds') that is themselves. When they look at themselves they behold the Simurgh. Again when they look at themselves and the Simurgh simultaneously they find only one Simurgh.

The birds, out of amazement, ask the reason of this great mystery and are told that whosoever comes here finds his own reflection in the mirror of the Divine Presence. The birds see the Simurgh because they are thirty. Were they forty or fifty, they would have seen the same. "It is impossible for an ant to see the Pleiades ()". Whatever you thought or saw, said or heard, was otherwise; but because you are amazed and stripped of soul and heart, and patience,

you may vanish in us, with the greatest pride so that you may find yourself in us".²¹ Lastly the birds vanished in the simurgh as a shadow is lost in the sun²².

But the story does not end here. After passing away like shadows in the sun, the birds again attain subsistence. This happens after a hundred thousands of centuries. These centuries are without time and have no beginning or end. This time the self-effaced birds are given back to themselves without themselves in their annihilation. This, the poet, styles as 'Baqā' (Immortality) after 'Fanā' (Annihilation).²³

Concept of God :

The Mantiq begins with a hymn to God which affords us an opportunity to form 'Attār's concept of God. The first thing which strikes the mind of a reader, of this hymn, is that 'Attār implies to God more or less the same attributes which the quranic teachings suggest.

According to quran, God is beyond comprehension and His real nature cannot be understood by human reason. The Prophet forbids the people to ponder over God's Entity (Zāt). This injunction includes also His Attributes or Sifāt, because, according to Islām, these two are eternal and uncreated. Zāt and Sifāt, Essence and Attributes are disputable subjects.

21. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 167, Paris Edition.

22. Ibid Page 168.

23. Ibid Page 168.

According to the Mu'tazilites²⁴ both are identical. God's 'Zāt' was virtually made up of his attributes i.e. 'Sifāt'. If they are considered separate, then that amounts to Duality in Unity which naturally leads to an inadmissible position.

Shāh Walī Ullāh, the great Moslem theologian and philosopher of India does not agree with the views of the Mu'tazilites and is of the opinion that Essence, and Attributes are two separate entities, which are eternal and uncreated. All the same, the relation existing between the two is incomprehensible for the human mind due to its limited potency. The possibility of the concept of Duality cannot creep in, because His attributes can only be the inseparable features of His essence. The human sense and sight or other means within the human power cannot see His Zāt. Only the superior soul (Nafs-i-Nātiqa) of the saints and the Prophets may have a vision of Him in their dreams or spiritual trances. Here also the imagination and the mental potency plays an important part.

The attributes of God differ from the human faculties. The terminology used in the Qurān to explain the attributes signifies only the end and not the means. Thus the term 'Rahman' used for God does not suggest that He has a heart which is moved to pity when offered prayers. It simply means

24. Shushtarī, Vol I, Page 554.

that He may bestow the gifts of pleasure and comfort upon the Faithfuls. Again, the term 'Samsi' does not imply that God has ears. It only suggests that He may hear when called upon to do so. His attributes, according to Islam, are not to be taken literally. Moreover all the attributes used to express the human qualities cannot be applied to God.

God, as described in Qurān, is placed at an immeasurable distance from man. He is to be worshipped in fear and trembling. The man is like a slave who must prostrate himself before God if he wishes to attain heaven. There could be no relationship of man with Him except as a chattel.

The above teachings of the Qurān, except the concept of a dreadful God, serve as the basis for Attār's views on the subject. Regarding the incomprehensibility of God²⁵, he says :

برتر از علمت و بیرون از عیای زانکه در قدوسی خود بی نشان

(He is beyond the reach of sight and knowledge. Because He is, in His absolute purity, without sign).

ز دستان جز بی نشانی کس نیست چاره ای جز جان نشانی کس نیست

(No body could gain any sign of Him, except signlessness.

25. Nantig-ut-Tair, Page 4, Paris Edition.

No remedy except hard labour).

عجز زان هم شیره شد با معرفت کونه در شرح ایدش نی در صفت

(Helplessness mixes up with (the desire to acquire) His knowledge, because, He neither is expressible nor describable).

گر بغایت نیک گریه گفته اند هر چه زو گفتند از خود گفته اند

(Whatever people have said regarding His good or bad quality, they have only spoken from themselves).

Human intellect cannot conceive Him.

26 ای خردمگر گشته در گاه تو عقل را بر رشته گم در راه تو

(O Thou | The wisdom is amazed of your Court. The prudence has lost link in your Path).

The world is from Him, but He is not in the world.

جمله عالم بتو بینم عیان و ز تو در عالم نمی بینم نشان

(The whole world, I very clearly, behold from you. But I do not find your sign in the world).

This Islamic idea of the transcendence of God appears to me very inconsistent here as the pantheistic trend of the poet's mind can very well be traced in the following verses which

immediately precede the above verse :

درنگر کین عالم و آن عالم اوست نیست غیر او اگر هست او هم اوست
27

(See carefully (to find) that both the worlds are (nothing except) He. There is none except Him. If there is, it is He).

ای دریغنا هیچ کس را نیست تاب دید با کور و جهان پر آفتاب

(Alas ! no body can stand it. The world is full of sun and the eyes ^{are} blind).

گر به بینی این خرد را گم کنی جمله ادب بینی و خود را گم کنی

(If you behold it, you will lose your intellect. You may see all to be He and may lose yourself).

ای ز پیدائی خود لبس ناپدید جمله عالم تو و کس ناپدید

(Thou art extremely invisible due to your visibility; you are the whole world and none is invisible).

But inspite of His presence everywhere, it is extremely difficult to search Him out.

گرچه چنین چشم گردون باز کرد هم ندید از راه تو یک ذره گرد
28

(Although the sky opened many an eye, yet it could not see

27. Ibid, Page 3 verse 54-58, Paris Edition.

28. Ibid, Page 3 verses 71-72, Paris Edition.

even an atom of the dust of your path).

نه زمین هم دید هرگز کرد تو گریه بر سر گرد خاک از درد تو

(The earth, also could not behold your dust, inspite of the fact that it threw dust on its head due to your pain(of love)).

Whether the Divine Essence is comprehensible or not, the Divine Attributes are certainly conceivable. But they are so numerous that the poet says :

تو مکن چندی قیاسی حق شناس ز آنکه نباید کار بی چون در قیاس
29

(Oh knower of the truth! do not conjecture so much because the works of the Inscrutable cannot be enumerated.

It is interesting to note here that 'Attār, like all true Sūfīs, does not paint God as a cruel despot. The fire of hell and the attributes of punishment and wrath do not find place in 'Attār's concept of God. He ignores, like Abū-Sa'īd, the qurānic impressions where severe chastisement is mentioned for the wrongdoers. He prefers to present Hm as his Beloved who is full of affection and mercy for Her lovers. This beloved is manifest as well as hidden. God is all merciful.

خلق ترسند از تو من ترسم ز خود که تو نیکو دیده ام از خویش بد
30

29. Ibid, Page 4 verse 104.

30. Ibid, Page 7 verse 186.

(The people fear you and I am afraid of myself. Because I have seen good from you and bad from my ownself.)

As pointed out by Maulānā Shiblī No'mānī, in his Sawānīh-i-Maulānā-i-Rūm³¹, it was the interpretation of the different attributes of God which led to the very unfortunate dissensions among the Moslems. This problem in the long run was responsible for the creation of interminable disputes among the different Sects of Hambalites, Ashārites and Mu'tazilites etc. For example Ashārites were of the opinion that it was wrong to presume that God was residing in the heaven. They were ready to exterminate all those who believed in this concept. Similarly many people, who were found "Guilty of believing that God's word was eternal" were beheaded.

Attār is convinced of the futility of these controversies. He has a hearty dislike for the disputes of the different Sects. He says, He is one and He exists. ^{His} effects of His light and greatness are evident every where. But the questions as to what is His shape, Where does he dwell and what are his "exact attributes" cannot be answered by anyone. Consequently the question of disputes does not arise at all.

در جلالت عقل و جان و قوت شد عقل حیران گشت و جا مبہوت شد 32

31. Ibid, Page 101.

32. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 5 verse 105, Paris Edition.

(The intellect and the soul became decrepit in your majesty
The intellect got amazed and the soul stunned).

ببدوز از عرش و از کرسی پرس گریه یک ذره می پرسی پرس

(Close your lips and do not ask about the heavenly throne and
the earthly chair. If you are to ask (so little as) an atom,
do not ask).

عقل تو چون در رموی خست هر دو لب باید ز پریدن بدخست
33

(When your prudence got burnt over a hair's breadth; both
the lips should be tightly closed from asking questions).

کس نداند که یک ذره تمام چند پرسی چند گوی و السلام

(Nobody knows fully well about the substance of an atom. How
long you will ask and how long you will explain. Adieu !).

The concept that God is the only reality and the actual nature of Him cannot be conceived by human intellect and mind is not at all a new idea and may be traced out in the Indian system of thought without any great difficulty. In Śāṅkarā-śāryya, we, immediately, find a parallel of it when he declares that Brahman (Haq) cannot be characterized by any indicative marks, qualities or attributes, and it is beyond the comprehensibility of the human senses. He further adds that "It is free

from differentiation, and its essence is never non-existent, which is unmoved like the ocean without waves; the ever-free; of indivisible form; that which, though one only, is the same cause of the many"³⁴.

2. God and the World :

'Attār, like other great Sūfīs, while describing the Absolute Being, uses many symbols. In the Mantiq-ut-Tair, it is mainly the 'Simurgh'. However, he compares God to Sun, Sea, Light, King, Beloved, Fire etc. also and explains His attributes through these terms. Thus he says :

تو بدان انگه که سیرغ از نقاب اشکارا کرد رخ چون آفتاب

(So you should know then, that Simurgh (God), from His veil, manifested His Face like Sun).

صد هزاران سایه بر خاک افکند پس نظر بر سایه پاک افکند

(He throws hundreds of thousands⁷ shadows on the earth and then casts His glances on the pure shadows).

سایه خود کرد بر عالم نثار گشته چندین مرغ هر دم آشکار

(He scattered His shadow on the world. Every moment many a bird became manifest.)

صورت مرغان عالم سر به سر سایه اوست این بدان لے ییخز

35

(Oh you ignorant, know it that the shape of the birds of this world, is absolutely His shadow).

This clearly means that Attār believes in the Neo-Platonic theory of the emanation of the world from God. He expresses further, the concept of Plotinus, that the unseen world is included in the phenomenal world, in the following verse :

36 هر چه اینجا سایه را پیدا شود اول آن دیر آشکارا نجا شود

(Everything which casts its shadow in this world, first becomes manifest in that world).

Thus the things of this world (Ālam-i-Majāz) have no reality and are merely the reflection of that world (Ālam-i-Haqīqat).

37 باز اگر سیمرغ نیکشتی نهان سایه هرگز نبودى در جهان

(Again, if the Simurgh were to hide, there would have been not a single shadow in the world).

This idea has a striking resemblance with the Islamic conception of the transitory nature of the world. According to the Moslem

35. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 41, verses 1053 - 1056. Paris Edition.

36. Ibid, Page 42 - verse 1065.

37. Ibid, Page 42 - verse 1064.

theologians, the worldly things are created by God and depend on Him for their existence. They cannot claim any independent existence. Hence they are termed as 'qāim-bi'l Ghair' i.e. 'depending on the other', while God is styled as 'qā'im bi'l Zāt' i.e. 'depending on oneself.'

The world is like a mirror in which the reflection of that "beautiful beloved" may be seen very clearly. But this requires special efforts. Illustrating this point, Attar proceeds to relate the story of a beautiful king³⁸ whom none could dare to see on account of his dazzling beauty. With a view to enable his subjects to have a look at him, he got a mirror fixed before him in his palace in which his reflection was cast and the people were able to see him.

The reflection and the reality are, in fact, one. They may not be treated separately.

38 سایه سیمرغ چون نبود جدا گرجد آگوی از و نبود روا

(When the shadow of the Simurgh, is not separate; if you call it separate, it is not justified).

هر دو خود هستند با هم بازجوی در گزرا از سایه آنکه بازجوی

38. Ibid, Page 42-43 - verses 1070-1102.

39. Ibid, Page 43 - verses 1098-1102.

(Search out again, they are together themselves; Move away from the shadow and then find out the secret).

گرتزاید اشود یک فتح باب تو درون سایه بینی آفتاب

(If you happen to find a gate of victory, you will see the sun in the shadow).

چون تو گم گشتی چنین در سایه ای کی سیر غمت بود همراهی ای

(If you are thus lost in the shadow, how can you achieve the profit of the Simurgh).

سایه در خورشید گم بینی مدام خود همه خورشید بینی والسلام

(The shadow is always lost in the sun; you will see all sun Adieu |).

The presence of the Almighty Sun in the shadows of the world denote the pantheistic state of the poet's mind. We find him, at numerous places, declaring that everything is God and there exists nothing except Him. But at the same time, he follows the Islamic concept of God as a Personality, which creates confusion for the reader. Thus, according to Attār, God is, at the same time, the spirit ^{or} prevailing the phenomenal world, and a ^{One} Transcendant God. He is evident as well as hidden. He is infinite, yet He is manifested in the finite world.

The concept of the shadows and the sun, the beloved and her veil, and the terms Niṣāb and mirror etc. remind us the theory of Māyā in the Upanisadic philosophy. 'Attār says that the entire universe is veiled from our eyes. Its reality is not known to us. In other words the apparent world has no real existence and is a mere 'illusion'. This illusion has been termed as 'Avidyā' (Ignorance) which may be considered as a synonym for the term 'Māyā'. In the Hindu philosophy, Brahman (the Absolute), on account of its association with Māyā becomes the dynamic creator of the universe. Sankarācāryya, the great Hindu mystic and philosopher, in order to explain the plurality in the world gave this doctrine of Māyā, the most prominent place, in his Advaita philosophy.

The word 'Māyā' literally means, deception of the sight, magical trick, illusory image or apparition etc. In the general sense it signifies the cosmic illusion on account of which the Brahman (Pure Consciousness) appears as a creator, preserver, destroyer of the universe and its existence as a supreme power.

Māyā is the 'Śakti' (Power) of Brahman with which He performs His wonderful actions. It is the unreality of the plurality of souls and their environments. The Chandogya Upanisad explains clearly that "a cover of untruth hides the ultimate truth from us, just as the surface of the earth hides

the golden treasure that is hidden inside it"⁴⁰. Similarly the Prasna Upanisad tells us that "We cannot reach the world of Brahman unless we have shaken off the crookedness, falsehood and illusion (Māyā)"⁴¹. In the Svetāśvatara Upanisad, we come across the following extract : "It is only by meditation upon God, by union with Him and by entering into His being, that at the end there is a cessation of the great world-illusion (Māyā)"⁴². It is further stated in the same Upanisad that "the Mighty Lord (Maheśvara) is the illusion - maker (Mayin) and this whole world is pervaded with beings that are parts of Him"⁴³.

'Māyā', according to Śaṅkarācāryya, is illusion, both as a principal of creation (as a Śakti) and as the phenomenal creation itself (as the illusion of world - appearance). It is neither absolutely true nor absolutely false. Māyā is not true as the Absolute is true. Neither it is altogether false. Perhaps it is indescribable (Anirvacanīya).

In the Mantiq-ut-Tair 'Attār explains in detail, the emanation of the world from God. The Prophet, as we have already

40. Chāndogya Upanisad.

41. Prasna Upanisad 1, 16.

42. Svetāśvatara Upanisad IV, 9, 10 (Hume; Thirteen Principal Upanisad, Page 403-404.

43. Ibid IV, 10.

seen, was the light of the unseen lamp, and was the first to appear before God, who made him the origin of the whole material universe and the final cause of it. Hundred seas of light were created through the light of Mohammad and the whole world and Adam and his progeny were created with it. God, then, all of a sudden opened a way to the ocean of secrecy, for that light and then

44 چون پدید آن نور روی بجزایر جوش در روی افتاد از غزنواز

(When that light (of Mohammad) saw the face of the ocean of the mystery, it became enthusiastic from pride and respect).

در طلب بر خود گشت ادبفت بار هفت پر کار فلک شد آشکار

(It revolved round itself, seven times, searching and thus appeared the seven revolving spheres).

هر نظر کن حق نوی او میرید کو کبی گشت و فلک آمد پدید

(Everytime God threw a glance on that light (of Mohammad) a star appeared and a sky became manifest).

بعد از آن ان نور پاک رام یافت عرش عالی گشت و کرسی نام یافت

(After that the sacred light rested and became the High Throne of God and was named as the Chair).

عرش و کرسی عکس و انشخاستند بس ملائک از صفاتش خاستند

(The Throne and the Chair rose from the essence of the light.
Many angels sprang from its attributes).

گشت از انفاش انوار اشکار دزدل پیر فکرش اسرار اشکار

(From his breath many lights appeared and many secrets were
disclosed from the divine mind).

After the creation of the universe, the Prophet becomes the
great divine mystery.

بهر عالم اوست در هر رشته ای مرهم ریش دل هر خسته ای

(He is the divine mystery in every sphere (of life); He is
the ointment for every injured heart).

According to 'Attār, all things spring from God and
after coming into existence, long for the sea or the light
from which they came. Thus the birds originally separated
from the Simurgh, must seek re-union with him, otherwise there
could be no peace for them on the earth. The moths must come
and revolve around the divine candle. All the atoms of the
world are engaged in the same search for Him. In brief all
beings flow from God and return to God.

These ideas, when analysed, clearly show the impact of the Dionysian theory of Cosmology which, in term, is based on Plotinus. God-head, we are told by Dionysius, belongs, at the same time to two worlds; one is the ultimate reality and the other is the manifested appearance. The world of being is an issue of the super-essential state of the ultimate God-head, which, when brimful with its super-unity, must overflow into differentiation.

This descent must be followed by the spiritual ascent of the beings. In other words, the beings must long for the return to God. This can be achieved by a sublimation wherein the beings enable their mind to soar to the level of the higher soul, by rising higher than their personal limitations.

3. Mantiq-ut-Tair as an Allegory :

Allegory literally means a figurative story, or a parable wherein different things are used as symbols to convey some hidden meanings. Since times immemorial, people have been trying to interpret their religious texts allegorically so as to adjust them according to their beliefs and customs. The Christians and Jews were famous for this as they tried to interpret the Old Testament and the Bible to make them conform

with their philosophical and mystical ideas. The name of the great mystic Isac of Nineveh is especially famous for this type of allegorical interpretations⁴⁵.

In Islam also different Sects have been giving different interpretations of the sacred text. Thus the philosophers like Ibn-Rushd (Averroës) evolved special doctrine of 'Tāvil' i.e. allegorical interpretation, declaring the following verse of the sacred Qurān as the basis of his new theory :

"He it is who revealed the book to you, some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the book, and others are allegorical, then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow that part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation. But none knows its interpretation except God and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge"⁴⁶. This, in brief, means that different classes of people find different interpretation of Qurān, according to their own intellectual capacity and the Rationalists also have their share of the external and the hidden meanings of the Qurān.

In his Fash ul-Ma'qūl, Averroës, further discusses and explains his doctrine of 'Tāvil' and suggests that the Qurān

45. Wensinck's Introduction to his translation, Isac's work P. XXIV - VI.

46. *Ibid*, Ch. III, 6.

and the accepted judgement of reason must be interpreted allegorically so as to conform with each other.

Allegorical interpretations play special part in the esoteric doctrines of the Shi'ites. Their infallible hidden Imām (guide) is the chief source for the interpretation of the qurān and the Tradition.

The Sūfis, as already known, cared very little for the external appearances and forms of the things and had developed a very deep-seated tendency to interpret them in their own allegorical way. These interpretations or conception of things were sometimes nothingless than the prophetic revelations for them. The intellectuals, among them, had already compiled their own interpretations of the sacred qurān, which with the passage of time, received great admiration at the hands of the great Sūfi theorists like the author of the mystical work Kitāb-ul-Lumā'⁴⁷.

The conception that the word of God, as revealed by Him, in the qurān was of fixed quantity and extent, never found favour with the Sūfis. They have been insistent that it was only a finite quantity and the Infinite one was being poured into the hearts of His true servants i.e. 'the Sūfis'. These interpretations naturally led to a sharp difference of opinions

47. Nicholson : Abridged translation, Page 30.

between the Orthodox and the Sūfis and at a later stage, became a strong moot point presenting the problems of the Shari'at and the Haqiqat (Law and the Truth).

But, by far, the most favourable atmosphere, for the allegorical interpretation of the spiritual conceptions of the Sūfis, was to be found in the realm of poetry. Mystification of the spiritual values was far more appealing and impressive in their versification than expressing them in plain and simple prose. The symbols selected for different spiritual objects were worldly and romantic. Particularly, in the Persian poetry, the love of allegory, led to a very popular and pleasant admixture of romance and mysticism. The language of the worldly love was now profusely adopted by the Sūfi-poets to convey the sentiments of the Sūfi for his Divine Beloved. The different terms used in this context were meant, in reality for higher spiritual interpretations. For example :

Sharāb does not mean simple 'wine' in Sūfic poetry. It implies "the ecstatic experience due to the revelation of the True Beloved, destroying the foundation of reason".

Sāqi literally, a 'wine-bearer,' is "Reality, as loving to manifest itself in every form that is revealed".

Jām not a 'cup', but "the revelations of Divine Acts."

- Sabū a 'pitcher', meaning "the revelation of Divine Names and Qualities".
- Rukh meaning 'face', is "the revelation of Divine ^B beauty in Attributes of Grace e.g. the Gracious, the Clement, the Life-giving, the Guide, the Bountiful; Light, Divine, Reality".
- Zulf meaning 'tress', denotes "the revelation of Divine Majesty in Attributes of Omnipotence e.g. Withholder; the Seizer; the Omnipotent; the Death-giver; the Deluder; Darkness; Phenomena as a veil concealing Divine Reality.
- Khal meaning 'mole', is "the point of Real ^U unity, which is concealed and is therefore represented black.
- Khatt meaning 'down on the cheeks', denotes "the manifestation of Reality in spiritual forms"
- Ghashm meaning 'eye' implies "God's beholding His servants and their aptitudes. The 'eye' is said to be "Mast" (Intoxicated) or "Bimār" (Languishing) to indicate that God has no need of man, and pays no heed to him.
- Abrū meaning 'eye-brow' denotes "God's Attributes which veil His Essence".

Lab meaning 'lip' is "the life-giving property of God, and His keeping man is existence. The Dahan (Mouth) is said to be "lang" (narrow) as a reference to the fact that the source of man's being is invisible"⁴⁸.

Following the traditions of the Sufi poets like Sanāi Attar composed his splendid allegorical poem Speech of Birds to portray the Sufi's mystic elevation towards union with God. In this symbolic masterpiece, he has endeavoured successfully to paint the picture of the different types of the worldly people, who, although having different nature, aspire for their spiritual ascent. These people have been represented through the symbols of various birds who, when exhorted for the performance of the difficult journey to behold the Presence of the Simurgh, a symbol of the God-head here, speak of their worldly shackles and fetters.

4. The Nightingale :

Thus The Nightingale is the first type, who appears, in this allegory, to portray his character. On hearing the call of the Hoopoe for the precipitous journey, the nightingale, caring little for the surroundings begins to sing amorously,

48, Moini Faiz Kashani, Risala-i-Mishwaq, quoted by Arberry in his Sufism, Page 111-112. 113-114

confessing that the only passion of his life was the love, the love for his beautiful beloved, the rose. In spring times when the rose fills the gardens with its intoxicating fragrance, his joy is limitless. But when, in autumn, the beloved disappears, the mad lover is no more brilliantly eloquent. The reason is :

49 زانکه رازم در نیاید بر بچی راز بلبل گل بداند بی شکی

(Because my secret is not leaked out to anybody; undoubtedly it is only the rose who knows the secret of the nightingale).

من چنان در عشق گل مستغرقم که خود خویش محو مطلقم

(I am so much engrossed in the love of the rose that I am absolutely ignorant of my ownself).

در سرم از عشق گل سودا بس است زانکه مطلوبیم گل غنا بس است

(In my head the madness of the love of rose is gratifying. Because I am contented to have the graceful rose as my beloved).

طاقت سیمرغ نارد بلبل بلبل را بس بود عشق گلی

(A nightingale cannot stand a Simurgh ; For a nightingale, the love of a rose is sufficient).

The Hoopoe, the guide, is distressed to hear this discourse

of the amorous nightingale. The love of the short-lived rose results in melancholy and distress as :

عشق چیز می کان زوال آرد پدید کمالان رازان ملال آرد پدید

(The love with an object which deteriorates presently, creates anguish in (the hearts of) the adepts).

The Hoopoe, then proceeds to illustrate his point with a didactic anecdote, abounding in wisdom and humour. Thus the discourse ends in the condemnation of the love which is transitory and brings distress and anguish in its wake.

As it may be easily intelligible, The Nightingale, here represents the class of people, who are deeply attached to the worldly objects, the separation of which, causes untold misery and heart-burning to them. The worldly attractions lead a man to disastrous results. The roses of desires attain the bloom of fulfilment, but once in a blue moon, but the thorns of anguish and grief, prick the minds for ever. The appearances are deceptive.

خنده گل گرچه در کارت کشد روز و شب در ناله زارت کشد

(The smile of the rose, apparently, pleases you, but in fact leads you to painful lamentation).

The love for transitory objects can never be approved by the Sūfis. On the contrary it is the Divine Love which is the most

essential quality for the spiritual progress. In fact, this is the first and the last pre-requisite qualification for "realising the Sūfī mystery of self-effacement in Divine union". In the words of the Sūfīs Ḥāl-i-Mahabba (the state of Love) forms the main pillar of 'Tasawwuf' and is superior even to Ma'rifat (Gnosis)⁵⁰. In the opinion of Dr. Qāsim Ghānī, Sūfīsm, after passing many stages and absorbing many external influences, became a religion, a religion of the highest love.

The Love forms the essence of all creeds. But it is only the Divine Love which finds favour with the true Sūfī. The story of Ibn 'Arabī, falling in love with an Arab mistress has already been alluded to in the previous chapter. The poet composed beautiful odes while in love.

"Oh, her beauty - the tender maid ! Its brilliance gives light like lamps to one travelling in the dark.

She is a pearl hidden in a shell of hair as black as jet.

A pearl for which I thought dives and remains unceasingly in the deeps of that ocean.

He who looks upon her deems her to be a gazelle of the sand-hills, because of her shapely neck and the loveliness of her gestures"⁵¹.

50. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, P. 118.

51. Ibid, Page 102-103.

When asked by his critics, the theosophist, he categorically denied the charge of a worldly love, and declared "Love, qua love, is one and the same reality to those Arab lovers, and to me; but the objects of our love are different; for they loved a phenomenon whereas I love the Real. They are a pattern to us, because God, only afflicted them with love for human beings in order that He might show, by means of them, the falseness of those who pretend to love Him, and yet feel no such transport and rapture in loving Him as deprived those enamoured men of their reason, and made them unconscious of themselves⁵²".

True love is above all the virtues and the sins, but it requires self-sacrifice, in the very first instance. Hoopoe the guide, addressing the birds, gives the following definition of the Divine Love⁵³

چوں بترک جان بگوید عاشقی خواه زاهد بش خواهی ناستی

(When you say "Good bye" to your life, you may be an ascetic or a sinner, you are true a lover).

چون دل تو دشمن جان آیدت جان برافشان ره پایان آیدت

(When your heart becomes the enemy of your life, sprinkle it

52. Ibid, Page 105-106.

53. Mantia-ut-Tair, Page 40 - verses 1138-1158.

(life) and your way will come to an end).

سَدِ راهِ جانت جانِ ایشان پس بر افکن دیده و دیدار کن

(Life is the hurdle in your way. Sacrifice it, then cast your glance and behold (Him)).

گر ترا گویند از ایمان برای و از خطاب آید ترا کن جان برای

(If you are asked to be free of your faith and life).

تو هم این را و هم آن را بر نشان ترک یماں گیر و جان را بر نشان

(You leave this one as well as that onaset yourself free from your faith and your life).

منکر گر گوید این پس منکرات عشق گوید کفر و ایمان برزاست

(If after this, the non-believer calls you a non-believer, say that love is better than the faith and the heresy).

عشق را با کفر و ایمان چه کار عاشقان را سخطه ای با جان چه کار

(Love has no business with the faith or heresy. Lovers have nothing to do with the life even for a moment).

عاشق آتش در همه خرم نزنند اره بقرش نهند و تن نزنند

(The lover sets the whole heap on fire. A saw is placed on his head and he mutilates his body).

درد و خون دل بیاید عشق را قصه مشکل بیاید عشق را

(Love needs pain the blood of heart. It requires a hazardous episode (behind it)).

عشق را دردی بیاید پرده سوز گاه جان را پرده در که پرده دوز

(Love wants a pain that may burn the divine veil. It tears the veil of life and, at times, stitches it).

ذره عشق از همه آفاق به ذره درد از همه عشاق به

(An atom of love is better than the whole world. A grain of pain renders one preferable to all the lovers).

عشق مغز کائنات آمد مدام یک نبود عشق بی دردی تمام

(The love is always the essence of the whole universe. But it can not be perfect without a pain).

هر که در عشق محکم شد قدم در گدشت از کفر و از اسلام هم

(He whose step is firm in love sets himself free from Islam as well as blasphemy).

گر ترا صد عقبه ناگاه او فتد باک نبود چون در این راه او فتد

(If you are confronted with a hundred difficult times, you may not fear, when you have adopted this way).

The Divine Love, thus, involves the greatest sacrifices and hardships on the part of the lover. It is far above the consideration of 'to be or not to be'. Faith and blasphemy matter little in love. All external forms and ceremonies are to be abandoned and the lover has to be happy with the pangs and lamentations. It is the supreme principle of Attār's ethics which guards the Sūfī from worldly defilements.

But, Attār's conception of love differs from that of his successors, because it clearly shows an abhorrence for the worldly love. He, for example, reacts more like his predecessor Fuzail ibn Iyād than his celebrated junior contemporary Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī and Maulānā Jāmī. Love, from the ascetic point of view required the complete abandonment of the human passions for the objects of the world. This view implies that a Sūfī must not indulge in any worldly pleasure and contain nothing in his heart except the love of God. A very exact example cited by Nicholson⁵⁴ may be of interest here.

"One day he (Fuzail) had in his lap a child four years old and chanced to give it a kiss, as is the way of fathers. The child said, 'Father, do you love me?' 'Yes', said Fuzail.

54. Mystics of Islam, Page 109.

'Do you love God?' 'Yes' 'How many hearts have you?' 'One'.

'Then', asked the child, 'how can you love two with one heart?'. Fuzail perceived that the child's words were a divine admonition. In his zeal for God, he began to beat his head and repented of his love for the child, and gave his heart wholly to God".

In Mantiq-ut-Tair we find more or less a parallel of this example in the story of Sheikh San'an⁵⁵. The Sheikh, having spent fifty years, in Harem (sacred sanctuary) and commanding four hundred disciples, falls in love with a Christian mistress of Rome, who in order to put him in an ordeal, commands him to perform all sorts of blasphemous practices. The Sheikh, inspite of many sincere overtures to return and accompany his disciples to Ka'ba, obeys the mistress to the extent of keeping her pigs and abandoning his long-practised religion. At last, the Prophet, removing the dust of lust or worldly love from the heart of the Sheikh, affords him an opportunity for repentance. The mistress also, embracing the "true religion" comes to the Sheikh and attains the gift of Divine Love.

The worldly love, as we deduce from this anecdote, is a dark veil of dust between God and the Ṣūfī. Sheikh San'an, inspite of his fifty years of ascetic life could not behold

55. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 45-60.

the divine manifestation because ;

دریان شیخ و حق از دیرگاه بودی گردی و غباری بس یادم (56)

(Since long, a very dark (veil of) dust existed between God and the Sheikh).

آن غبار از راه او برداشتیم دریان ظلمتش نگذاشتیم

(We lifted that dust from his path and did not leave him in the dark).

On the contrary, Rūmī is of the view that Majāz (Phenomenal) is a bridge to Haqīqa (Real). Hence the phenomenal love leads to the Divine love :

"Whether it be of this world or of that⁵⁷

Thy love will lead thee yonder at the last".

Prof. Browne's rendering of Jāmī's extract, also conveys the same conception of love :

"Even from earthly love they face avert not,

Since ^{to} the Real it may serve to raise thee

Ere A,B,C, are rightly apprehended,

How canst thou can the pages of thy Quran ?

56. Ibid, Page 57, verses 1480-81.

57. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, Page 109.

A sage (so heard I), unto whom a student,
 Came craving counsel on the course before him,
 Said, 'If thy steps be strangers to love's pathways,
 Depart, learn love, and then return before me!
 For, shouldst thou fear to drink wine from Form's flagon
 Thou canst not drain the draught of the Ideal.
 But yet beware ! Be not by Form belated:
 Strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse,
 If to the bourne thou fain wouldst bear thy baggage,
 Upon the bridge let not thy footsteps linger⁵⁸."

The Sūfi theory of love as a means of realizing God reminds us of the Bhakti movement in India wherein only the love and devotion to God are regarded to be the main channels through which the human souls attain Liberation.

In the Bhāgavad Gītā, three paths, leading to the Brahman (Absolute), have been suggested to the man who seeks liberation from the unending circle of the transmigration of the soul: The path of Knowledge (Jñāna), the path of Action (Karma) and the path of Bhakti (Love and Devotion). By knowledge, is understood the intuitive apprehension of Brahman (Absolute). The path of action implies that it is possible and desirable to pursue the life of contemplation while still

58. Ibid, Page 110; A literary History of Persia Vol III,
 Page

engaged in an active life, without any attachment with the worldly objects. The goal of the path of knowledge and the path of action, then, leads simply to the realisation of an eternal dimension in the man.

But the way of love and devotion or loving devotion or Bhakti, leads a man not only to 'Moksa' (Liberation), the state of Brahman (Absolute), but also to participation in Himself. God, at this stage, causes the souls to enter Him, loves them, and asks to be loved by them.

The Gopis or the cowherd's daughter's love for Kṛṣṇa, the God-Man, is the symbol of the love of the soul for God. This self-abandonment to the divine is the nucleus of the conception of the Bhakti. God is in love with the soul and the soul with God. But the interesting feature of this divine romance is that God plays the part of a male and the soul, the female. God takes the initiative and the souls, on their part, are required to wait passively for the divine embrace. For example, the highest bliss, according to the Bengali saint Caitanya, who flourished in the 16th century A.D. and leapt into the river Yamunā while in a state of the ^{un}controlable ecstasy, was to identify himself with Rādhā, the favourite among the Gopīs, and thereby submit himself to the passionate embraces of his Lord.

For the Indian Bhaktas (devotees) the raptures of the divine love are to be regarded the chief aim. Although the divine love, automatically destroys the cycle of rebirth and leads to liberation of the soul, yet its highest aim is the enjoyment of love's felicity.

"At the sound of 'Sāyujya (being closely linked with God), one of them says, the Bhakta (the devotee) feels hatred and fear. He prefers hell to it.

At the utterance of the word 'Mukti' (Mokṣa, liberation) hatred and fear arise in the mind.

At the utterance of the word 'Bhakti', the mind is filled with joy"⁵⁹.

From the above-mentioned ideas of the Indian Bhaktas it is evident that the conception of the Divine Love occupies almost the same position of importance in the Bhakti movement as in the Sūfī theory.

5. The Parrot :

After Nightingale, the lover, The Parrot comes forward and explains his personal difficulty in approaching the God-head, the Simurgh. The honey-tongued green bird represents

59. Zaehner : Hinduism and Muslim mysticism, Page 191, London 1962.

himself as the Khizr ⁶⁰ or Elias of the birds because of his green dress.

خضر غانم اراغم سبز پوش بگو دانم کرد آب خضر نوش

(I am Elias of the birds and that is why I am clad in green. May be that I drink the water of life someday).

His sweet eloquence is peerless, but he is put into an iron-cage and burns the whole life to drink a drop, of the water of life, from the fountain of Elias. The parrot prefers this water of Immortality, to beholding the Simurgh.

من نیامم در پر سیمرغ نواب پس بود از چشم خضر تم کباب

(I cannot stand the shadow of the Simurgh. A drop from the fountain of Khizr will suffice for me).

Hoopoe, the convener of the meeting of the birds, gives the parrot a bit of his mind, on hearing his false notions, caring only for one's life, deprives one from the sight of the beloved. The life is useful only if you make yourself worthy

60. Khizr or Khizr or Khizar - The Prophet who discovered and drank of the water of life, whereby he became immortal, figures in oriental tradition, as the Wazir of Iskandar and also as Elias and St. George of England, on the supposition that the same soul, animated them by transmigration. His dress is supposed to be green.

of the "friend". Desiring the water of life, in order to become Immortal, is not the goal. Rather, the goal of life, is to sacrifice the life in the true path.

Hoopoe, then, narrates the anecdote of the madman who refused to be a companion of the Khizr, because the latter had drunk to immortalize his life, while the former would to sacrifice his, for the divine beloved.

بود آن دیوانه عالی مقام خضر با او گفت اے مرد تمام ⁶¹

(The mad man, who had attained a high station in the path, was addressed by the Khizr as "Oh perfect man")

ای آن داری که باشی یا من گفت با تو بر نیاید کار من

(Do you propose to become my companion? The mad man replied, "my mission may not be fulfilled with you),

ز آنکه خوروی آب حیوان چند روزه تا بماند جان تو تا دورگاه

(Because you have drunk the water of life many a time so that your life may endure long),

من در آمم تا بگویم ترک جان ز آنکه بی جانان ندادم برگ جان

(My mission is to sacrifice life, because, without my beloved, I do not have the provision for my life).

نی چو تو در حفظ جانی مانده ام بلکه من هر روز جان افشانده ام

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(I am not engaged in preserving my life, like you; on the contrary, I scatter my life daily, in His path).

بهتر آن باشد که چون مرغان دام دوری باشیم از هم و السلام

(It will be better if we remain far away from each other as the birds from the net. Adieu !).

The Parrot is a typical example of the people who perform all their religious ceremonies and enchant hymns only to attain an eternal life. Life, is for them the end and the goal in itself. They desire to become immortal in order to prolong, as much as they can, the enjoyment of the worldly pleasures. They are thus, selfish to the core. They are imprisoned in the cage of self-aggrandisement and misguiding others also.

The traveller, in His path, is always self-less. He does not seek the eternal life. What he wants is, to behold His manifestation and he lays down his life in this cause. Eternal life, in fact, is a by-product of the process. The destination is the union with the Supreme :

جان زیر این بکار آید ترا تا دمی در خود یار آید ترا

(You can benefit from life only if you make it worthy of the beloved, for a moment).

6. The Peacock :

Next comes The Peacock, with hundreds of thousands of embellishments on his feathers. Once, in the heaven, he became friendly with an ugly snake who, eventually brought him down ignominiously, with the most ugly and hatred-provoking legs. Thus the beautiful bird, the Gabriel of the birds, has to remain confined in the present state, yearning to return to heaven. Now, the chief desire of the peacock is :

عزم آن دارم کزین تاریک جای رهبری بشد بخدم رهنمای⁶³

(My intention is (to seek) a guide who may lead me to heaven, from this dark place).

The interesting feature of the situation is that the peacock is desirous of the heaven only and has no longing whatsoever for the creator of it.

من نه آنم مرغی که در سلطان رسم بس بودا نیمم که در دربان رسم

(I am not that bird which may reach the Royalty. Suffice for me to be at the gate)

63. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 31 - verses 795-812.

کی بود سمرغ ز پر وای من بس بود فردوس عالی جای من

(Why should the Simurgh care for me. I am content with my place in the heaven).

من نه دارم در جهان کاری دیگر تا به شمره دید باری دیگر

(If I am re-admitted into the heaven, I have no more work in the world).

Hoopoe, the guide, is, once more, distressed to hear the discourse of the peacock, who, in fact, is a typical ascetic, seeking to attain to heaven for its fabulous pleasures. He is misled by his carnal desires and is searching His house instead of His Presence. Hoopoe, explains the reality in the following verses :

خانه نفس است خلد پر هوس خانه دل مقصد صدقت و بس

(Heaven, filled with lust, is the house of carnal desires. The house of (pure) heart is the only seat of the truth).

حضرت حق هست دریای عظیم قطره خورده است جنای النعیم

(The true presence is like a great sea. "The paradise of delights" is a very small drop).

چون بدریای توانی راه یافت سوی یک شبنم چرا باید شتافت

(When you can find your way to the sea; why to hurry for a drop of dew).

ہر کہہ داند گفت با خورشید راز کی تواند ماند از یک ذره باز

(One who can discuss secrets with the sun cannot remain satisfied with an atom)..

ہر کہہ کل شد جزو را با او چہ کار و آنکہ جان شد عضو را با او چہ کار

(He who becomes the whole, the part has no business with him. And he who turns life, has nothing to do with the limb).

گرتو ہستی مرد کی کل بہ ہیں کل طلب کل پیش کل شو کل گزین

(If you are a man of the 'whole', behold the 'whole', desire the whole, be the whole, remain the whole and select the whole).

In the above-mentioned discourse between the peacock and the Hoopoe, we find Attar, mentioning two important mystical theories :

The man, according to him, had his eternal quarters, in the Paradise, where from his lust and sensuality drove him to the phenomenal world. Secondly the whole universe, including man, is essentially, one with God, emanating from Him like a part from the whole, a drop from the sea, an atom from the sun. The part must have the courage to behold the 'whole' and seek re-union with it.

The doctrine of 'the part and the whole' needs special attention here. 'Attār is of the view that the man comes from Him and the relationship between God and the soul is that of a drop and the sea. This idea is as old as the hills and may be regarded as one of the cardinal principles of Neo-Platonism, where the soul is a part of the world-soul and the return to the original 'whole' is the greatest achievement of this 'part'. Similarly Avicenna, the philosopher-physician, in his celebrated poem 'The Soul' expressed the same ideas.

In fact, the Moslems, ^{have} this conception, on the following verse of the Qurān wherein God commands to the angels in these words : "So when I have made him (Adam) complete and breathed into him of My Spirit, fall down making obeisance into him"⁶⁴. 'Attār believing in the Qurānic version of the creation of man, clearly states in the Jawāhir Nāmah and the Musibat Nāmah that men are also the image of God and are the divine secrets of the pure spirit⁶⁵. Mixture of the divine spirit and the material body presented a wonderful mystery which came to be called as the Man. The creation of a part, from the whole was the strangest talisman.

جزو کل شد چون فرد شد جان بحسب کس نسا زد زین عجائب تر ظلم⁶⁵

65. Jawāhir Nāmah, Page 184 ; Musibat Nāmah, Page 194 - British Museum MSS.

66. Mantiq-ut-Tair, page 5 - verses 125-127.

(When the spirit entered the body, the part became the whole.
No body makes a more surprising talisman).

جان بندى داشت و تن پستى خاک مجتمع شد خاک پست و جان در پاک

(The spirit had loftiness and the body, the lowness of the
dust. The sacred spirit and the humble dust became united).

چون بلند و پست با هم يار شد آدمى العجوبه اسرار شد

(When the low and the high became attached to each other, the
man turned to be a wonder of the secrets).

Summing up the scattered ideas in Attār's verses, we can thus say that, according to him, God breathed His Spirit into His creation i.e. Man and therefore, man, is, ⁱⁿ reality, a part of God or in other words, a microcosm. This means that all men are parts of one whole and they are like one soul. The actions or sins committed by us are to have impressions on others. Junaid may be held responsible for the sins committed by the men of the past, present and the future. This universality finds its expression most explicitly in the following saying of Hallāj : "I know the truth of Adam. I am Adam; I am Noah, the Sea, the Reason, the love and the M-ajesty, I am all the saints and the Prophets. I am all the things. I am hidden and manifested. No doubt I am the breath of God. I am the eternal sun, the full-moon and the model of perfection. I am the

spheres, the Tablet, the Throne, the Chair, the Holy spirit and the Angels etc⁶⁷.

This extreme type of Pantheism has been called as the theory of Wahdat-i-Wajūd or 'Unitarism' and stands as a sharp contrast to other theories of creation, advanced by the Sūfīs before and after the advent of 'Attār.

The first theory in regard to the problem of Creation (Cosmogony) is the philosophy of Dualism. Its exponents, the Ijādiyyahs or Creationists assert that God is one and there was a time when He was alone. Subsequently He created everything from the nothingness. But the world though created by God or the Absolute Reality is separate and conditioned reality. After the creation, there have always been two realities: one is God Himself and the other is the conditioned reality i.e. ^{the} world.

In opposition to this School, the followers of the Wahdat-i-Wajūd, claim God as the source of all existence. He, in their opinion, manifests Himself, by His own command into many different forms. These forms are like the Ideas in the mind of God, but they do not possess any independent existence of their own. Thus the world is apparent and not real. Everything of this phenomenal world takes its form from Him. He is, then, the essence of all created beings. But every manifestation is a

67. Jawāhir Nāme, P. 301 Kulliyat, Lucknow Edition.

different type and it is essential to distinguish between them. It is this differentiation which constitutes the difference in the appearances of the worldly things. To know the reality of a thing means the knowledge of the Divine Reality. A drop is supposed to contain all characteristics of the sea. An atom has the same essence as possessed by the blazing sun. This School found its great exponent in the shape of Ibn 'Arabī who perfected this conception and was responsible for its permanent inclusion in the Sūfī structure. Farīd-ud-Dīn 'Attār, was another champion of this School.

The third School the Wahdat-i-Shuhūd or the moderate type of Pantheism was founded by Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn 'Alā-ud-Daulah, a famous disciple of Sheikh Nūr-ud-Dīn who wrote commentaries on the Futūḥāt-i-Makki of Ibn 'Arabī. According to Sheikh Rukn-ud-Dīn, the world is the reflection of God, and its existence does not depend on manifestation or revelation as considered by the Wahdat-i-Wujūd School. The travellers sometimes are deceived by the appearances of the things and have the feeling of Wahdat-i-Wujūd, but it is simply an illusory image. The light of the stars pale into insignificance before the sun; but it does not mean that they do not exist and cannot emit light. Their light fades away during the day time. Hence what is termed as Wahdat-i-Wujūd is actually Wahdat-i-Shuhūd i.e. the unity of the light.

Wahdat-i-Wujiūd asserts that the universe and beings are the existence of God Himself. But the Wahdat-i-Shuhūd believes in the fact that Adam is conjoined with the reflex or illumination of the names and attributes of God.

7. The Duck :

The next speaker, The Duck, represents an ascetic, with a spotless dress, performing ablution every moment and professing to be endued with miraculous powers :

68 کرده ام هر لحظه غسلی بر سر آب پس سجاده باز انگنم بر آب

(I have bathed every moment, in a proper manner; Afterwords, I have stretched the prayer-mat on the water),

هم چون بر آب چون استدیکی نیست باقی در کراماتم شکی

(Who can stand on water like me ? Certainly there is ^{no} doubt in my miracles).

ز اید مرغان منم بارای پاک دامنم هم جاره و هم جای پاک

(I am the ascetic of the birds. My intellect is pure and my dress and place are always sacred).

من نیام در جهان بی آب سود زانکه زاد بوم من در آب بود

(Without water, the world for me is useless; because my residence is situated in the water).

The fellow whose life depends on water, cannot venture to traverse the interminably long distance on land;

آب در جوی منست اینجا دلم من بخشکی چون تو انم یافت کام

(There is perennial water in my canal here. How can I attain my object on land?)

چون مرا با آب افتادست کار از میان آب چون گیرم کنار

(When I have to accomplish my work with the water; how can I get aside from it?)

The water is the source of life for everybody :

زنده از آبست و ایم هر چه هست این چنین از آب نتوان شست دست

(All creatures are alive on water. Water cannot be abandoned like this).

من را دوا کا کجا د انم برید ز آنکه با سمرغ نتوانم پرید

(How can I know to reverse the path of the Valley? The reason is that I cannot fly with the Sîmurgh).

The water is sufficient to obliterate all the sins of the world.

گرچه در دل عالمی غم داشتم شستم از دل کاب هم داشتم

(Although I had a world of sadness in my heart; I could obliterate it from it as the water was my companion).

"Dependence on water" says Hoopoe, "is stupidity. Only those who are impure, need water, for their purification. Both the worlds, situated high and low are like a drop of water. Hence they are existent as well as non-existent. No foundation may endure on water.

هر چه بنا بر آبی بود گر همه ز این بود خوابی بود

(Anything which is founded on water, will melt away like a dream even if it is made of iron),

کس ندیدت آب هرگز پایدار کا بود بر آب بنیاد استوار

(Nobody has seen the water enduring. How can a pedestal be durable on water ?).

This discourse reveals an ascetic, engrossed in the performance of external ablutions and sacred ceremonies oblivious of the fact that this exhibitionism of purity will lead him to nowhere. It is not the purity of body that counts. Rather it is the purity of heart which matters in the true path.

The Salik (Traveler) cannot rely upon the simple ablutions with water. Literally speaking, water itself is most perishable and anything connected with it is sure to dissolve.

Like a true Sūfī, Attār here condemns the dogmatism and the external forms and estimates the value of worship by the spirit and significance of it. One who is lost in the religious performances, is misled. The journey to the Real One is different and involves great hardships and ordeals. Asceticism, as compared to the true contemplation, stands nowhere. This is, in fact, the first step and if one prolongs at this stage, it becomes a digression from the Sūfī way.

8. The Partridge :

The duck, having taken his seat, is followed by The Partridge, who raises his head from among the assembly, to narrate his hardships and perpetual yearnings, for the hectic search of the diamonds • precious and much-sought-after diamonds are his main passions. Leading an austere life on the mountains, he is, day and night, burning in the love-fire of these valuables.

70 در میان سنگ و آتش مانده ام هم معطل هم مشوش مانده ام

(I have remained between the stone and the fire. I have been

detained here as well as distressed).

نگ یزہ مخورم در تف و تاب دل پر آتش می کنم بر سنگ خواب

(In the flame and heat, I eat a pulse of diamonds. I fill my heart with fire and sleep on the stones).

دل در این سختی بعد از زده خست ز آنکه عشق گوهرم در کوه بست

(My heart has been very badly bruised in this hardship; because the love of diamond has tied me on the mountain).

هر که چیزی دلت گیرد جز نگهر عاقبت آن چیز باشد در گذر

(One who loves a thing other than a diamond; that thing will ultimately, pass away).

ملک گوهر جادوان دارد نظام جان او با کوه پیوسته بدام

(The possession of diamond is a permanent arrangement. Life of that possessor is always attached to the mountain).

من پیار گوهرم در دگر نیستم یک لحظه بی تیغ و کر

(I am a touch-stone of the mountain and a diamond-man. I do not remain without the summit and the waist (of the mountain) for a moment).

نی چو گوهر هیچ گوهر یافتم فی ز گوهر گوهری تر یافتم

(I have not found any diamond like the diamond. I have not seen any diamond more brilliant than this).

Under these circumstances detachment is difficult and to set out for the search of the Simurgh sounds hardly possible.

چون رہ سیرغ راہ مشکلت پای من در سنگ گوہر در گلت

(The way to the Simurgh is hard. My foot is in the stone and the diamond in mud).

من بسیرغ قوی دل کی رسم دست بر سر پای در گل کی رسم

(How can I reach the strong-hearted Simurgh? Hand on head, foot in mud, how can I reach?)

ہمچو آتش بر تنابم ہرزنگ پا بہیرم یا گہ آرام بہنک

(Like fire, I may not turn my head away from the stone. Either I will die or secure the diamond in my grip).

گوہرم باید کہ گردد آشکار مرد بی گوہم کجا آید بکار

(The diamond must manifest itself. A man without diamond is useless).

The diamond-seeker Partridge portrays, in this allegorical speech, the character of a greedy person, who has turned blind with a brilliant flash of the riches of the world. The

dazzling sight of the diamonds, gold and silver renders him incapable of seeing the path leading to the Real one. Worldly attachments are shackles and the man, inspite of all the pains and distress, feels uncontrollably inclined towards them.

But, as the Hoopoe, explains in the following verses, this, in fact, is all illusion. The reality is that the diamond is nothing more than a worthless stone which has been presented as a multi-coloured valuable. On the other hand, at times, it is simply the colour which renders the man colour-blind. The man toils for it and, naturally, finds himself empty-handed at the end. He falls on the thorns of greediness and bleeds profusely.

پای و منقار پر خون چکر تو بسنگی باور مانده بی گهر

(With your feet and beak smeared with the blood of your liver, you are left on a stone without a diamond).

اصل گوهر چیست سنگی کرده رنگ تو چنین آهن دل از سودای سنگ

(What is the reality of a gem ? A coloured stone ! You have turned so stone-hearted due to the madness of the stone).

گر مانند رنگ او سنگی بود هست بی سنگ آنکه در رنگی بود

(If there is no colour, it is a stone. On the other hand if it is colour, it may not have stone).

ہر کراہویت اور رنگی خواست زانکہ مرد گوہری سنگی خواست

(One who can smell does not like a colour. Wise man cannot accept a stone).

The most valuable diamond, which had the whole world at its command, was to be found in Solomon's ring. But, nevertheless, its real worth was nothing more than the fourth part of a dram. Solomon, the wise, when came to know the real worth of it, got ready to say good-bye to all his possessions in order to procure for himself the eternal wallet :

من ندادم با سپاہ و ملک کار می کنم ز نبیل باقی اختیار

(I have no business with the army and domain, I shall adopt the eternal wallet).

چوں اگر تنگیت چندین کان مکن جز برای روی جانان جان مکن

(When the diamond is a stone, do not dig the mine. Do not indulge in soul-harrowing except for the face of the Real Beloved)

دل ز گوہر بر کن ای گوہر طلب جوہری را با بش و ایم در طلب

(Oh seeker of the gem ! detach yourself from the worldly diamond. Always look for the Real gem).

This idea of the detachment from the worldly possessions is the corner stone of Sūfism and is in perfect harmony with the Indian mysticism which exhorts the Yogis to dispel the erroneous belief that the worldly objects are real.

9. The Phoenix :

The next bird, The Phoenix, is arrogant and self-conceited. He is a symbol of power and abstinence. Being a recluse, he leads a life of seclusion, far above the other's reach. Casting bones to the dog of sensuality, he grants protection to the soul. His asceticism is proverbial and his bestowal of kingship to all those who come under his shadow, has become a legend. The greatest kings like Faridun and Jamshid received their high stations from him.

نفس سنگ را خوار دادم لا جرم عزت از من یافت افریدون و جم

(I held the dog of carnal desires in contempt. Undoubtedly Faridun and Jam received their esteemed positions from me).

پادشاهان سایه پرده من اند هرگز ای طبع نه مرو من اند

(The kings have been fostered under my shadow. Every beggar of sensuality is not my man).

نفس بگ را آتخوانی می دهم روح را زین بگ امانی می دهم

(I offer a bone to the sensual dog and thus give refuge to the soul, from this dog).

نفس را چون آتخوان داوم دادم جان من زان یافت آن عالی مقام

(I always cast bones to the (dog of) Lust. Consequently my soul attained this high station).

Everybody is supposed to offer great respect to the king-maker.

آن کشته خیزد ز ظل پراو چون توان بهیچید سر از فراو

(That whose shadow of the feather produces kings, how can he be disobeyed ?)

کی شود سیرغ کر کش یار من بس بود خستد شانی کار من

(How can the refractory Simurgh become my friend ? Suffice for me, this work of King-making).

The bird of happy omen, thus, telling the tale of prognosticating a crown to every head, he over-shades, makes much of himself. He is, in reality, the self-centred mystic, who, shunning all his earthly passions and desires, has assumed wonderful spiritual powers to grant boons to the others. Little doubt that

he can favour others with his high attainments; but his gifts and grants cannot exceed the worldly pleasures. The kingship granted by him is transitory and cannot endure longer. On the other hand it creates snares for the kings themselves. The Hoopoe says :

من گزتم خود که شاهان جهان
جمله از ظل تو خیزند این زمان

(I admit that the kings of the world, today are produced by your shade).

یک فردا در بلا عمری دراز
جمله از شاهی خود مانند باز

(But tomorrow, in distress, for a long time, all of them, will remain without royalty).

سایه تو گزندی شهریار
در بلا کی ماندگار روز شمار

(If the king had not seen your shade, he would not have remained in calamity on the day of Judgement).

Mahmūd of Ghazna, the mighty Sultan, could derive no benefit from his royal position, after his death. His royalty had been fictitious and the true Royalty only befits Him who is the keeper of the world.

حق که سلطان جهاندار آمدت
سلطنت او را سزاوار آمدت

(Only God, the King of the world, is worthy of Royalty)

چون بدیدم عجز ویرانی خویش تنگ می دارم ز سلطان خویش

(When I noticed my humility and astonishment, I felt ashamed of my royalty).

خشک بادا بالهیر آن ههای کو مراد سایه خود داد جای

(May the wings and feathers of that phoenix remain dry, who accommodated me in his shade).

The attainment of sanctity, by leading the life of a recluse, may sometime lead to worldly admirations. It may, as a resultant effect, empower the hermit, to work miracles. But, in the opinion of Attār, the pride and arrogance of the mystic, commanding such powers, misguide him and he goes astray from the Real path. Hence acquiring of such position is of no use in achieving the ultimate Sufic goal of establishing a direct union with the Divine Reality.

10. The Falcon :

After Phoenix, the next in line is The Falcon who claims to be the commander of the birds. He shuns the company of the vulgarity in order to secure for him the hand of the king. He practises mortification in the fashion of the hermits to become

adept in mannerism. The much-coveted company of the king is much preferable to the wonderings undertaken in the search of the Simurgh. To wait upon the king and hunt for him is a pleasure for which, he is ready to sacrifice anything and everything. This high station is the fulfilment of his long-cherished desires.

چشم از آن گرفته ام زیر کلاه تا رسد پایم پست پادشاه

72

(In order to set my foot on the hand of the king, I have kept my eye behind the cap).

در ادب خود را بسی پرورده ام بچو مرا خضای ریاضت کرده ام

(I have trained myself elaborately in manners; I have practised austerity like ascetics).

تا اگر روزی مرا شاهم برند از رسوم خدمت آگاهم برند

(So that if they take me to the presence of the king, one day. They may find me to be well-versed in the art of service).

روزقه ای از دست شاهم پس بود در جهان این بارگاهم پس بود

(Sustenance at the royal hand is sufficient for me. In the world, this court is the most suitable for myself).

من اگر نشسته سلطان شوم بگو که در وادی بی پایان شوم

(To become worthy of the king is better than wandering in the endless Valley).

روی آن دارم که من در روی شاه
عمر بگذارم خوشی اینجا بگاه

(I have the face to lead a happy life in front of the king.)

گاه در شوقش شکاری میکنم
گاه در انتظاری می کنم

(I wait upon the king and, at times, hunt to his liking).

The people, aspiring for high offices, toil, throughout their lives, to achieve this end, which, in their opinion, may bring the greatest pleasure to them. Royal favours and endowments are, but, a very insignificant achievement. A mortal cannot be the benefactor of a mortal. It is only the Immortal King that can bestow the inexhaustible treasures of pleasure on the seeker.

سلطنت را نیست جز سیمرغ کن
ز آنکه بی همتا بشاهی اوست بس

(No body is worthy of royalty except the Simurgh; because He is the only peerless King).

شاه دنیا گردن فاداری کند
یک زمان دیگر جفاکاری کند

(If the worldly king is kind, in another moment, he may indulge in cruelty).

هر گاه پیش او نزدیک تر
کار او بی شک بود باریک تر

(Anybody who is nearer to the king, undoubtedly his fate becomes more doubtful).

دایا از شاه بدتر حذر جان او پیوسته باشد در خطر

(He is always afraid of the king. His life is in a perpetual danger).

شاه دنیا فی الشل چون آتش است دور بهش از وی که دوری کا زد خوش است

(The worldly king may be compared to fire. It is always good to keep away from the fire).

High offices and royal favours are full of perils. A slave-boy, who was in high favour with a very noble king became a physical wreck, because his royal master, inspite of his kindness and bounties, used to practise archery while putting an apple on his head.⁷³

Hence the Salik (Traveller) cannot venture to aspire for the favours and offices of the worldly Sultans. He must not follow the example of the falcon who is entrapped in the phenomenal and ignorant of the Real. The real service could be of Him only.

شاه آن باشد که بهتا نبودش جز دفا و جز مدارا نبودش

73. Ibid, Page 37 - verses 938-949.

(Only He is the king who is incomparable. He has nothing except fulfilment and kindness).

11. The Heron :

Pacified, to some extent, by the Hoopoe, the falcon, makes room for The Heron, who comes forward in a sad and melancholy mood. He is the jealous type, sitting close to the waters, and watching silently the others who come and drink to their fill. The tempestuous water has not even a drop to satisfy his thirst. But, he, on his part, is, day and night, burning in the fire, kindled by the love of water, in his heart.

74 دریا اندوهگین و ستمند بر لب دریای نشستم و دیندم

(I sit on the bank of the river in a miserable condition, always sad and afflicted).

زارد کی آب دل پر خون کنم چون دریغ آید بخویشتم چون کنم

(My heart bleeds due to the craving of water. What can I do if I lament on my plight ?)

چون نیم من اهل دریای ای مجب بر لب دریای بمیرم خشک لب

(I am dying on the bank of the ocean with dry lips, because, it is surprising enough that I am not among the sea-dwellers).

گرچه دریای زند صدگونه جوش من نیارم نکر دازد یک قطره نوش

(Although the ocean produces hundreds of waves, I do not have the courage to drink even a drop).

کز دریایم شود یک قطره آب ز آتش غیزت دلم گردد کباب

(Even if a drop of water becomes less from the ocean, my heart is roasted by the fire of envy).

چون نمی راضی دریا بس بود در سرم این شده بود آب بس بود

(The love of ocean is sufficient for a person like me. In my head, this type of madness is gratifying).

جز غم دریا نخواهم این زمان تا بسیر غم نباشد الا مان

(I cannot entertain anything, except the love of ocean, at this time. May God give me shelter, I cannot stand the Simurgh).

آنکه ادر اقطره آبست اصل کی تواند یافت از سیرغ وصل

(How can one, whose origin is a drop of water, secure union with the Simurgh).

Depressed with an inferiority complex, The Heron,

represents the morbid kind of man who is always pessimistic about his own potency. He has lost confidence in himself and is, thus, unable to dive head-long in the sea of life to bring out the pearls of contentment for him. The periodical rise and fall of the worldly sea is wholly unintelligible for him. Similarly he is unaware of the fact that the depth of the apparently calm sea is infested with terrifying animals. In the words of the Hoopoe:

بدیش گفت ای ز دریایی خبر هست دریا پر نهنگ و جافور

(Hoopoe said, "Oh you ignorant of the ocean ! This ocean is full of crocodiles and other animals)."

Life is ever-changing.

گاه تلخت آب رود گاه شور گاه آرامست او را گاه زور

(Sometimes its water is bitter and, at times, brackish. It is at one time pacified and at other tempestuous),

منقلب چیز است ناپاینده هم گزرونده گاه باز آئنده هم

(It is ever-changing and undurable. At times, coming and going)

The world is a whirlpool of illusion. Nobody could steer through it.

بس بزرگان را که کشتی کرد خرد بس که در گرداب ادا افتاد و مرد

(Many an old-timer wrecked his ship in it. Many fell in its whirl-pool and died).

هر که چون غواص رده دارد درو از غم جانم نگر دارد درو

(Anybody, who like a diver, finds his way inside it, controls his breath, for fear of his life).

در زند و غم در یاد کسی رده از بن بهر افتد چون خسی

(If anybody breathes in the depth of ocean, he, from the bottom, comes floating on the surface like a straw).

Hence the insincerity and deceitfulness of the world is evident.

از چنین کس کو وفا داری نداشت هیچکس امید دل واری نداشت

(This type of person (world) who is faithless, cannot be trustworthy for anybody).

It is highly desirable to seek the shore of this agitated sea, otherwise,

گرفتاز و دریائی بر کن غرقه گردانند ترا پایان کار

(If you do not go ashore from the sea, you will be drowned at the end).

The world, itself, is a manifestation of His Attributes. Like a lover, it is always, impatiently searching for its Divine

Beloved. Hence a lover cannot benefit from another lover. Both should search for their common beloved.

می زنداد خود ز شوق دست جوش گاه در موج است گاهی در خردش

(The worldly ocean is itself in commotion, out of its love, for the beloved, being, at different times, noisy and wavy).

او چو خود را می نیابد کام دل تو نیابی هم از دآرام دل

(When the world, itself, cannot achieve its heart's desire, you will also not secure your peace of mind from it).

هست دریا چشمه ای از کوی او تو چرا قانع شوی بی روی او

(The ocean is but a fountain of His street. Why should you be contented without His Face).

In order to prove the ocean, a true lover, the Hoopce now proceeds to relate the anecdote of a wiseman and the ocean:

دیدم در روی بد ریاشد فرد گفت ای دریا چرا داری کبود
75

(A wiseman went down the ocean and asked "Oh ocean why are you clad in blue ?)

جامه ماتم چرا پوشیده ای نیت هیچ آتش چرا پوشیده ای

(Why are you wearing the mourning dress? No fire, why are you fomenting?)

داد دریا آن نخود را جواب
کز فراق دوست دایم اضطراب

(The ocean, replying to that good-hearted, said "I am restless due to the separation of the Beloved).

چون ز نام روی نیم من مرداد
جامه نیکی کرده ام از درد داد

(As I am not His man, due to my cowardice, I have rendered my dress blue because of His pain).

خفتن بنشسته ام مد یوش من
ز آتش عشقش شده در جوش من

(I am sitting, unconscious and dry-lipped. The fire of His love has produced restlessness in me).

گر بیایم قطره ای از کوثرش
زنده جاوید گردم بردش

(If I receive a drop from His Kaḥsar⁷⁶, I shall turn eternal at His door).

در نه چون من صد هزاران خشک لب
من بمیرد و در ره او روز و شب

(Otherwise, hundreds of thousands of dry-lipped die in His way, day and night).

From the above verses, it is evident that Attār believed

76. Kaḥsar : According to the Islamic ideology, a river in the Paradise, whence all the rivers derive their source.

in the theory that all things, comprising the phenomenal world, remember their original place of emanation and are always striving to regain it. The whole world is like a fountain, taking its origin from the ocean of Eternity. The ultimate goal of this fountain is to seek re-union with the ocean.

In the Mukhtār Nāmeḥ⁷⁷, 'Attār stressing the same point, compares the soul to a nightingale imprisoned in the net of calamity, but, always yearning to return to its original home. "Oh nightingale, you came from the incomparable world, unequalled in beauty, and remained under the veil of matter..... no rest till you return Oh soul ! How are you in this strange world ? How are you while stripped of all your pomp and majesty." The soul is a bird flown from the Throne--if it finds no guide to its home, it is lost."

Another point, which needs clarification here, is that, according to 'Attār, while the way to return, remains open, it is extremely difficult to traverse it and reach the destination. It is because of this unimaginably hard nature of the return journey that makes the ocean styling itself as a "coward" and dress up in blue after the fashion of the mourners. Even the most saturated remains dry here.

77. Kulliyāt, Page 972.

12. The Owl :

The heron is followed by The Owl, who, out of his love for the hidden treasure, remains a permanent dweller of ruins. The inhabited or well-peopled-places do not suit his taste. He prefers solitude for the fulfilment of his desires. The attraction of a hoard for him is much more stronger than the love of Simurgh. Only the sight of a treasure can make him happy.

ز آنکه باشد در خرابی جای گنج
78

در خرابی جای می سازم بربنج

(I make my nest in ruins with much difficulty ; because the place of treasure is also in ruins).

سوی گنجم جز خرابی ره نبود

عشق گنجم در خرابی ره نمود

(The love of treasure showed me the way to the ruins; only the waste leads to the treasure).

باز رستی این دل شدائی من

گرفت رفتی بگنجی پائی من

(If my foot had sunk in a treasure, this lovesick heart of mine, would have been freed).

ز آنکه عشق کار هر دیوانه نیست

عشق بر سیمرخ جز افسانه نیست

(The love for Simurgh is nothing but a story, because His love

is not possible for every insane).

من نیم در عشق او مردانه ای عشق گنجم باید ویرانه ای

(I am not so courageous as to love Him. I need ruins and the love of treasure only).

The love of money blinds the money-minded. A life spent in hoarding the money is a life wasted. This, according to the Sūfī standards, is nothing short of blasphemy. To worship the idols of gold befits the faith of the followers of Samiri⁷⁹ the magician. The love of gold, changes the shape of a man, on the day of Judgement. Hence, the Hoopoe, advises the owl, to shun the desire for the hidden treasure.

بدویش گفت ای ز عشق گنج مست من گرفتم کامت گنجی بدست

(The Hoopoe said, "Oh you intoxicated with the love of treasure. I agree that you will secure the treasure one day".

بسر آن گنج خود را مرده گیر عمر رفته به سر نابرده گیر

(But consider yourself dead on the surface of that treasure. Think your life gone and the journey unended).

عشق گنج و عشق زرا از کافریست هر که از زربت کند او آذریست

79. Samiri : Name of a magician, said to have been contemporary with Moses, and to have made a speaking calf.

(The love of hoard and the desire for gold is blasphemy; one who makes a golden idol is a follower of Āzar⁸⁰).

ز پرستیدن بود از کافری نیستی آخر ز قوم سامری

(Gold-worship springs ^{from} infidelity; you are not one of the followers of Samirī, after all).

هر دلی که عشق زر گیرد خلل در قیامت صورتش گردد بدل

(Every heart that is damaged by the love of gold. On the day of Judgement its shape is changed).

The illustrate his point, Heopoe, here cites the example of a greedy man who, after his death, was turned into a mouse and was seen by his son, hovering round the vase full of gold, left by him in a secluded place during his life time. When questioned by the son, the mouse-father replies :

گفت زرنهاده ام اینجا بگاه میدانم تا بدو کس یافت راه
81

(He said, "I have left gold here. I do not know whether some one has found it or not)."

گفت آخر صورت موش چراست گفت هر دل را که مهر زر نباشست
صورتش اینست اندر من نگر پذیرد زر بینگن ای پسر

80. Āzar : The name of Abraham's father whose idolatry is proverbial.

81. Mantiq-ut-Tair : Page 39 - verses 994-1000.

(The son asked, "Why have you turned a mouse"? The father replied, "Every heart that is filled with the love of gold, look at me, its shape is like this; Oh son, learn a lesson and throw away the gold)."

Thus, condemning the love of gold, Hoopoe, the guide, keeps silent and the last speaker, the solitary sparrow, comes to the fore-front.

13. The Sparrow :

The small-headed Sparrow, appears trembling, from her red-head to the tiny tail, like a flickering flimsy flame. The weak-minded and the feeble-hearted bird is the symbol of frailty, and humility. She compares herself with the insignificant and that cannot even dream to behold the presence of the Simurgh.

82 ہجو مری باز دی زوریم نیست در ضعیفی قوت موریم نیست

(Like a hair, I do not have the strength of arm. In weakness, I am weaker than an ant).

من نہ پر دارم نہ بال و نہ پیر چیز کی رسم در گرد سیر غمزہ

(I have neither wing nor feather; in fact nothing. How can I reach the Venerable Simurgh).

در جهان اورا طلبکاران بیست و صل او کی لائق چون من کیست

(In the world He has many searchers. How can a person like me be suitable for His union).

گر نیم من روی سوی در گیش یا بیرم با بوزم در ریش

(If I turn my face towards His threshold, I may die or get burnt in His path).

چون نیم من مردا و این جایگاه یوسف خود باز جویم ز چاه

(Since I am not suitable for this adventure, I shall seek my Joseph in the well).

گر بایم یوسف خود را ز چاه بر پریم با او من از ماهی بماه

(If I find out my Joseph in the well, I shall soar from the fish to the moon, with him).

On hearing these lame excuses from the sparrow, the Hoopoe, at once, chides the sparrow for her hypocrisy and humility. The hypocrites, in the garb of their humility, conceal hundred signs of arrogance and pride. They represent themselves as weaklings and crest-fallen; but in fact they are deceitful.

مهر گرفت ای ز تنگی و خوشی کرده در افتادگی صد کشتی

(The Hoopoe said, "O You, who, in your despondency and gaity, have shown a hundred pride in your humility).

جید و سادوسی تو شگرم هست این سادوسی و من کی خرم

(I will not accept your artful excuses. This is hypostasy. How can I be deceived by it).

پای در زمین کب را بدوز گر بسوزند این همه تو هم بسوز

(Put your foot forward; no talking; sew up your lips. If you burn, (you will not burn alone) burn with the others).

گر تو یعقوبی بمعنی فی المشی یوسفت ندهند کمتر کی جیل

(If, for example, you are, in reality, a Jacob you will not be given Joseph, do not be so hypocrite).

In the end of his discourse, the Hoopoe narrates the story of Jacob, who was asked by God not to utter the word "Joseph", if he was to retain his own name in the roll of the Prophets and God-sent messengers. Jacob, although it was difficult for him to obey this command of God, lifted the name of Joseph from his tongue, but beat his chest and heaved a sigh from the core of his heart. This amounted to the destruction of all the effects of his repentance. The Gabriel appeared presently and informed him:

گزرا ندی نام یوسف بر زبان یک آهی برشیدی این زمان

(Although, you have not pronounced the name of Joseph from your tongue; yet you have heaved a sigh now).

در میان آه تو دانم که بود در حقیقت تو به شکستی چه سود

(I know who was in your sigh. In fact you have broken your vow in vain).

14. The Hoopoe :

The sparrow having thus been criticised and showed the right path by The Hoopoe, all the birds, at a time, begin to make foolish excuses and now it becomes imperative for the true messenger of Solomon, to guide the assembly in the right direction.

This bird, in fact, is the symbol of a true 'Murshid' (Guide) whose foremost duty is to show the true Path (Tarīqat) to the 'Salik' (Traveller). The ornament on his breast symbolizes that he has entered the way of spiritual knowledge. Similarly the crest on his head is the crown of truth, showing that he has knowledge of both good and evil. He, himself, portrays his achievements and character in the following verses :

گفت ای مرغان منم بی پیچ و یب هم از حضرت و هم یک غیب

83

(He said, "O birds, I am one, who is undoubtedly, a follower of the divine and a messenger of the world invisible)."

هم از حضرت من خبر دار آدم هم از فطرت صاحب اسرار آدم

(I have knowledge of God and I know the secrets of nature)

آنکه بسم الله در منقار یافت در نو بدگرسی اسرار یافت

(He, who carries "Bismillah" i.e. the name of God on his beak, means that he has the knowledge of many hidden things).

But inspite of all these qualities the Hoopoe passes his days restlessly. The reason is that he is not concerned with any person as he is wholly and solely occupied by love for the true king. He is the only person, sought after by Solomon and this merit entitles him to wear a crown on his head. God also speaks well of him, consequently no bird can reach his station.

As for his experience in the spiritual journey, the Hoopoe says ;

سایه در بجز و بر می گشته ام پای اندر ره بر می گشته ام

214

(For years I have travelled by sea and land. My feet have been traversing the path).

وادی کوه و بیابان رفته‌ام عالمی در عهد طوفان رفته‌ام

(I have gone over mountains, valleys and deserts. I covered an immense space in the time of the deluge).

با سلیمان در سفر بوده‌ام عرصه عالم بسی پیموده‌ام

(I have been with Solomon on his journeys. I have measured extensively the bounds of the world).

با دژ شاه خویش را دانسته‌ام چون روم تنها که نتوانسته‌ام

(I know my king very well. How can I set out alone to find him?).

This claim of the Hoopoe that he knows his king fully well is further testified in these words where he gives a vivid description of His whereabouts.

نام او سیمورغ و سلطان طیور او با نزدیک و ما ز دور دور

(His name is Simurgh and He is the King of the birds. He is close to us whereas we are far from Him).

بدرختی بس بلند آرام او نیست حدیث زمانی نام او

(He dwells on an extremely high tree. No tongue is able to utter His name).

صد هزاران پرده دارد بیشتر
هم ز نور و هم ز ظلمت بیشتر

(He has more than hundred thousand veils of light and darkness hanging before Him).

The guide is fully aware of the essence and attributes of the Simurgh (i.e. the God-head) and explains them to the rest of birds in the following verses :

در دو عالم نیست کس راز مهره ای
کو تواند گفت از وی بهی

(In the two worlds, nobody care dare to dispute even a small part of His Kingdom).

وایما او پادشاه مطلق است
در کمال عزت و مستغرق است

(He is always the absolute Lord. He is immersed in His grandeur).

او بجز نایز خود آنگاه که هست
کی رسد علم و خرد آنگاه که هست

(He cannot be contained in the place of His dwelling. How can the knowledge and intellect attain this place of Him).

نه بدو راه نه شکبای از او
صد هزاران خلق سودای از او

(There is no way to Him, no patience in His love. Hundred of thousand creatures are His mad-lovers).

وصف او چون کار جان پاک نیست عقل را سرایه او را ک نیست

(The work of His praise cannot be fully justified even by the purest soul. Neither can the intellect comprehend).

لا جرم هم عقل و هم جان خیره ماند در صفاش با دو چشم تیره ماند

(Undoubtedly, both the intellect and the soul have been left out as dazzled. They have remained blind, with their two eyes, in beholding His attributes).

پسچ و انانی کمال او ندید پسچ بنیای جمال او ندید

(No wise could discover His perfection. No enlightened could perceive His beauty).

It is the foremost duty of the creatures to find their way to the Greater. This is the only path which frees them from the good and evil of the world.

هر که در دی باخت جان از خود نیست در ره جاناں ز نیک و بد بر نیست

(He who loses his life in Him, is delivered of himself. He is delivered from good and evil in the path of the beloved).

جان فانی و قدیم در ره نیست پای کوپان سر بران در که نیست

(Sprinkle your life and set your foot in the path. Set out for that threshold cheerfully).

But, all the same, the path to Him, is not so easy to traverse. Hoopoe, the guide, is of the view that,

دست باید شست از جاں مردوار تا توان گفتی که هستی مردکار

(The hand should be washed of life bravely if you are to be called a man of action).

This sacrifice is reciprocal. The beloved will respond the love of the lover.

گر تو جانی بر قانی مردوار بس که جانان جان کند بر تو نثار

(If you renounce this life manly, the beloved will also give His life for you).

Of all the characters mentioned in the Mantiq-ut-Tair, The Hoopoe is perhaps the most important, and may be described as the pivot around which the whole allegory revolves. He is the knower, the guide, or the 'Murshid' without whom the laborious and dangerous way to the God-head cannot be traversed. A 'Salik' or the traveller of the Sūfī path is like a blind man who cannot travel without the aid of the 'Murshid'. In the words of Attār "Whosoever travels without a guide may fall in a trap, even though he were a lion"⁸⁴.

84. Musibat Nāmah : P.194. B.M. MSS. add 16, 787.

The birds or the travellers have to depend entirely on the guidance of the Hoopoe or the 'Murshid' from the very beginning to the end. In fact "no traveller can succeed without using the dust of the feet of the guide as his collyrium"⁸⁵. As soon as a man enters the Sūfī path, after repentance, he has to submit himself completely to the commands of the guide or the 'Sheikh' who is a holy man of ripe experience and profound knowledge, whose least word is absolute law to his disciples"⁸⁶.

Hujwiri, in his Kashf-ul-Mahjūb describes the purgative way as conducted by the sheikhs in a lucid manner. He writes, "When a novice joins them, with the purpose of renouncing the world, they subject him to spiritual discipline for the space of three years. If he fulfils the requirements of this discipline, well and good; otherwise they declare that he cannot be admitted to the 'Path'.

The first year is devoted to the service of the people, the second year to service of God, and the third year to watching over his own heart. He can serve the people, only when he places himself in the rank of servants and all others in the rank of masters i.e. he must regard all, without exception, as being

85. Musibat Nāmah, Page 194.

86. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, Page 32.

better than himself, and must deem it as his duty to serve all alike. And he can serve God only when he cuts off all his selfish interests relating either to the present or to the future life, and worships God for God's sake alone, in as much as whoever worships God for anything's sake, worships himself and not God. And he can watch over his heart only when his thoughts are collected and every care is dismissed, so that in communion with God, he guards his heart from the assaults of heedlessness. When these qualifications are possessed by the novice, he may wear the "Muraqqa'āt (the patched frock worn by Dervishes) as a true mystic, not merely as an imitator of others"⁸⁷.

The guide, thus, is the only capable personality initiating the disciples into the true path, which itself can be compared to nothing because of its hardships. The battle against one's self cannot be fought successfully without the help of a spiritual commander.

The importance of the guide or 'Pir' has been greatly stressed by the eminent Sūfī Poet Maulavī in the following verses of his celebrated Masnavī. He writes⁸⁸:

May none but the Pir be (thy) master and captain !- not the Pīr (old man) of the rolling sky, but the Pir of right guidance.

87. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, page 33-34.

88. Nicholson's translation : Masnavī : Volume VI, verses 4121-4125.

The devotee of darkness sees the light immediately as soon as he becomes subject (the authority of) the Pir.

What is required is self-surrender, not long toil: 'tis useless to rush about in error.

Henceforth I will not seek the way to the Ether (the highest celestial sphere) : I will seek the Pir, I will seek the Pir, the Pir, the Pir.

The Pir is the ladder to Heaven: by whom (what is the arrow made to fly ? By the bow.)."

At another place, the same poet gives a very poetic description of the guide addressing his beloved friend Husām-ud-Dīn, he says⁸⁹ :

" O Splendour of the Truth, Husāmu-ddīn, take one or two sheets of paper and add (them to the poem) in description of the Pir.

Although thy slender body hath no strength, yet without the sun (of thy spirit) we have no light;

Although thou hast become the lighted wick and the glass (lamp), yet thou art the heart's leader (the Spiritual Guide): thou art the end of the thread (which serves as a clue).

Inasmuch as the end of the thread is in thy hand and will, the beads (of spiritual knowledge) on the heart's necklace are (derived) from thy bounty.

89. Ibid, Verses Vol I, verses 2933-2945.

Write down what appertains to the Pir (guide) who knows the Way : Choose the Pir and regard him as the essence of the Way.

The Pir is (like) summer, and (other) people are (like) the autumn month; (other) people are like night, and the Pir is the moon.

I have bestowed on (my) young Fortune (Husāmu^ʿddīn) the name of Pir (old), because he is (made) old by the Truth, not (made) old by Time.

So old is he that he hath no beginning : there is no rival to such a unique Pearl.

Verily, old wine grows more potent; verily, old gold is more highly prized.

Choose a Pir, for without a Pir this journey is exceeding full of woe and affright and danger.

Without an escort you are bewildered (even) on a road you have travelled many times (before) ;

Do not, then, travel alone on a Way that you have not seen at all, do not turn your head away from the Guide.

In the Hindu mysticism also, the guide or the Guru occupies the key position. Śaṅkarācāryya, while speaking of the necessity of having a 'Guru', writes, "Hence the seeker after the reality of the Ātman should take reasoning, after duly approaching the Guru, who should be the best of the knowers of

Brahman (the Absolute), and an ocean of mercy⁹⁰.

The first condition of approach to a Guru, according to the same mystic, is as thus, "others maintain that the inquiry into the truth of one's own self, is devotion. The inquirer about the truth of the Ātman who is possessed of the above-mentioned means of attainment, should approach a wise preceptor, who confers emancipation from bondage⁹¹". Śaṅkarācāryya is very fastidious in prescribing the qualification of a guide. The foremost quality in Guru, according to him, should be that he (the Guru) should come from the traditional line of the Gurus. Therefore, "even though versed in all the śāstras, a person who does not know the traditional teaching, not being initiated therein, should not be followed"⁹². And the Guru should be a person "who is versed in Vedas, Sinless, unsmitten by desire and a knower of Brahman; who is calm, like fire that has consumed its fuel; who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him"⁹³, "Who do good to others as does the spring, and who, having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and

90. Śrī Śaṅkarācāryya : Viveka Gūdāmaṇi Swāmi Mādhavānanda, P.6 Stanza 15.

91. Ibid, Stanza 32, P.11.

92. Gītābhāṣya, 13, 2.

93. Śrī Śaṅkarācāryya : Viveka Gūdāmaṇi Swāmi Mādhavānanda, P.12, Stanza 33.

death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever".⁹⁴

And further, "there is no known comparison in all the three worlds for the venerable teacher that bestows knowledge. If the philosopher's stone be assumed as such, it only turns iron into gold, but also cannot convert it into philosopher's stone. The venerable guide on the other hand, creates equality with himself in the disciple that takes refuge in his feet. He is therefore peerless, May transcendental. Just as, by virtue of the fragrance, diffused by a sandal tree other trees around it are also full of fragrance at all times, and afford shelter from heat, to diverse beings, so do they that have derived wisdom from the teacher, with hearts full of mercy, emancipate by their teachings all those who are fortunate enough to stand in their presence, from the three kinds of misery and three kinds of Sin".⁹⁵

94. Ibid, Page 14, Stanza 37.

95. Sri Saṅkarācārya : Satasloki (The Century of verses - selected works of Verses 1-2 : S. Venkataramanan, Second edition, G.A. Natesan & Co., Madras.

15. The Way :

'Tarīqat' or the Ṣūfī Path which symbolizes the progress of the spiritual life towards God, contains many stages, which, in turn, must be crossed by the 'Ṣālik' or the traveller, to gain the grand success of his union with the fountain-head. These stages are styled as 'Maqāmāt' in the Ṣūfī terminology. Similarly the different experiences which the spiritual traveller comes across during this journey are termed as 'Ahwāl' or states. Both the terms have been explained by Saiyid Jurjani very appropriately in these words "Ahwāl or the states are the gifts of God and the Maqāmāt or the Stations are the things acquired by effort. In brief, the Hāl is a state that is experienced by the heart of a Ṣūfī without any conscious effort on his part. The best examples of Hāl, according to qushairī is "delight and grief," "expansion or contraction", "yearning", "fright", "fear" and agitation" etc.⁹⁶

'Maqām', on the other hand, as stated by As-Sarrāj, qushairī and Haḡwīrī, denotes the perseverance of the Ṣālik or the seeker in fulfilling his obligations towards the object of his search and strenuous exertion and flawless intention⁹⁷. 'Hāl' and 'Maqām' differ from each other in their general nature also.

96. Risālah, Page. 42.

97. Nicholson's translation, Page 390.

'Hāl' is transitory while the 'Maqām' is durable⁹⁸; Moreover, it is said that 'Ahwāl' are like lightning⁹⁹ and that which continues it is not Hāl, it is only one's thought".

The author of the Kitāb-ul-Luma' enumerates seven 'Maqāms' in Tarīqah and is of the view that after the first 'Maqām', each 'Maqām' is the resultant effect of the preceding one. These seven stations are : 'Tawbah' (Repentance), 'Warā'' (Abstinence), 'Zuhd' (Renunciation), 'Faqr' (Poverty), 'Sabr' (Patience), 'Tawakkul' (Trust), 'Rizā'' (Satisfaction) which is considered to be the last station and the first of the 'States' by some Sūfis. In Qushairī's times, the Khorāsānian School held that 'Rizā'' was a 'Maqām', being a development of 'Tawakkul', whereas the Irāqī School emphasized that it was a 'Hāl'. Qushairī, following the middle path decided that the beginning of 'Rizā'' was a 'Maqām' and its conclusion a 'Hāl'.

The 'Ahwāl' or the states according to the Kitāb-ul-Luma' are : 'Murāqaba' (Meditation), 'Qurb' (Nearness to God), 'Mahabbat' (Love), 'Khauf' (Fear), 'Rajā'' (Hope), 'Shauq' (Longing), 'Uns' (Intimacy), 'Itminān' (Tranquility), 'Mushāhada' (Contemplation) and 'Yaqīn' (Certainty).

98. Kitāb-ul-Luma', Page 42.

99. Qushairī, Page 32&42.

'Attār in his Mantiq-ut-Tair does not deal with the 'Stations' and 'States' systematically. He rather interprets them in terms of Seven Valleys implying seven degrees of progress in the mystical path, explaining here and there different qualities and conditions required for the traveller.

According to 'Attār, the first thing that a 'Salik' has to realise before setting out on the hazardous path is the relation between him and God. He is called upon to understand his position in relation to the universe and the Creator. The Hoopoe compares the Simurgh to the radiant sun, manifesting himself out of His veil and producing thousands of shadows on the earth. These shadows are the birds themselves. If the birds or the souls ponder over this mystery, they are sure to understand their relation with the Simurgh or the Absolute. And once they realise it, they would certainly like to behold Him, which pleasure is not ordinarily attainable, because no human eye is able to contemplate and marvel at His beauty. But, all the same, His bounty is unlimited and He, by His abounding grace has provided every body with the mirror of heart to reflect Himself. Thus, Hoopoe, the guide, advises the birds in this way :

بادشاه خویش را در دل به بین عرش را در ذره حاصل به بین

(See your king in the heart. Behold the sky in the apparent particle of dust).

هراکسی کان بصرا آمدت شایه سیمرخ زیبا آیدست

(All appearances in the desert are only the shadow of the graceful Simurgh).

سایه سیمرخ چون نبود جدا گر جدا گشتی از او نبود روا

(The Simurgh is not distinct from His shadow. To call it separate is to err).

سایه خورشید گم بینی مدام خود همه خورشید بینی والسلام

(You will see the shadow always existing with the sun. You will behold the sun everywhere, Adieu!).

Having understood something of these ancient mysteries, the second question is related to the 'Way' itself. The souls are feeble and the 'Way' to the sublime unknown. How can they traverse it ?

The guide, once again comes to their rescue by clearing the unfounded doubts disturbing minds. It is the Love which is a grand key to this knotty problem. In love, ascetic or libertine, forget everything about themselves, alike. They sacrifice their desires and in the path of love, set fire to all hope of

harvest. In fact, love, loves the difficult things. An atom of love is preferable to all that exists between the horizons. The love opens the door of spiritual poverty and this state ultimately purifies the soul. There remains neither blasphemy nor religion; the body and the soul also disappear. Only at this stage a man becomes worthy of the mysteries. Hence this is the only way which leads to the success. A hundred vicissitudes may come upon you unawares, if you are a true lover, you will not retrace your steps. But, according to 'Attār, divine love should not be mixed with the worldly love. This point has been fully illustrated in the story of Sheikh San'an where the saintly Sheikh, having spent much of his life in making pilgrimage to Mecca, falls in the trap of the worldly love and is freed from its sinful grip only by the intercession of the Prophet Mohammad followed by the bounty of God.

The same story affords us an opportunity to know some more mystical ideas of 'Attār. They may be gleaned from the story as follows :

The struggle of the spirit with body is endless and it takes strenuously long time to be bold enough to face this struggle manly. In the path of divine love, a traveller experiences despair and mercy, illusion and security and many other paradoxical states, but he has to cross all these stages and make a speedy progress towards the goal.

The first and the foremost obstruction is caused by the 'Nafs' or the carnal desires which, at times, compels many a saintly character like Sheikh Sa'nān, to resign to becoming a hog-word. In the words of 'Attār,¹⁰⁰

در نهاد هر کسی صد خوک هست خوک باید گشت یا زنا ربست

[There are a hundred pigs in the nature of every man. This fact may turn you into a pig or compel you to tie the Zunnar].

تو جهان ظن میبری ای یحیی کین خطر آن پیر افغانی

(O you, who are non-existent, you think that this danger was meant for that old man (the Sheikh) only.)

در درون هر کسی هست این خطر سرمدون آرد چو آید در سفر

(This danger is present in each one of us. It raises its head when one sets out on the path (of self-knowledge).)

تو ز خوک خویش گراگه نمی سخت مزدوری کرد و راه نمی

(If you are not aware of your pig; you are helpless, as you are not fit for the path).

چون قدم در ره نهی ای مرد کار هم بت و هم خوک بینی صد هزار

(O you brave man | If you set your foot on the path (of self-knowledge) you will see hundred of thousand idols as well as pigs).

در نه همچون شیخ شور و ای عشق

خوک کش بن روز در محراب عشق

(Kill the pigs, burn the idols on the plane of love; otherwise like the Sheikh, be dishonoured by love).

The 'Nafs' or the evil element in man, is thus, the source of all passions and lusts. If a man kills it, he becomes the master of his destiny. On the other hand, if it remains unchecked, it grows day by day like the fox of Mohd. Ibn Ulyan.¹⁰¹ According to the Prophet "Thy worst enemy is Nafs, which is between thy two sides".

Another point which has been emphasized in the story of Sheikh San'an is the importance of Repentance. In Attār's view sins of all men and women can disappear in a moment of repentance. The Sheikh had strayed from the right path and steeped in sinfulness for a long time; but once he repented and he was granted pardon immediately by God.

بود گردی و غباری بس سیاه

در میان شیخ و حق از دیرگاه

(Between the Sheikh and God, there has a black speck for a long time).

قدیم بشته گز بر خاست

آن غبار اکنون ز رو برخاست

101. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, Page 39-40. See the complete story.

(That dust has been lifted from the way now. He has repented and his sin has been wiped away).

توبه یقین می‌دان که صد عالم گناه از توبه یک توبه بر خیزد ز راه

(Be sure that the sins of a hundred worlds can disappear in the vapour of a moment of repentance).

بمواجان چون در آمد موج زن موج گردانند گناه مردوزن

(When the sea of bounty is waved, the sins of all men and women are washed out).

Repentance, in the Sūfī terms, has been regarded as "the awakening of the soul from the slumber of heedlessness, so that the sinner becomes aware of his evil ways and feels contrition for past disobedience".¹⁰² This, in fact, amounts to Conversion, and means the beginning of a new life of virtue and purity. According to Hujwiri "The penitent is a lover of God, and the lover of God is in contemplation of God; in contemplation it is wrong to remember sin, for recollection of sin is a veil between God and the contemplative".

16. Departure :

Convinced by the wise discourses of the guide, the birds

102. Ibid, Page 30.

or the souls decide to give up their former way of life and, out of their ardent love for the Simurgh or the God-head flock together to perform the difficult journey. But as soon as they see the road to the destination, they are extremely frightened. The entrance to the First Valley is so much deserted and awe-inspiring that fear and apprehension draw plaintive cries from their throats. They gather round the guide for advice and explanation. The Hoopce answers very lucidly and compares the silent and deserted valley to the court of the All-powerful King where only a few chosen are admitted. The king cannot receive tramps at his door. This is like a sanctuary where only the purified souls like Bāyazīd Bistāmī can enter :

عزت این درخین کرواتفا کز در مادر باشد هرگز

(The dignity of this gate demands that every tramp should keep away from our door).

چون حریم عزمانو را فکند غافلان محنت را دور افکند

(When the sanctuary of our dignity sheds its effulgence, the sleepy ignorants are kept at a distance).

سأها بر دند مردم انتظار سآیگی را بار باشد از هزار

(The people crave admission for years so that one out of a thousand may be admitted to this Court).

The state of 'khauf' or fear of God and the state of

'Rajā' or Hope are two wings, with which the Sūfī flies in the atmosphere of 'qurb' or Nearness to God¹⁰³. The salik fears God as he begins to know Him. There are three degrees of Fear:

First is the fear of the common people from the grandeur and power of God. This is like the fear of the children from their father.

The second type is the extreme fear which is undesirable according to many Sūfīs, because it leads to despondency.

The third is the moderate fear which keeps one away from the sins and, at times, incites one to the obedience of God.

'Attār's First Valley implies and inspires the second type of fear. In his own words :

راہ می دیدند پایان ناپید درومی دیدند در ماننا پدید

(They were looking at an endless road. This pain had no remedy).

یاد استغنا چنان جستی درو کاسان پشت شکستی درو

(The wind of detachment was so strong that the vault of heaven was being split by it).

103. Qāsim Ghani : Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf Dar Islām, Page 347.

The travellers, out of fear and awe, naturally seek shelter and guidance from the Sheikh. The guide asks them to explain their doubts and difficulties one by one to enable him to remove them so that they can set their feet firmly on the true path.

17. Speech of the First Bird :

The first soul inquires about the position of the guide himself. He is of the same mettle as the other souls, but stands out from others and is but in a privileged position. What could be the reason for it ?

چرگنه آمد ز جان و جسم ما
رقم تو صفاتی و دردی قسم ما

(What sins of the body and soul have we committed that you have shared the pure wine while we have been given its residue).

The knowledge of the guide, as compared to the ignorance of the followers, is unintelligible.

The answer of the guide to this question, about his own station, is very simple and precise. It cannot be purchased by gold or silver. Even the obedience alone cannot bring this fruit, although it is very essential. In fact this is the result of our glance from the true Solomon.

تا سلیمان بر تو اندازد نظر

تو بطاعت عمر خودی بر بسر

104

(Lead your life in obedience so that (the true) Solomon may cast His glance on you).

هر چه گویم بیشتر زان آمدی

چون تو مقبول سلیمان آمدی

(When you are the chosen one of Solomon, your praise is beyond any measure).

This point is further illustrated by anecdotes. In the first one, the fortunate king Mahmūd, changes the luck of the poor fisher boy by throwing his net in the water to have a catch of a hundred fish for him. A glance of kindness makes the boy an equal of the Sultān himself, thus proving the above assertion.

In another anecdote the same lucky king Mahmūd raises the value of the thorns of a poor wood-cutter a hundred times by simply touching them.

تا چو اودی دست برخام نهاد

تا مرادی خاری بایام نهاد

(The disappointment placed many a thorn in my way, until a person like him put his hand on my brambles).

گرچه این خاریت ارزان ارزداین چون ز روت اوت صد جان ارزداین

(Although this is a faggot of thorns and is quite cheap, yet when he touches it, it costs a hundred lives).

In brief, the Grace of God is not the result of any mental or physical process, but depends entirely on His will and favour. He bestows this gift on the chosen ones whom He has created with the capacity for receiving it.

18. The Second Bird :

The second soul is so conscious of her worthlessness that it appears futile to her to undertake this journey. The Valley is uncrossable and the difficulties unsurmountable.

واوی دور است در راه مشکش من بمرم درختین من زبش

(The valley is distant and the road difficult, I will die at the first stage).

کوه های آتشین در راه بیت این چنین کاری نه کار هر بیت

(There are many volcanoes in the way. It is not expedient for everybody to engage in such an enterprise).

صد هزاران سر در این راه گوی شد بس که خونها زین سبب در جوی شد

(Thousands of heads have become the balls in this way. Many a blood has formed a stream in this cause).

در چنین راهی که مردان بی ریا چادر می دادند بر کشیدند از جا

(In such a road where many faithful men have hidden their heads, out of shame)

از من سکن چه خیزد و چه غبار گر کنم عزمی بمریم ناز ناز

(What can I do except raising dust? If I make up my mind to set out, I shall die mercilessly).

The reply of the Sheikh is prompt and analysing. It is far more preferable to die in His search than to perish in the filth of this world amidst tears and affliction. The world itself is mindless whether you are young and valiant or old and feeble. The stinking ordure of the world attracts many who perish round it at every door.

صد هزاران خلق همچو کرم زرد هزار می پزند در دنیا بیدرد

(Hundred of thousand creatures die in the world in affliction like the yellow insect).

ما اگر آخر در این میریم خوار به که در عین نجات ناز ناز

(If we perish in this search at the end, most ignominiously, it is still better than dying in the midst of the ordure pitifully).

گر کسی را عشق بدنامی بود به زکنا می و حجامی بود

(Notoriety in love is better than the professions of a sweeper and a barber^a).

Some people presume that the attainment of the spiritual destination is beyond our reach and that no mere upstart^{can go so far}. This may be true or not. But it is decidedly better to sacrifice the life in His desire than to be linked with any worldly business.

Under these circumstances, the best course for the traveller is detachment from the world. But it should be a real renouncement and not exhibitionism. For this purpose one has to die before death, for himself, as well as for the other worldly creatures:

تا بمیریم از خود و از خلق پاک بر نیاید جان سر از خلق پاک

(So long as we do not die completely to ourselves and the world, we cannot have our soul perfectly free).

محم این پرده جان اگر است زنده ای از خلق نامدوره است
از خلق

(The knower of this secret is the knower of the soul. One who is alive to the world is unworthy of the way).

"Die before ye die" is the nucleus of the Sūfī doctrines. In fact, it does not mean the death of any part of the Sūfī's body. It means a moral transmutation of the inner self of the traveller. The self is not to be destroyed. It is to be purged of its evil qualities. When one is free of these bad attributes, he dies to himself and lives in God. In Sūfī terms it has been styled as 'Nafs Kushi' or mortification and its main purpose is to kill the worldly passions and desires through suffering and tribulation. Renouncement of the world is considered to be the right action to achieve this end. True life, we cannot have, unless during our life time, we cross the boundary of death. Maulavi says :

"Of dying before death the secret is this, that after such a dying divine blessings dost thou receive". At another place we come across the following expression :

"Rise thou, O soul, and come thou up before thy death and behold thou thy kingdom and thy eternal home".

"If life dost thou desire, then before death do thou die, O friend".

Indian mystics also strike the same note. According to them, the fruit of dying before one's death is Liberation from the thraldom of Māyā and salvation from the bondage of Karma. In this process one goes beyond all delusion and darkness and finds true bliss and beatitude of spiritual planes just

now and here. The famous Panjabi Sūfi Bhulle Shāh writes :

"If before thy death dost thou die, this dying
shall bear fruit"¹⁰⁵

In Adi Granth of the sikhs we find the following extract :

"Such a mystic practice do thou follow O Nānak, that
diest thou even while living"¹⁰⁶.

But, from the Indian point of view, also, this 'dying before one's death' does not mean going out of the body altogether, and severing one's connection with it. It only means withdrawal within us of our conscious spirit-current from the physical plane into the subtle transcendent realms. This is like closing the external windows and opening the inner ones and thus going to the inner apartment of the self to look on Reality.

But this spiritual way is not for those who are wrapped up in exterior life. The Valley of Search can be covered only by a soul who possesses love because

عشق چون در سینه ای منزل گرفت جان آنکس را ز هستی دل گرفت

(When the love comes to stay in a breast, it lifts the heart of that man from life).

105. L.R. Puri : Mysticism, the spiritual path, Vol II,
Page 156, 1959.

106. Ibid, Page 158.

The love plunges the man in blood, renders him infamous, leaves him restless, kills him and still demands ransom from him. The traveller is made to drink the water of tears and the bread soaked with blood. The redeeming feature of the situation is that be the lover more feeble than an ant, love will lend him strength. But all said and done, the way of search is unending. The object for which the Sūfi sets out is almost unattainable.

کار آسان نیست با درگاه او خاک می باید شدن در راه او

(It is not easy to have dealings with His Court. One has to be become the dust of His way).

پس کی آمد بدین درگاه ز دور سوخت هم بغدخت هم از تار و نور

(Anyone who comes to this Court from distance, gets burnt and ablaze with the light and the fire).

چون پس از عمری بقصدی رسید عین حشر گشت مقصودی نندید

(After a long time, a man reaches the destination, only to be disappointed to know that he has not attained it).

Habī'a, the crown of the Sūfis, spent eight years, in traversing the way to Ka'aba, in crawling posture. But, when at last, she reached the gates of the sacred place, she could not enter, as all of a sudden, she experienced the menstrual trouble. So she retraced her steps and said, "O God, for eight

years I have crawled all the way to your temple and now, when the longed-for day has come, in answer to my prayers, you have scattered thorns in my path".

To understand the importance of such an incident it needs a searcher and a lover of God like Rābi'a.

But whether the aim is obtainable or not, one must search for it and try to attain it unceasingly.

تو یقین دان کیں طلب گر کا فریت کارانیت و نہ کار سہریت

(Be sure that even if this search is impious, it would still be worth while to try it).

19. The Third Bird :

The next soul¹⁰⁷ is despondent and hopeless. A dirty fly cannot aspire for the union with the Simurgh. A sinner who has lost his way, cannot expect nearness to the king.

The guide asks the soul not to be so disappointed, instead the grace and favour of God is to be asked for. Moreover

گر باسانی بندازی سپہ کار تو دشوار شد ای بی خبر

(If you throw away the shield so easily, you will be put into difficulties).

107. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 69-73.

The best course is to repent and seek His pardon sincerely.

گر گنه کردی در توبه است باز توبه کن یکن در سخا به شد باز

(If you have committed a sin, the door of repentance is open. Repent as this door will not close on you).

Sincerity in repentance is the pre-requisite condition.

در بصدق آئی در این ره توبی صد نفیحت بیش باز آید بهی

(If you enter this path sincerely for a moment, you will come across a hundred gratuities).

The anecdote of a sinner who repented bitterly thrice and was pardoned by the Almighty is a clear proof of His grace, favour and magnanimity. The criminals who are reduced to miserable states can also secure forgiveness from His door. His bounty is unlimited and the people who acknowledge their perfidy and wish to return to Him, find Him waiting for them.

God's mercy does not distinguish between an idol-worshipper and an idol-breaker. The former is equally entitled to His grace. The angel Gabriel is astonished to find an idol-worshipper, in a Roman monastery receiving a favourable response to his prayers. When asked about this mystery, God replies :

حق تعالی گفت هستن دل سیاه من ندانم زان غلط کردست راه

(His heart is darkened. Due to his ignorance, he has lost the right path).

هم کنون را بشویم در پیشگاه
لطف ما خواهد شد ادا عذر خواه

(I will admit him to the high station and my kindness will pardon him).

God's mercy is a radiant sun which reaches the smallest atom. God even rebukes the Prophets for the sake of unbelievers. He is merciful to those who are themselves without mercy. Korah called the Prophet Moses, seventy times but he did not reply. God out of pity for Korah, rebuked Moses for being so callous.

تو ندانستی هیچ بار ادا جواب
گر بزاری یک دم کردی خطاب

(You did not reply him at all. If he had addressed me once in his lamentation.)

شاخ شرک از جان او برکندمی
خلعت دین در پیش انگذمی

(I would have torn off the branch of polytheism from his soul and covered his body with a vestment of faith).

کردی ای موسی بصد در دشمنی
خاکارش سرفرو دادی بخاک

(O Moses, you have caused to perish very painfully. Like the dust, you have cast him into the earth).

گرتو ادا آفریده بوده ای
در عذابش آرمیده بوده ای

(If you had created him, could you take rest while he was in agony?).

The Sufie theory that all existence, thought and action are really divine implies that even the sin and infidelity are effects of the divine activity and belong to the divine perfection. Yet some attributes of God i.e. some aspects in which God manifests Himself, such as majesty and wrath are relatively less perfect than others, such as beauty and mercy. The last attribute of God has been extremely emphasized by all the great Sufis. His mercy is not limited to anyone creed. The grace of God is common to all. The great Spanish mystic Saint Teresa claims that all are called to it if they only follow the necessary discipline. "Remember that the Lord invites all He says without restriction "Come ye all". I hold it for certain that all those who will not tarry on the way shall receive this quickening water (of mercy and grace)"¹⁰⁸.

In a vivid description of her mystical experience, Santa Teresa compares the soul to a garden which is saturated with an abundance corresponding to the influx of grace. The soul is like a fountain where the water of God's mercy and grace springs directly from the divine source. 'Attār finally

108. Jacques De Marquette : Comparative Mysticism, Page 148-149.

compares the divine mercy to a river which is flooded by the drops of our tears and apology.

بست دریا با بی فضلتش بی دریغ عذر خواه جرم ما اشکت و میغ

(The rivers of His bounty are limitless; The tears and the clouds (of sighs) are the apologies of our sins).

آنکه بر بی رحمان رحمت کند اصل رحمت را اولی نعمت کند

(He who is merciful to the merciless, highly favours the compassionate men).

20. The Fourth Bird :

The fourth soul is fickle-minded, and does everything half-heartedly. She has no stability in her behaviour and like eunuchs she is neither full man nor full woman. Thus she herself admits:

گاه رندم گاه زاهد گاه هست گاه نیست و نیست و است
109

(Sometimes I am wanton and dissolute, at other times I am abstinent; Sometimes I possess something, at other times I have nothing with me).

گاه نفسم در خرابات افکند گاه جانم در شاجات افکند

(Sometimes my carnal desires drag me to the tavern; at other times my good spirit draws me to prayer).

گه بر دتا بگرم دیوارا هم گه فرشته باره آورد تا گهم

(Sometimes Satan misguides me in no time; at other times Angel guides me back to the right path).

من میان هر دو چیز ^{صبر} آن مانده ام چون گنم در چاه و زندان مانده ام

(I have been left in a state of astonishment, between the two. What shall I do ? I am in a pit and the prison).

This dual nature of the seeker is a matter of common-place for the guide. He consoles the effeminate soul saying that if we had been guiltless from the very beginning, God would not have had the need to send His Prophets and Messengers to guide us. But, nevertheless, the main cause of our affliction lies in the fact that we keep on burning in the "Bakehouse" of lethargy and yet are full of idle desires :

چون تو دایم نفس گداز پیوری کمتر آید از منت گوهری

(When you continue to feel the dog of your desires, you are like a eunuch who is not of a good stock).

The seeker is expected to concentrate his mind on one object only i.e. the union with God. If he is double-minded and goes changing his mind, he is worse than a eunuch. Shibli, the

great Sūfī, was once found sitting among the eunuchs. When asked about the cause of sharing a common place with these grotesque creatures he replied : "The eunuchs are neither men nor women. In the spiritual way I am no better than these creatures; because I am sinking in inertia and lethargy and am ashamed of my virility". Firmness and sincerity require that when you appear like a Sūfī, you must not conceal idols under your Khirgā¹¹⁰.

چون ترا صدت بود در زیر دلق چون نمائی خوشی را صوفی بخلق

(When you are hiding a hundred idols under your cloak, why do you appear, like a Sūfī in public ?).

The mantle of resignation or Khirgā is a symbol of perfect peace. The anecdote of those two Sūfis who, in their spiritual dresses, were quarreling and abusing each other, before the tribunal, is very instructive. The judge, a purely worldly man, could not help advising these so-called students of divine mysteries in these terms.

گر شما هستی اهل جنگ و کین این لباس از سر بر اندازید

(If you are vindictive and violent, better cast off this dress of the Sūfis).

110. A garment made of patches and shreds, a patched cloak, worn by the Sūfis.

جامه تسلیم دبر کرده آید این خصومت از چه در سر کرده آید

(You are wearing a mantle of submission to the will of God, why do you fight ?)

منکلفانی ام نه مرد مستوی زین رقع شرم می دارم قوی

(I am a judge and not a spiritual man, (Like you) still, I am very much ashamed for this Khirqa).

The spiritual path or the way of love requires of the seeker that all the prejudices and duplicity should be cast to the wind. Salik is expected to be selfless. The fear of death does not exist for the true lover. The lustful can be recognized through his behaviour. The story of the lover of the Egyptian king illustrates this point. The king asked the artificial lover to choose one of the two ^{lk}kings - either have his head cut off or go into exile, When the self-styled lover preferred to be exiled, the king ordered him to be ^{be-}headed. The man was not true in his love and was not whole-hearted, otherwise, he would have lost his head than leave the object of his love.

هر که در عشق من سر دارد او مدعیست و دامن تر دارد او

(He who cares for his head, in love, is a braggart and a sinner).

21. The Fifth Bird :

The fifth soul is very much over-powered by the carnal desire which is here compared to a dog. This dog of desire appears so attractive that it is constantly fed upon lies and dishonesty. The strangest feature of the situation is that the dog of desire is the greatest enemy of its own master. It is the thief of the way to God. It hinders the journey to the spiritual guide. If you trample it underfoot it may become more happy.

نفس مگ هرگز نشد وفادار بهم می ندانم تا ز دوستش جان بدم
111

(The dog of desire has never been faithful to me. I know not how to get rid of it).

در محابب مانده ام زین بی وفا تا چرامی او قدر در آشنا

(I have been wonderstruck on account of this unfaithful. Why does it attack its own friend ?)

Other qualities of this dog of desire are :

نفس تو هم احوال و هم امور است هم گفتم کاهل هم کافراست

(Your evil spirit is one-eyed and squinting. It is a dog, very lazy and blasphemous).

نہت روی آنکہ این نگ بہ شود کہ دروغی این چنین فرہ شود

(There is no hope of this dog getting well, as it grows fat with even one lie).

At different stages of life, human soul's progress towards the God-head is arrested by the bodily appetites, in different manners.

بود در اول ہمہ بی حاصلی کو کی و بی دلی و غافلگی

(At the first stage it was all ignorance, disinterestedness, childishness and fruitlessness).

بود در اوسط ہمہ بیگانگی در جوانی شعبہ ویرانگی

(At the middle stage, it was all hostility; being youth a part of lunacy).

بود در آخر کہ پیری بود کار جان حرف در ماندہ تن گشتہ نزار

(At the end when it was old age, the soul was doting and the body languishing),

با چنین عمری بھل آراستہ کی شود این نفس نگ پیراستہ

(With this life full of ignorance, how can this dog of desire be trimmed away ?)

The evil self leads to ignorance and wastage of life.

چون ز اول تا به آخر غفلت حاصل مالا جرم بی حاصلیت

(When it is ignorance from the beginning to the end; undoubtedly the result is fruitlessness).

The dog of desire has innumerable followers in this world :

بنده دارد در جهان این نگهبانی بندگان کند آخر کسی

(This dog has many a slave in this world. At the end such a man worships the dog).

صد هزاران دل بر دامن غم می ویننگی ز نمی میرد می

(Thousands perish from grief; but this blasphemous dog of desire never dies).

The most marvellous thing in the world noticed by a grave-digger, who had grown old in his trade was that his dog of desire had seen the dead buried for seventy years, but he himself has not died once, nor for a single moment had he obeyed the laws of God. God sent a hundred and twenty thousand Prophets in the world to save the humanity from blasphemy; but they have not yet succeeded fully. The reason is that the domination of Nafs misguides the disobedient body and the soul

gets polluted. The soul is like a rider who is followed by the dog of bodily appetites :

اسب چنراقی که می تازد و سوار در برابر می دود و سنگ در شکار

(The rider may gallop at a fast speed; the dog runs parallel to him while hunting).

هر چه دل از حضرت جانان گرفت نفس از دل نیز همچنان گرفت

(Anything which is secured by the heart from the threshold of the beloved, is taken away in the same quantity by the body from the heart).

The subduer of this dog is the master of the two worlds :

هر که این سنگ را بر وی کرد بند در دو عالم شیر آرد و رکند

(He who makes this dog a prisoner, his manhood takes into his net the lion of the two worlds).

هر که این را زبون خویش کرد گرد گفشتش در نیاید هیچ مرد

(He who subdued this dog, became peerless among his fellow-men).

هر که این سنگ را کند بندی گران خاک او بهتر از خون دیگران

(He who puts this dog in heavy chains, his dust is preferable to the blood of others).

On the other hand, he who falls a prey to the carnal desires, leads a miserable life, and his end is very tragio. In the anecdote, recording a discourse between the lustful king and the shabily dressed spiritual man,¹¹² the latter addresses the former in these verses :

ای گزته برنگ نفست خوشی در تو انگیزه ز شهوت آتشی

(O you who are happy with the dog of desire, the carnal appetites have kindled a fire in you).

آب تو آن آتش شهوت بهزد از دلت نور و زتن قوت بهزد

(You have been dishonoured by the carnal lust, the light of your heart and the strength of your body taken away).

تیرگی دیده و کمری گوشت پیرگی و نقصان عقل و ضعف هوش

(Blindness, deafness, old age, deterioration of intellect and weakness of mind).

این همه چندین سپاه شکراند سر بر میراجل را چاکراند

(They are all the armies; all of them being the slaves of the commander of death).

The Nafs reduces the lustful kings to the status of an ass, whereas, the man practising self-restraint and self-perfection, though clad in rags is a thousand times better off.

112. Mantiq-ut-Tair, Page 77 - verses 1973-1994.

The former is a non-entity and fit for nothing. The latter, due to the knowledge of the secrets of the heart, makes the Nafs an ass to ride upon.

The theory that the desires and the worldly passions are the source of all sufferings and afflictions is a focal point in Buddhism. According to Lord Buddha, the men are subject to pain and evil, because they are under the domination of sensual passions and selfish desires, that bind them and hold them as prisoners to the personal state. He declares that these bonds and the door of this prison can be broken, if the human beings will resolutely endeavour to resist selfish desires and passions, and to translate their interests and affections from the troubled spheres of sense and emotion into the tranquil sphere of mind and spirit. This process is styled by Buddha as Self-Emancipation and the ^{me}ethod by which this end is to be achieved, is shown in the discourses connected with the Noble Eightfold Path, which, in the words of Dr. Rhys David, is the very pith of Buddhism¹¹³. Nirvāṇa, the ultimate goal of all Arhats, Bodhisattvas, and the followers of the Buddha, explicitly means Enlightenment through extinguishing all desires and passions. It is this attainment which extinguishes the cause and effect of re-incarnation and crosses the sea of Samsāra or the cycle of birth and rebirth. Nirvāṇa, does not

113. Religious Systems of the world, Page 161, London 1905.

mean annihilation^{ty} of individual existence, as often supposed, but the cessation of rebirth, the extinction of passions, and the replacement of suffering by bliss.

The Second Noble Truth of the Buddha, explains the disastrous results of the carnal desire in a very clear and explicit manner. This truth is named as the truth of the cause of suffering. According to it, the main cause is craving or the strong desire, which is in turn, due to ignorance, as explained by the twelve-fold chain (Dvādaśanidāna) of causation (Pratītyasamutpāda). Ignorance (Avidyā) is the cause of the aggregates (Samskāra); the aggregates are the causes of consciousness (Vijñāna); consciousness is the cause of name and form or body and mind (Nāma-rūpa); name and form are the causes of the six sense-organs (Ṣaḍāyatana); the six sense-organs are the causes of contact (Sparsa); contact is the cause of sensation (Vedana); sensation is the cause of craving (Tṛṣṇā); craving is the cause of grasping (Upādāna); grasping is the cause of coming into existence (Bhava); coming into existence is the cause of birth (Jāti); and the birth is the cause of old age and death (Jarā-marana).

It has been contended that the Buddha borrowed this idea from the Sāṃkhya categories. He may or may not have done so but there is no denying the fact that Buddha was concerned with

the practical problem of removing the cause of human suffering, and in order to put an end to the above - explained vicious circle, he advocated the killing of desire and passion, a virtue leading to the attainment of Nirvana, the tranquil extinction.

22. The Sixth Bird :

The sixth soul complains of the deep influence of the Devil on her behaviour. Whenever she intends to enter the right path, the devilish qualities of her mind obstruct her intentions and misguide her. ^She desires to be free from the Devil, in order to enter the sphere of righteousness.

چوں منم کز دی نجاتی باشم وزی منی حیاتی باشم
114

(How can I gain freedom from it ? How can I be vivified by the wine of the spirit).

The Hoopoe replies :

گفت تا در پیش رفت این نفرنگ از برت ایلمی بگریز درنگ

(So long as the dog of desire is in front of you, the devil will run away very fast from you).

What the guide means is that even the devil fears the dog of desire. In other words the Nafs is worse than the Iblis :

عشوه ابلیس از تبلیس است در تو یک یک آرزو ابلیس است

(The flirtation of the Devil is due to your own deceitfulness.

Each of your desire becomes a demon in you).

گر کنی یک آرزوی خود تمام از تو صد ابلیس زاید و السلام

[If you yield to one desire of yours, this act begets a hundred devils, Adieu).

گلمن دنیا که زندان آدم است هر بر اقطاع شیطان آدم است

(The worldly Bakehouse is a prison and the domain of the Devil).

دست از اقطاع او کوتاه آوار تا نباشد هیچ او را با تو کار

(Do not interfere in devil's domain; so that he may have no business with you).

23. The Seventh Bird :

This soul is extremely avaricious to possess gold and is prepared to sacrifice everything to achieve it. She is so dazzled by the exterior forms of the glittering worldly objects that the value of the spiritual goal never dawns upon her. Seduced by colour like a child, she is unable to understand the worthlessness of a thing which detaches the human being from God.

In the opinion of the Hoopoe, possession of gold could be beneficial only in one case. The possessor should distribute his possession indiscriminately. This is the only way to secure good fortune in the world. Detachment from the worldly possessions is the way to the ultimate goal:

هر چه هست آن ترک می باید گرفت ز آنکه هم جان ترک می باید گرفت
115

(All of your possessions should be renounced, because the life is also to be sacrificed in this way).

The worldly possessions are like fetters and the world a deep pit. One who is identified with the love of money falls into it and can never come out.

هر کز از راه زد گمراه بود پای بسته در درون چاه بود

(One who is misguided by the gold, has been bound hand and foot and thrown into a pit).

یوسفی پر بیز کن زین چاه ژرر دم مزن کین چاه دم دارد شکر

(You are a Joseph, avoid this deep well. Hold your tongue, for this has a strange deceivable quality).

The collection of money involves great difficulties, but the result is disastrous. The polluted soul leaves the body in

agony and the Simurgh of Reality can never be approached.

مرد دنیا جان و دل بر خون نهد صد هزاران دام دیگر گون نهد

(The worldly man puts himself into untold misery and spreads a hundred thousand snares in different ways).

تا بدست اورد دوی هزار حرام چون بدست آورد بمیرد و السلام

(So that he may secure a grain of gold illegitimately. But when he has got it, he dies, Adieu!).

دارش او را بدو آن ز رطلال او بماند پیر آن ز درد وبال

(His successor is lawfully entitled to this gold, whereas the collector remains in distress for it).

ای ز سیرغ را بفروخته دل ز عشق زر چو شمع افروخته

(O you have sold the Simurgh for gold, your heart is illumined like a candle due to the love of gold).

چون در این راه می نگنجد موی سر نیست کس را برگ گنج دروی زر

(When even a hair cannot be tolerated in this path; how can anybody think of gold and treasure?)

Zuhd or 'Renunciation' is an important stage in the Sūfī path. Junaid Baghadādī has defined it in these words, "the hands being clear of worldly property and heart being free from

greed. "The fatalistic spirit which brooded darkly over the childhood of Islam", writes R.A. Nicholson in his Mystics of Islam, "caused renunciation to become the watchword of early Moslem asceticism. At the early stages "Renunciation was interpreted almost exclusively in a material sense. To have as few worldly goods as possible appeared the surest means of gaining salvation".¹¹⁶

To practise renunciation, one has to adopt Wara' or Abstinence first. Bashr Hafi says that Wara' consists of being free from doubts and self-examination at every moment.¹¹⁷

Shāh bin Abdulla Tustarī writes, "the faith of the man does not attain perfection unless he acts with Wara' and Wara' cannot be without Ikhlas (Sincerity of purpose, purity of motive) and Ikhlas means abstaining from every thing other than God".

Wara' at the last stage, leads to Zuhd. The famous Rūmī explains this stage in the following verses of his Masnavi:

"For the sake of your death-day be dead (to self), now, so that you may be (united) with everlasting Love, O fellow-servant.

Through the curtain of the struggle (against self) renunciation sees the face like a pomegranate-flower and the two tresses of the Desired One.¹¹⁸

116. Page 36.

117. Attār : Tazkirat-ul-Auliya, Vol I, Page 112.

118. Masnavi: R.Nicholson, Vol. III, verses 3760-3761.

(enduring) self-mortification and affliction; continually behold everlasting life in dying to self.¹¹⁹

Zuhd as already explained, was 'Abstinence', at first from sin, from what is superfluous, from all that estranges from God (this is the extreme that the Hanbalis admit), then it came to be considered as Abstinence from all perishable things by detachment of the heart. Here in the mystical sense it means complete asceticism, renunciation of all that is created. Thus the term Zuhd, taking the place of Nisk (its synonym in the older texts) clearly means more, not only than qana'a (moderation and control of one's desires) but also than Wara', scrupulous abstention from the use of everything doubtful in law. In arranging the gradation of the virtues, Misri notes "that the stage of Wara' brings one to Zuhd which Ghazzali places after Faqr and before Tawakkul.¹²⁰"

In Judaism and early Christianity also, the view, that through moderation or renunciation of those things commonly considered pleasant, one reaches a higher spiritual state, was very much liked. This meant the longing to rid one's soul of the defiling corruption of the body. In Judaism, the Rechabites and Nazarites led an austere life, completely abstaining from pleasures and luxuries. In later Judaism also ascetic

119. Masnavi ; Vol V, verse 2040.

120. Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, Page 661, Leiden 1953.

groups such as Essenes and Therapeutae were present.

Some branches of Christianity acquired an ascetic nature as a characteristics. Although the early Christians did not show its definite signs, yet not infrequently it has been read into Paul's cautious words regarding marriage. It has been suggested that early in the first century ascetic notes were being stressed from the outside and were being as heatedly opposed. With the passage of time, these trends became more prominent, leading to a disparagement of marriage and a temporary unwholesome exaltation of the type of life, characterised by the so-called pillar-saints. Even today, in many Christian circles, we still come across the people expressing nervous suspicions that anything pleasant and natural to man is under the wrathful ban of God and will have to be atoned for at the bar of Judgement.

In a word, it was in the second/third century A.^H. that the conception of Zuhd or Tark-i-Dunya (Renunciation of the world) deepened from Hasan-al-Basri to Darānī, became fixed: Renunciation not only of dress, lodging and pleasant food, but also of women (as preached by Darānī). Then as introspective analysis progresses with Muḥāsibī (and with the Malamatiya) stress is laid on inner and subjective asceticism, renunciation of intentions and desires, which leads to the concept of Tawakkul.

24. The Eighth Bird :

This soul is a typical example of the people who worship place and position and derive utmost pleasure out of it. Their world of contentment comprises golden palaces and kingly ranks and they are least concerned with anything beyond it.

است قصری زرنگار و دلکشای
خلق را نظاره او جانفرمای
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(I have a golden palace which is beautiful and refreshing the soul of those who look at it).

عالمی شادی مرا حاصل ازو
چون توانم برگرفتن دل ازو

(I derive a world of pleasure from it. How can I be expected to give it up?).

شاه مرقانم در آن قصر بلند
چون کشم آخو درین وادی گزند

(I am a king of the birds in that grand palace, why, then, should I expose myself to the hardships of this Valley (of Search)).

شهر یاری چون دهم ^{کلی} زیست
چون منم بی آن چنان قصر کا نشست

(How can I foresake my royalty and a palace to sit in like that)

پیچ عاقل نت از باغ نام
تاگزیند در سفر دلغ و الم

(Did any wiseman leave the garden of Irem to undertake so difficult and hazardous a journey?)

The guide is shocked to see this disinterestedness, of this soul, in the higher values of life. The souls who are without spiritual aspirations and energy are fit to become a dog or an attendant in the Hammām (Bath). The world is a fire-place and the palace of the richman is a part of it. Even if this palace is turned into a paradise, it will not endure. The death is sure to render it a prison of suffering and affliction. It would be expedient to stay in this palace only if the death ceased to exercise his power over the mortals.

گر نبودی مرگ را در خلق دست لایق افتادگی در این منزل نشست

(If the death had no power over the people, only then it was reasonable to stay in this house).

The following symbolic anecdotes clearly bring out this reflection of the guide and prove the importance of the death. A king built a very costly palace and furnished it in a beautiful manner with carpets many and other decorations. Once he asked his guest, many of whom were philosophers, "Has anything been forgotten in this palace which may mar its embellishment"? Everybody praised that the palace was of a unique type in the world. But an ascetic stood up and said, "There is one crevice which to me appears a blemish".

گر نبود قصر را آن رخنه عیب تحفه دادی قصر فروکش ز عیب

(If there were no crevice in this palace, the palace of paradise itself would bring gifts to it from the invisible world).

When the king sought the explanation, the sage said :

زادش گفت ای بشارت سرفراز رخنه ای هست آن ز عزرائیل باز

(O you exalted with royalty ! That crack has been opened through Isra'il, the angel of death).

بو که آن رخنه توانی کرد سخت در نه چه قصر تو چه تاج و چه تخت

(May you be able to stop that, otherwise your palace, your crown, your throne is nothing).

The worldly house is extremely comfortable, but the hand of death will turn it into a handful of dust; The transitory nature of the world should always be kept in mind. Nothing endures and it is on account of this phenomenon that the beauty of your dwelling is temporary. So,

بر سر او قصر خود چن دین خاز غش بگرد گشتی چن دین ساز

(Do not be proud of your palace, do not let the courser of your arrogance caracole).

The example of the spider, web and the fly is very befitting.

The spider spins her wonderful web with marvellous speed and alacrity. She garnishes it for her use. When she catches a fly in the web, she sucks its blood and keeps its body to use as her food. Then, all of a sudden, the owner of the house jumps from his place, with a broom in his hand and in the twinkling of an eye, spider, web and fly, everything is gone.

The spider, here, is the human soul, the world, the web and the fly represents the subsistence which God has provided for the man. Now if the riches of the whole world fall headlong into your web, you may lose it in an instant.

گر همه دنیا مسلم آیدت گم شود تا چشم برهم آیدت

(Even if all the wealth of the world falls to you, it may be lost in the twinkling of an eye).

Life is nothing more than the wind in the flag and the sound in the drum. Naturally the wind and the sound are of less value than the smallest coin. Your life will be snatched away in the same manner as a panther is flayed.

ای سرا و باغ تو زندان تو وای جان تو بلای جان تو

(O you who are imprisoned in your palace and garden ! Alas your soul is, so miserable for you).

در گذر زین خاکدان پر غرور چند پای جان پر غرور

(Leave this dustbin full of (the filth of) pride. How long will you traverse this self-conceited world ?).

چشم بہت برکشاد و رفیع
پس قدم در رہ نہ در گہ بہین

(Open the eye of ambition and discover the spiritual path. After this, put your feet in the way of God and behold His celestial Court).

چون رسانیدی بدان در گاہ جان خود تنگنجی تو ز عزت در جہاں

(When you have conducted your soul to that Court; your respect will cross the limits of the world).

25. The Ninth Bird :

The ninth soul is a lover of a beloved who has taken possession of his reason and intellect. Sensual love has put fire to the harvest of his life. When the heart is on fire with passion, one cannot set out on the great path. Crossing of the Valleys and the hundred trials which this journey involves, becomes simply impossible. The image of the beloved, who represents a body of flesh, blood and moods, is a thief of the spiritual path. In these circumstances, the soul inquires of the guide.

من زمانی بی رخ آن مہ روی
چو آنم بود ہرگز راہ جوی

(I cannot remain without the face of that moon-faced. How can I search that path ?)

درد من از دست در میان درگذشت کار من از کفر و ایمان درگذشت

(My pain cannot be cured now. I am above faith and infidelity)

من چو بی طاقت شدم در کار او یک نفس نشکیم از دیدار او

(When, I am so weak in this love affair that I cannot have a moment's peace without her sight).

خاک را هم غرقه در خون چون کنم حال دل اینست اکنون چون کنم

(How can I bear the hardships of the divine love. Such is my state, what can I do now ?).

The guide is thoroughly familiar with this kind of sensual love which renders the soul incapable of loving the divine beloved. In his opinion the love of the external forms leads one to untold misery because :

عشق صورت نیست عشق معرفت است شهوت بازی ای حیوان صفت

(Love of the visible things is not the real love. O animal-like (man) this is pure lust).

مرد را از آن عشق تمامانی بود

هر جمالی را که نقصانی بود

(Any beauty which is deteriorating, causes loss to its lover).

صورتی از خلط و خون آراسته کرده نام او مه تا کاسته

(You have named "a body of blood and moods" as the full moon).

What could be uglier than a body composed of blood and flesh. Love for such a passing beauty is itself fleeting. True beauty is not visible. The Salik has to seek it in the invisible world:

چند گری گرد صورت عیب جوئی حسن در غیبت حسن از غیب جوئی

(O you seeker of the vice ! How long will you revolve round the visible ? The beauty is hidden; seek the beauty in the invisible sphere).

The visible is the shadow of the invisible. If the curtain is lifted, the Real will manifest itself and the phenomenal world will be lost in nothingness :

گر برفت پرده ای از پیش کار نه بماند دیار

(If the veil falls from the mystery, neither the inhabitants remain nor the mansions).

محو گرد صورت آفاق کل عز با کلی بدل گرد و بدل

(The whole universe is obliterated and the paradoxical conditions appear).

When the phenomenal is so transitory and unreal, and the divine so permanent and real, the lover of the unreal shall die of sorrow whereas the seeker of the real will enjoy eternal bliss. The anecdote of Shibli is instructive in this context. A man was weeping. When the Sheikh asked the reason, he replied:

گفت شیخا دوستی بود آن من در جالش تازه بودی جان من

(O Sheikh, I had a friend whose beauty was extremely refreshing for my soul).

دی بمر داو من بمیرم از غمش شد جهان بر من سیاه از ماتمش

(He died last night and I shall also die of the sorrow of his death. The whole world is dark for me in his condolence).

The Sheikh advised :

دوستی دیگر گزین این بار تو کو نهی و تا نمیری زار تو

(Select, this time, another friend, one who will not die and hence you will not die in a miserable condition after him).

Hence it is the love and friendship of a mortal that leads to sorrow. Hence the best thing will be to love One who is immortal.

26. The Tenth Bird :

This soul is overwhelmed with the fear of death. The

spiritual goal is distant and she has nothing at all for the journey. The fear of death is so dreadful that the mere thought of it may kill her at the first halting place of the journey. Even if she were a mighty chief, at the time of death, she could not fare better. A blow of death can never be defended by anybody. The mortal hands are broken and chopped off like a reed. The guide now explains the reality of life and death. Life, in his eyes, be it long or short, is composed of a few breaths. The mortal is a mere frame of bones; the marrow of these bones having melted away, they are cast into the dust. Life must be followed by death ;

تو نمى دانى كه هر كز زادن مرد شد بجاك و هر چه بودش باد برد
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(Do you not know that one who is born, must die ? That he becomes dust and his remains are dispersed by the wind).

هم براى مردنت پرورده اند هم براى مردنت پرورده اند

(You have been nourished for death. You have been brought here to be taken away).

The nature herself has murderous qualities. The sun is a murderer and the sky an upside down disc. The blood of sunset proves that this murderer, armed with a sword, is busy cutting off heads on this disc. Mortal beings, as compared to the

murderous natural phenomena, are like drops in front of the ocean.

گر تو عمری در جهان فرمان دهی ہم بسوزی ہم بزاری جان دهی

(You may remain in the highest position throughout your life; but in the end, you will die miserably).

The phoenix is a very attractive bird with its long beak full of holes, like a flute. This bird always remains alone and produces plaintive notes from his flute-like beak which have a magical effect on birds and animals. It was from this bird that a philosopher learnt the art of music. The phoenix lives about a thousand years and very clearly knows the time of his death. When the exact time comes the bird makes preparation for his death, gathering round him some palm leaves. The fear of death causes him to utter plaintive cries. His lamentations manifest the sorrow of death and this makes him tremble like a leaf. His clamour attracts the birds and the animals, who, finding him in death pangs, are extremely astonished and most of them die on the spot because they cannot stand this sight. In his lamentations, while the phoenix is just going to die, he beats his wings and produces fire. In this fire, the bird and the fire-wood both are reduced to ashes. But when the last spark becomes invisible, a young phoenix arises from the ashes. In the words of the guide :

یچکس را در جهان این اوفاد کویس از مردن بزیاید بازاد

(Has it ever been experienced by anyone in the world ? Who can give birth to or be reborn after death ?).

گر چو قفس عمر بیارت دهند هم بمیری هم بسی کارت دهند

(Even if you are granted a very long age like the fabulous bird phoenix, nevertheless you will have to die and suffer hardships).

The phoenix is nothing less than an ascetic, living without a spouse and children. In spite of all this worldly detachments, the thousand years of his life are filled with lamentations. His death after such a long age of renunciation and piety is a testimony to the fact that nobody can escape death whatever trick he may use:

در همه آفاق کس بی مرگ نیست دین عجایب بین که کس را برگ نیست

(No one is death less in the whole world. The strange thing is that nobody is prepared for it).

مرگ اگر چه بس درشت و ظالم است گردن او را نرم کردن لازم است

(Though death is a great tyrant, nevertheless we must obey its order).

گرچه مارا کار بسیار افتاد سخت تر از جمله این کار افتاد

(Although we had many hardships ⁱⁿ life, but they were nothing as compared with dying).

The fourth anecdote in this discourse leads one to believe that Attar believed in the cycle of births and rebirths. Jesus drank a little water from a limpid rill and found its taste very agreeable. One of his companions filled a pitcher from this rill and, on the way, Jesus tasted the same water in the pitcher and found it to be bitter. He, in his astonishment, wanted to know the reason of it. The water of the rill and the water of the pitcher was from the same source; but one was sweeter than honey and the other very bitter. The pitcher then answered Jesus in the following words :

بیش عیسی آن خم آمد در سخن گفت ای عیسی منم مرد کهن

(The pitcher started speaking in front of Jesus and said "O Jesus, I am a very old man).

زیر این نه کاسه من بارهای هزار گشته ام صم کوزه هم خم هم تعار

(Over a thousand times, under the nine firmaments I have been modelled sometimes as a vase, sometimes as a pitcher and sometimes as a bowl).

گر کتدم خم هزاران بار نیز نیست جز تلخی مرگم کار نیز

(Even if I am fashioned as a pitcher for a thousand times, I must have the bitterness of death everytime).

درایم از تلخی مرگم این چنین آب من زانست نا شیرین چنین

(This bitterness of death will always make my water so bitter).

The mystery of life is hidden in the shape of death. In order to know oneself, one must strive before life is taken away. Secret of existence should be discovered before the arrival of death. When Hippocrates was on the death bed, one of his students asked him, "Master where shall we bury you after washing and shrouding". The philosopher replied, "Throughout my long life, I have been striving to find me, but could only know that the least hair of knowledge of myself is not evident. How will you find me when I am dead? Anyhow you can bury me anywhere, if you find me".

27. The Eleventh Bird :

The eleventh soul is an embodiment of discontentment. Spending her whole life in vexation, she is ^a poor beggar in the worldly street. Always in a state of astonishment and humility she has never experienced the satisfaction of the fulfilment

of her desires. This discontentment has produced a sense of frustration which, in turn, does not allow her to start out on the road of spiritual knowledge. In this conditions of perplexity, the confused soul seeks the advice of the guide, who explains the secrets of contentment and the transient nature of the worldly pleasures.

گفت ای مغرور و شیدا آمده پای تا سر غرق سودا آمده
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(O you who are given over to pride and self-love; you are drowned in a vain imagination).

نامرادی و مراد این جهان تا بجنبی بگذرد و در یک زمان

(The contentment and discontentment of this world will pass in a moment).

چون جهان می بگذرد بگذر تو نیز ترک او گیر و بدو منکر تو نیز

(When the world passes, you should also pass. Leave it and do not cast a glance on it).

Consolation or disconsolation does not matter much in the worldly sense.

گر تو هستی از مرادی سرفراز از مراد یک نفس چذین مژاز

(If you are elevated by the gratification of a wish, do not be so proud of this momentary consolation).

نامرادی چون می باشد محال

در شدت از نمرادی تیر محال

(If you are in an evil plight, this discontentment is for a moment. Do not cry).

The pains and the hardships are not humiliating. They are in fact, an honour for you, because that which appears to be a suffering, may turn out to be a treasure for the seer. God's bounty is unlimited.

صد هزاران می رسد در هر دم هست از احسان او پر عالمت

(Your world is full of His blessings which reach you in hundreds every moment).

But the problem is that you are ungrateful and do not make effort on His path. One suffering should not lead you to forget His all blessings. This point is further illustrated by the guide in the following anecdote. A good-hearted king who used to bestow so many gifts upon one of his slaves, once gave him a fruit. The slave tasted it and said that he had never eaten so delicious a fruit in his life. Thereupon, the king asked him for a piece and found it to be very bitter. He was astonished and the slave was called upon to explain it. The slave said, "I have received hundreds of gifts from your hand, how can I complain of one bitter fruit?" One bitterness from the

hand of that who constantly showers boons should not estrange you from Him.

گزنادر راه اوست و بس تو یقین می دانی که آن گنج است و بس

(If you experience suffering in His path, be sure that it is going to be a treasure for you).

بمخشان چون سر راه آورده اند لقمه بی خون دل کی خورده اند

(The veterans have not set out on the path without enduring heart rending sufferings).

The real contentment can be achieved only in His way. Even the greatest sufis like Sheikh Abū Sa'eed of Mahna could not secure it because this thing is unobtainable in the worldly sense.

Junaid was once asked, "when can a man reach the state of contentment". He replied, "At the time when he has no desire". The disconsolation follows as long as you do not find the goal.

تا که نبرد دست وصل پادشاه پای مزدت ناکامی راه

(So long as you do not attain union with the king the reward of your feet is the fatigue of the way).

The much-coveted state of contentment does not require simple toiling and striving. Its pre-requisite quality is sincerity and submission. The proud bat continues encircling, in its search for the sun, with its eyes closed. After going round

in circles for many years it thinks itself to have flown beyond the sun as the sun is still not visible. But, the fact is, that in the blindness of pride, it does not advance a single step and remains where it is.

Contentment is a very high stage of moral improvement and self-training in the Sufic path. The Sufi who succeeds in destroying 'Self-will' is described to have reached the stages of acquiescence or Rizā and Tawakkul or 'Trust in God.' When the Salik begins to regard God as the origin of all good and believes that He alone has the power and authority to grant human wishes and that one should not be afraid of or hope from any other than God, he enters that stage of 'Trust in God' which has been technically styled as Tawakkul. "Tawakkul", writes Nicholson, "in its extreme form, involves the renunciation of every personal initiative and volition; total passivity like that of a corpse in the hands of the washer who prepares it for burial; perfect indifference towards anything that is even remotely connected with one's self"¹³⁰. Tawakkul belongs to the third stage (Martaba-i-Lubb) of the Tawhid (union). In the fourth stage (Martaba-i-Lubb-i-Lubb) there is nothing left of the 'Arif (Gnostic) that he may require Tawakkul. Tawakkul has three degrees as shown by Shaqiq-i-Balkhi.

The first is that the Mutawakkil (one who practises Tawakkul) surrenders himself completely and has full faith in

130. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, Pages 41-42.

the Oneness of God. His hopes and fears are from God and none else. The second stage of Tawakkul is that the ṣūfī feels as dependent upon God as the child does with regard to his mother. The first stage is conscious, but the second one is unconscious and automatic. Third stage of 'Trust in God' is perhaps the highest. 'Trust in God' and 'His unity' makes the ṣūfī satisfied with Him and not to be angry with Him on account of anything that vexes him. Shaqīq says, "Let your heart be with Him always, let it not be withdrawn from Him, for a single moment. Beware of anger!"

Bayazīd of Bistām says that Tawakkul means confining life to the living of one day and keeping the mind clear of the worry of tomorrow. It is only by controlling oneself that one can have Tawakkul in the true sense of the word. This is why we notice the mystics asking us to be careful of our Nafs. Rūmī says, "Hark, put trust in God, do not let thy feet and hands tremble (with fear)."

Thy daily bread is more in love with thee than thou (with it)"¹³².

Salik's perfect submission to God's will leads him to contentment. This is the fruit of the perfect love of God and now the ṣūfī has full faith in the fact that no wrong can ever

131. Ibid, Page 43.

132. Masnavī, Vol V, Verses 2857.

come to him from God. There is no error in the divine scheme of things for him. Whatever happens is good and one should be content with it so that God may be pleased with it. The perfect Sūfī does not open his lips for cursing even if he meets with enmity or calamity. To ask for a change in conditions of life is to ask God to change His commands and this is against the Sūfī principles. The contented soul does not pay attention to either the past or the future, she is busy with the present. At this stage she remains unmoved in the midst of sorrow, meets praise and blame with equal indifference. Life and death are mere incidents for her, the eternal drama of destiny.

28. The Twelfth Bird :

This soul is extremely obedient and is always ready to surrender her will to the commands of God and the guide. She is unconcerned with virtues and vices. Her only interest in the world is to obey whatever order is given to her.

ہرچہ فرمایا بجا فرمان کنم گر ز فرمان کرشم تاوان کنم

(I will obey your commands. If I turn my head away from your injunction, I will make amends).

The guide is very much pleased to notice this quality of the Salik because, in his opinion, obedience is the greatest virtue in the spiritual path.

از همه دشواری او آسان تر است

هر که فرمان برد از خدایان بر است

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(He who obeys, becomes free from disappointment. He sets himself free from difficulty, in an easy manner).

طاعتی در امد در یک ساعت بهتر از بی امر عمری طاعت

(Your one hour of serving His will is better than a life-time of devotion without obedience).

هر که بی فرمان برد سختی بسی سنگ بود در کوی اینکس نه کسی

(He who undergoes the hardships of devotion without obedience is meaner than a dog).

On the other hand

آن که بر فرمان گذر سختی می از ثواب خود کند پر عالمی

(He who endures a moment of hardship in obedience receives a high reward).

Trials and ordeals are very beneficial for self-knowledge. The obedient shows his worthiness in the time of such hardships, because he acts conformably with the word of God. Such a man is given precedence and is respected by the great spiritual masters like Bāyazīd and Tarmazī.

29. The Thirteenth Bird :

This soul wants to know the way to the purity of mind. She is free of all bonds and impediments. Whatever comes in her hand must be lost because all the possessions become scorpions for her.

من ندادم خویش را در بند هیچ بر فشانم جمله را از بند هیچ
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(I have freed myself from all shackles. I have cast off all from the fetters of nothingness).

پاکبازی می‌کنم در کوی او بگویم در پاکتی به بنیم روی او

(I am trying to be pure in His way in the hope of seeing His face in the state of purity).

The way, this soul has adopted, is praiseworthy in the eyes of the guide. But, nevertheless, it is not open to everyone. Only those people who are libertine may tread this path. It requires the salik to burn all his possessions, gather the ashes and then sit over it.

چون بسوزی کل باه آتشین جمع کن خاکسترش در روی نشین

(When you have burnt everything with your fire of sigh, collect the ashes and seat yourself amidst them).

چون چنین کردی برستی از همه در نه خون خورتا که رستی از همه

(If you act accordingly, you will be free from all; otherwise bear these hardships until your death).

World is a prison and freedom from it may be sought through detachment. The first and the foremost step in this direction is to be free from oneself.

دستها اول ز خود کوتاه کن بعد از آن بر خیز و عزم راه کن

(First of all get lost to yourself. After that be ready to tread this way).

The allegorical anecdote of a saint of Turkistan further explains it. The old saint was extremely attached to two things of the world, his son and his palfrey horse. In order to free himself from these love bonds, one day he said:

گر خبر یابم ز مرگ این پسر اسب می بخشم به شکر این خبر

(If I receive the news of my son's death, I shall give my horse in charity as a thanksgiving).

زان که می بینم که هست این هر دو چیز چون و دبت در دیده جانم عزیز

(The reason is that both these things i.e. my son and my horse, are like two idols in the eyes of my soul).

Love of the world is an idolatrous practice. Magicians of Pharaoh were the luckiest people, who, with one step firm in religion, relinquished the world with the other.

Detachment or the habitual renunciation of the things of the flesh as a self-discipline for the purpose of cultivating the things of the spirit is a focal point in Sūfism. The conception is equally popular among the philosophers and materialists. But, according to the celebrated Sūfī-theorists like Suhrawardī, the detachment from the worldly objects, when practised by a ṣālik illuminates the heart. On the other hand, the materialists and the philosophers practise it with the object of purifying the senses and thus facilitate the acquirement of the intellectual sciences. "The latter", Suhrawardī says in his work Awārif, "leads to heresy which, in turn, assumes its most interesting form in the so-called Zindīqs, a name given by the Orthodox Moslems, to the different kinds of heretics, particularly those who rejected positive religion and acknowledged only the moral law¹³⁵. These Zindīqs followed the path of renunciation very sincerely and were said to have been under the influence of Manichaean, Buddhist and Jain ideas. Their main sin according to the Orthodox was that their attitude towards life was ethical and reflective rather than religious. One of them, Abu'l Atāhiya (D. 828 A.D.) declared, "The noblest of men is a king in the garb of a beggar (i.e. an ascetic who is in-

135. Browne : A Literary History of Persia, PP 159 FF. 1902.
136. Nicholson : A Literary History of the Arabs, PP 372 FF. 1907.

-dependent of the world and whose passions no longer enslave him) and again, "those who are content with their lot are the truly free"¹³⁶.

Another great personality of the same type is the poet Abu'l Alā al-Ma'arri, who retired from the miserable and sorrowful atmosphere of the world probably under the influence of the Jain ideas of renunciation. Ma'arri was of the view that it was wrong to kill or injure any living creature, even a flea. He practised severe abstinence from non-vegetarian food and wore a dress of undyed wool and wooden shoes. Detachment from the worldly pleasures was an affair of conscience for Ma'arri. But, all the same, it was only an ingredient of the highest virtue for him and he did not consider it as a stepping stone to the Absolute, like the Sūfis like 'Attār. Perhaps the Ikhwān-us-Safā or 'Brothers of Purity' inherited the true spirit of the Sūfī conception of detachment when they inculcated obedience to the divine world-law and love of God, and adopted asceticism for the serenity of soul, freedom of heart, peace with all the worldly creatures, and in the future life, ascension to Eternal light.

30. The Fourteenth Bird :

Another soul explains to the guide that the only thing she possesses is her lofty ambition. She is weak and is not

136. Please see Footnote in the previous page

apt in meditation. The only redeeming factor is her high aspirations.

گرچه هستم من بصورت بلیصنیت در حقیقت هستی دارم ثریف
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(Although I am weak in appearance, in reality, I possess a noble aspiration).

گر ز طاعت نیست بیاری مرا هست عالی هستی باری مرا

(Though I do not have much of meditation, at least I have a lofty ambition.

Hoopoe, the guide praises the bird of this soul, explaining the importance of high ambition in the following verses :

هر چه هست آن چیز شد عالی پدید هر که شد هست عالی پدید

(Everything, which exists, becomes known to the man who possesses lofty ambition).

هر که یک ذره هست و ادوست که ذره خورشید را زان ذره هست

(He who has even an atom of ambition, will triumph over the sun with that little, much).

۱۱ پروبال مرغ جاناهاست

نقطه ملک جاناهاست

(Aspiration is the focal point of the universe. Ambition serves as the feathers and wings of the bird of the soul).

When Joseph was on sale, every Egyptian wanted to buy him. The bid was so high that it reached from five to ten times his weight in musk. An old woman, came forwards, very much excited, and wanted to purchase that unique pearl for ten spools of thread, whereupon the broker smiled and said :

هست صد گنجش بهادر انجمن چه تو چه ريسان ای پیر زن

(His price is a hundred treasures in the assembly (of purchasers) "O old woman you and your spools of thread stand no match").

The old woman replied, "I know that you will not sell him for so little but

لیک اینم بس که چه دشمن چه دوست گوید این زن از خریداران اوست

(It is sufficient for me that my enemy and my friend will say, "This old woman has been among the purchasers of Joseph").

Like this ambitious old woman, one must possess lofty aspirations to reach the boundless spiritual kingdom. Great kings who realised the emptiness of the world, reduced it to ashes,

in order to reach the spiritual realm.

چون بپاکی همتش در کار شد زین همه ملک نجس بیزار شد

(When his ambition turned to the state of purity he got fed up with this polluted kingdom).

چشم همت چون بود خورشید بین کی شود با ذره هرگز بهمانشین

(When the ambitious eye sees the sun, how can it be satisfied with the company of an atom).

The bird of aspiration soars very high. This can rise above the temporal as well as the religious things. A hundred worlds can be sacrificed to achieve the end of self-perfection which is the resultant effect of lofty aspirations.

The world, according to a Sūfī, is like a chest with its lid tightly closed. At the time of death, when the lid is lifted, he who has acquired wings soars away to eternity. But he who has remained without wings, stays back in the chest under the circumstances.

مرغ همت را بمعنی بال ده عقل را دل بخش و جان را حال ده

(Give real wings to the bird of your fortitude. Give your intellect a heart and acquire ecstasy for your soul).

بیش از آن کین حقیر بگیرند سر مرغ زه گرد و بر آرد بال و پر

(Before the lid of this chest is lifted, be a bird of the spiritual way and open your wings and feathers to fly).

31. The Fifteenth Bird :

The fifteenth soul is just and faithful. She would like to know the advantages of these good qualities in the spiritual journey. The Hoopoe replied that the justice is the king of salvation and saves a man from errors. Justice is better than all kinds of exterior worship.

از تو گرانصاف آید و وجود به زمر در رکوع و در سجود
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(If you practise justice, it is better than a long life of prostrations and bowings in prayer).

خود نموت نیست در هر دو جهان برتر از انصاف دادن در نهان

(There is no generosity, in the two worlds, better than justice exercised secretly).

Justice done in secret is always preferable, because open justice, in a majority of cases, tends to become hypocrisies).

و آنکه او انصاف بدید آشکار از ریایم خالی افتد یادوار

(Remember, he who professes justice publicly, often becomes

a hypocrite).

Travellers of the spiritual journey do not expect justice from anybody, except God. Rather they are themselves just to every body. The name of Ahmed-i-Hambal is celebrated because of his erudition. He was pure in mind and knowledge, and used to visit Bishri-Hafī, the famous ṣūfī of his times. Once a man blamed him saying

گفتی آخر تو امام عالمی
از تو دانا تر بخیر آدمی

(You are the Imām of a world and the most learned man)

هر که میگوید سخن می شنوی
پیش این سر برهنه میروی

(You do not listen to anybody, but you like the company of this bareheaded and barefoot).

The Imām replied, "undoubtedly I am well-versed in the tradition and the path, and that I have more knowledge than him, but he understands God better than me". This justice of Imām Hambal should be a lesson for the unjust.

ایمان ز بی انصافی خود بی خبر
یک زمان انصاف ره بیان نگر

(O you who are ignorant of your injustice! Reflect for a while on the justice of the knowers of the path).

32. The Sixteenth Bird :

The next soul asks the guide whether rudeness is permitted in the Court of the supreme. "Could rude behaviour be tolerated there ? Tell me the secret and scatter pearls of your wisdom" The Hoopoe replies :

گفت هر کس را که اهل بیت بود محرم راز الوهیت بود
139

(He who is worthy, knows the divine secrets).

مگر گزشتاخی اورا رواست ز آنکه دایم راز دار پادشاست

(If such a man shows want of politeness to God, he may be excused as he is the knower of the royal secrets).

The ignorant is like a camel-driver. Naturally a camel-driver of the desert cannot be a confidant of a king. If such a man commits such a sin i.e. shows arrogance in approaching the Majesty of the Great king, he cannot be pardoned.

مردا شتر بان که باشد برکنار کی تواند بدوشه را راز دار

(A low camel-driver cannot be a trusty of the king).

مگر گزشتاخی چون اهل راز ماند از ایمان او از جان نیز باز

(If such a man shows rudeness to God, like the knowers of the secrets, he forfeits his faith as well as life).

The rudeness of the true Sūfī is actuated by pure divine love. He becomes fearless and sees the Lord in all. He burns in the fire of true love and thus becomes a lunatic of God. At this stage nobody dare curse him for any of his idiotic acts. But, nevertheless, this is a blessed stage and the talk of such a man, (it may be a language of deification) must be tolerated;

چون ترا دیوانگی آید پدید
هر چه تو گوی ز تو بتوان شنید

(When you manifest this stage of madness, any thing that you utter, can be tolerated).

The following anecdote affords a good example of such rude behaviour towards God. The Khorasanian prince 'Amīd was attended by a hundred Turkish slaves whose beauty was unparalleled. They wore very costly dresses and caps. All were riding white horses. The mere sight of these slaves was so attractive that anybody who happened to see them, lost his heart. Perchance, a mad Sūfī, barefooted, clothed in rags and very hungry, saw this cavalcade from a distance and asked as to who they were. A richman replied, "They are the pages of the chief of our city". When the mad Sūfī heard this, he got flared up and cried :

گفت ای دارندۀ عرش مجید
بندہ پروردن بیا موز از عمید

(O God, the possessor of the high throne, learn, to take care of your servants, from 'Amid).

This abnormal behaviour of the mad Sufi who asked God to learn to keep servants from 'Amid is justified on the ground that the true lover of God is like a moth, the greatest pleasure for which is to burn himself alive on the candle of divine love.

خونبود دستاخی دیوانگان خوش همی سوزند چون پروانگان

(Impeliteness of the mad men is laudable. They burn, like moths, happily).

هیچ نتوانند دید آن قوم راه چه بد و چه نیک جز آن جایگاه

(This group cannot tell whether the way is good or bad, they only know their destination).

Once there was a severe famine in Egypt, so severe it was that the people were dying as they begged for bread. A mad or intoxicated Sufi saw the people perishing with starvation and cried.

گفت ای دارنده دنیا و دین چون ندارم که بزرگتر ازین

(O you possessor of the world and religion ! Since you cannot feed many, create fewer).

بر جالش چشم جان روشن کنم با و عاشق دست در گردن کنم

(I shall make the eye of my soul luminous with His beauty.

I shall unite with Him with my hand on His [neck]).

The guide is displeased to listen this tall talk of love from the mouth of this soul. He shows his disapproval of such boastful attitude in the following verses :

گفت نتوان شد بدعوی و بلاف همنشین سیرغ را بر کوه قاف

(By boastings and tall-talks no body can be a companion of the Simurgh of the Caucasus).

لاف عشق ادمزن در هر نفس کو نکجدر حوال پیچ کس

(Do not boast of His love every moment. Every heart cannot contain His love).

It is only the good luck that may unite you with Him.

گر نسیم دوستی آید فراز پرده اندازد ز روی کار باز

(The curtain of mystery may be lifted only if the wind of good-luck starts blowing).

پس ترا خوش در کشد در راه خویش فرد مبتلاند بخلوت گاه خویش

(Then He will draw you near Him and make you sit with Him in His seclusion).

The love should be mutual. If God does not love you, then your love for Him turns into affliction. On the other hand if He also loves you, you will attain to the truest felicity. The following anecdote may illustrate this point very well. Bāyazīd, the famous Sūfī, was seen by one of his disciples, in a dream, after his death. When asked about his encounter with Munkir and Nakir, the Sūfī replied, "when the two angels questioned me about my creator, I could not say, 'He is my Master'. On the contrary, I asked the angels to return to God and ask Him what He thinks of me because :

گر مرا او ندیده خواند نیست کار بنده باشم من خدا را نادار

(If He calls me a servant, it is nice. I shall then be the known servant of God).

در مرا از بندگان نشمارد او بسته بند خرم بگزارد او

(And if He does not count me as one of His servants, He will leave me to the bonds which hold me).

با کسی آسان چو پیوندش نبود من اگر خوانم خداوندش چه بود

(It is not easy to obtain union with Him. So if I call Him "my Master", it is of no use).

چون نباشم بنده بندى او

چون نباشم بنده بندى او

(If I am not bound in His bonds as a servant, How can I boast Him to be my Lord ?).

ليكن او بايد كه خواند بنده ام

در خداوندش سرافكنده ام

(I have bowed my head before His Lordship. But it is necessary that He calls me His slave).

تو مبعوث او بجايت لايحقى

گر سوزى او در آيد عاشقى

(If He becomes the lover, only then you are the most suitable for His love).

34. The Eighteenth Bird :

The eighteenth soul is a great egoist and feels the greatest pleasure of her life in egotizing her achievements. Thus, according to her own version, she has attained all the perfection that is possible and undergone very painful austerities in order to achieve it.

هم رياضتهاى مشكل كرده ام
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هم كمال خویش حاصل كرده ام

(I have achieved my perfection and have undergone many strict

austerities).

Under the circumstances

چون ہم اینجا کار بن حاصل شود رفتن زمین جایگاه مشکل بود

(Since I have achieved my object here, it is very difficult for me to leave this place).

دیدہ ای کسی را کہ برخیزد از گنج کارود در کوہ و دریا و صحرا

(Have you seen anybody leaving the treasure and wandering over the mountains and across the wilderness?).

The Hoopoe at once proceeds to admonish this self-conceited and arrogant bird. In this opinion, egoism has turned this creature into Iblis. When the desire has the upper hand on the mind, the devil becomes all-powerful and the creature remains far from divine things. Pride and vanity lead to nowhere.

تا تو در پندار خویشی ای عزیز خواندن و راندن نیز بیک پیشتر

(As long as you are lost in egoism, O dear, your study and imperious nature are not worth an obol).

چون بیرون آید از پندار وجود بر تو گردد در پرکار وجود

(When you come out of your self-pride, you will be relieved of this circle of birth).

Existence is the greatest affliction on the earth.

ذره ای اگر طعم هستی باشد کافری و بت پرستی باشد

(If you wish to have a little taste of existence, you will have to practise heresy and idolatory).

Consequently, it is better to shun the pride of the existence of 'I'. The anecdotes narrated in support of this point are instructive.

Once God asked Moses secretly to go to Satan and get a word of advice from him. So Moses went to Iblis and asked him for a word of advice. The Iblis said :

گفت وایم یاد دار این یک سخن پشیم من گمواتا تو نگر دی همچو من

(Always remember this axiom - never say 'I' so that you may not become like me).

An egoist Sūfī used to spend his time in meditation but never experienced any spiritual excitement. Once he came across Moses and requested him to ask God why he never experienced spiritual satisfaction or ecstasy inspite of his continuous adoration. When Moses went up on Sinai, he spoke to God about the Sūfī and asked the reason of his unluck. God replied, "This Sūfī has sought union with me, but, nevertheless, he is always worried about his long and beautiful beard". When the

Ṣūfī was told this by Moses, he began to tear his beard and wept bitterly. Presently Gabriel came and informed Moses that this Ṣūfī was still occupied by the thoughts of his beautiful beard. "He is even more attached to the beard while tearing it". Yourself-pride, jealousy and ego can be seen by every body except yourself. You have a corner of your being full of dragons. Out of negligence you have set them free on yourself. In pride, you ate nothing short of Pharaoh and Haman. If you wish to get rid of it then,

پشت درکش، همچو موسی کون را ریش گیر انگاه این فرعون را

(Like Moses, turn your back on the world. Then catch the beard of this Pharaoh (of self-pride)).

ریش این فرعون گیر دخت دار جنگ ریشاریش کن مردانه دار

(Get hold of this Pharaoh's beard firmly. Fight with it manly).

در ره دین آن بود فرزانه ای کوندار درشش خود را شانه ای

(He who does not comb his beard, is considered to be wise, in the path of faith).

A man is usually called egoistic or egotistic when his inclinations and purposes are immediately and exclusively directed towards himself. The appeal for our own good is to each one of us immediate and it is intuitively evident that we should

seek it. But the higher spiritual and ethical values of life require that a man's actions should be pure and self-less to enable him to rise above the phenomenal in order to reach the real.

In the Pali Pitakas, we come across a definite theory with respect to the "springs of human actions". They are styled as Hetu (condition cause) or Mula (root) or Nidāna (source). In Pali they comprise three vices and three virtues. The three bad roots are Greed (Lobha), Hate (Dosa) and want of Intelligence (Moha); the other three are their opposites i.e. Detachment (Allobha), Love (Adosa) and Intelligence (Amoha). Other frequent synonym for Lobha is Rāga (Lust, passion), for Moha, Avijja, for Adosa, Metta (Love) and for Amoha, Panna (Wisdom)

The first three roots are considered to be radical and potent sources of all human faults and follies and consequent suffering, so much so that the extinction of them, that is to say, letting action proceed solely from their three opposites, is one of the few positive definitions given of Nibbāna i.e. Nirvāna. Other aspects of egoism i.e. self-interest, self-conceit, self-seeking, self-reference etc. are also represented in the Buddhist doctrine. The term Sadāttha i.e. 'one's own good, advantage or interest' is used invariably in

this sense. Self-conceit or Māna is thus described:

"Conceit at the thought 'I am the better man'; 'I am as good as they'; 'I am lowly' - all such fañies, over-weening vanity, arrogance, pride flag-flaunting, assumption, desire of the heart for self-advertisement - this is called Māna¹⁴²".

Etymologically speaking egoism is more than paralleled in Indian linguistic. Thus we come across the terms, Aham-Kāra, (I-maker) and also Manan-Kāra (mine-maker), Manattan (mine-ness), A-māna (having nought of 'mine' i.e. calling nothing or wishing nothing to be 'mine') etc.

35. Nineteenth Bird :

This soul desires to know how she can be happy on this spiritual journey. She is eager to know the correct direction because

خیزد با شرم و آرد راه دور تا بگیرد از ره رفتن نفور
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(While travelling on a long way, a man must know the right direction so that he does not become apprehensive).

According to the guide, the greatest happiness on the earth is to be content and happy with Him. Live in His happiness

142. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psych. Ethics*, 1. 295.

143. Mantiq-ut-Tair, PP. 117-120, Paris Edition.

and turn like the dome of heaven in His love.

هر که از هستی او دشا دگشت محو از هستی شد و آزاد گشت

(He who is happy over His existence, loses his own existence and becomes free).

شادی جاوید کن از دوست تو تا نگنجی همچو گل در پوست تو

(Remain eternally happy with your friend so that you may be like the rose in the Galyā).

But, for contentment and happiness, one has to avoid the indiscreet talk. A man who is always on the lookout for the faults of others cannot be happy.

چون تو مشغولی بجوئی عیب کی کنی شادی بزیبای عیب

(When you are busy finding the faults; how can you be happy over the invisible beauty).

موی بشکافی بعیب دیگران در رسم عیب تو کوری در آن

(You split a hair for the fault of others. But to your own fault you are blind).

گر عیب خویش مشغولی ای گر چه پس محبوب ای مقبول ای

(If you are busy looking to your own faults, you may be guilty, still you will be a favourite of God).

36. The Twentieth Bird :

This soul inquires of the guide as to what ought she ask from the Supreme Being if she arrives at the place where He dwells

از بگو تو چیز اگر آگاه می
چون رسیدم من بدان خواهی
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(If you tell me the best thing, I shall ask it from Him when I reach near Him).

The guide replied, "O ignorant, you do not know Him, Ask for Him from Him, if you must.

مرد را درخواست آگاهی به است
کز هر چیزی که می خواهی به است

(A man should know what he wishes to ask, because He is far better than anything you ask for).

هر که بوی یافت از خاک درش
کی بر شوت باز کرده از برش

(He who got the smell of the dust of His door, never left Him to return to the worldly attractions).

Bu 'Alī Rudbar, a saint was offered a grand place in the heaven, after his death and all the saints who dwell in the palace of Immortality were ready to welcome him, but he declined this offer saying:

نیست بر گم تا چو اهل شهوتی سرفروا کرم بانگ رشوتی

(Like the worldly men I cannot bow my head before this enticement), the reason being :

عشق تو با جان من در هم برشت من نه دوزخ دانم اینجا نه بهشت

(Your love has been kneaded in my soul. I know neither heaven nor hell).

من ترا دانم نه دین نه کافری بگذرم من زین گهر تو بگذری

(I know you only and am unaware of belief or unbelief. If you are above them, I am also above them).

God, once, commanded David to tell His servants to adore Him not for the fear or hope of hell and heaven. They should worship Him out of supreme respect. The attraction of paradise may deprive them of His nearness.

گر زامشغول خلد و حور کرد تو بقتین دان کوز خوشت ددر کرد

(If you get engrossed in the ideas of the pleasures of Paradise; be sure you have been thrown away from Him).

The story of Mahmūd and his slave Ayāz bears testimony to this fact. One day Mahmūd gave Ayāz, his crown, throne, everything

and asked him to rule over his dominion as an independent king. The courtiers were wonderstruck over this generosity of Mahmūd, but the wise Ayāz wept bitterly and said :

نیتید اگه که شاه انجمن دور می اندازد و از خوشنیتن

(You are not aware that the king of this country is exiling me from his presence).

می دهد مشغولیم تا من ز شاه باز بانم و در مشغول سپاه

(He wants me to be busy with the army and thus keep away from him).

من چه خواهم ملک کار او ملک من پس بود و دیدار او

(I do not have anything to do with the royalty. I am content to see his face).

If you are a real Sālik, you should learn from Ayāz how to serve God. Dependence on paradise and hell is the greatest obstruction in your way. The veil of mystery cannot be lifted until and unless you relieve yourself from these enticements.

Rābi'ah, once prayed to God, "O knower of the secrets, grant the worldly desires of my enemies and give my friends a good place in the next world. As for me, I am free from both. This world and that world, comparis^{ed}on to your company, matter

little. I want you and only you, because if you are mine, everything is mine.

گر بسوی هر دو عالم بنگرم یا بجز تو هیچ خواهم کاظم

(If I look at the two worlds or desire anything except you, I am a heretic.)

27. The Twenty-first Bird :

While visiting the royalty one should take some gifts with oneself. This soul is desirous to know of the guide what gift could be suitable and precious for such a Court because,

بیش نشان تحفه ای بایز نصیب مرد بی تحفه نباشد جز حسین
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(While going to the kings one should bear the nicest gifts only vile men go empty-handed).

The guide replies :

گفت ای سائل اگر فرمان بری انچه انجا هم بیا بد آن بری

(If you obey my order, take to that place, a thing which is not readily available there).

هر چه تو زیجا بری کان جا بود بدون آن بر تو کی زیجا بود

(Anything which is found there, may not be taken to that place, because it does not look graceful).

علم است آنجا یگانه اسرار است طاعت روحانیان بسیار است

(There you will find true knowledge, divine secrets, and saintly worships in ample quantity).

So the best gifts to take to the Court of the Supreme Being shall be :

سوز جان و درود دل می برسی ز آنکه این آنجانان ندیده کسی

(Take then in large quantities the pain of love and the fiery longings of the soul, with you, as these things are very rare).

گر بر آید از سر دردی یک آه می برد بوی جگر تا پیشگاه

(If a single sigh of love is heaved, it will take the message of your love to His presence)

آه اگر از جای خاص آید پدید مرد را جانی خلاص آید پدید

(A sigh of true contrition secures salvation for the man).

The sighs of true love have a deep effect on the beloved and a pre-requisite quality of a lover.

تا نگرددی مرد صاحب دردتو در صف مردان نباشی مرد تو

(You cannot be counted among the saliks until you possess the pain of love).

38. The Twenty-second Bird and the Seven Valleys :

To the last soul, the way is very hard and its length is immeasurable. Hence a full description of the journey and its difficulties is highly desirable. The guide, in a lucid answer to this question says :

گفت ما را هفت وادی در ره است چون گذشتی هفت وادی در گاه است
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(We have Seven Valleys to traverse. After we have crossed them, we shall reach the threshold of the Absolute).

و انیامد در جهان زین راه کس نیست از فرنگ او آگاه کس

(Since none has returned to the world from this journey, nobody knows the exact distance to be covered).

چون شدند آنجا کج گم بر سر کی خبر بازت دهند ای بی خبر

(O ignorant fellow, whosoever went there, got lost. Hence how can you get news about the fears and tears of this Valley).

The Seven Valley of this spiritual journey came in the following order :

هست وادی طلب آغاز کار وادی عشقت از آن پس بی شمار

(The first one is the Valley of Search. The unending Valley of Love will follow it).

پس سیرم وادیت آن معرفت هست چارم وادی استغنا صفت

(The third Valley is the Valley of Understanding. The Fourth is styled as the Valley of Detachment).

هست پنجم وادی توحید پاک پس ششم وادی حیرت صغناک

(The Fifth is the sacred Valley of the Pure Unity and the sixth is the hard Valley of Surprise).

هفتمین وادی فقر است و فنا بعد ازین روی روشن نبود ترا

(The seventh and the last Valley is Poverty and Annihilation. After this you can travel no longer).

در کشش افندی روشن گم گرددت گر بود یک قطره قلمم گرددت

(You will be overpowered, losing your senses to go farther. If you have a drop, it will change into an ocean).

39. The First Valley : Valley of Search

This Valley, which involves a hundred obstacles, requires of the Salik to search incessantly for his true aim. Many an ordeal and many a dragon of fear will come in the way, but the traveller has to think nothing except the pursuit of his

Ideal.

صد بلا در هر نفس اینجا بود طوطی گردون مگس اینجا بود

(In a moment, you will experience a hundred trials. In this Valley the parrot of heaven is no more than a fly).

جد و جهد اینجا تا باید سالها زانکه اینجا قلب گرد و دهاها

(You will have to toil here for years. Your condition will be totally changed).

مال اینجا بایست انداختن ملک اینجا بایست در باختن

(Everything, including money and position, is to be sacrificed in this Valley).

The purity of heart and detachment go hand in hand.

چون نماند هیچ معلومت بدست دل بایست کرد پاک از هر چه هست

(When you have lost every possession, the heart should be once again detached from all that exists).

At this stage, the heart starts shining with the pure celestial light and the longing to see Him multiply infinitely :

چون دل پاک گردد از ملوک تا فتن گیرد از حضرت نور پاک

(When your heart becomes pure due to mortification, the pure light of Divinity will start shining on it).

چون شود آن نور بر دل آشکار در دل تو یک طلب گردد هزار

(When that light is manifested, your desire to search Him increases infinitely).

Now the quest of the Supreme Being becomes the greatest passion of the Salik. Hundreds of thousand difficulties cannot discourage him. What he needs now is a draught of spiritual wine from the divine cup-bearer and when he has drunk it, neither this world matters for him nor the other one.

غرقه دریا بماند خشک لب سر جانان میکند از جان طلب

(Although he is drowned in the ocean, yet his lips are dry. He wants to search the divine secret in his own soul).

ز آرزوی آنکه سر بشناسد او ز اژدهای جانستان نهر اسد او

(In his quest for the truth, he does not fear the murderous dragons even).

In order to open the door of Divinity, the Salik crosses the limits of faith and blasphemy. The search for the Real One takes you far above these trifles.

Majnūn's search for Laili is proverbial and can be a good

example for the lovers. Once he was seen sifting the dust along a roadside. When asked as to what he was looking for, he replied, "I am searching Laili". The on-looker said, "How can you find Laili in this dust? Can you expect a pure pearl in this trodden dust?" The reply of Majnūn was highly instructive :

گفت من سبجویش ہر جا کہ ہست ہو کہ جائی یکدمش آدم بدست

(He said, " I look for Laili every where, may be I find her somewhere for a moment)."

Yūsuf of Hamadān, who knew the mystery of this world, very well, once said, "Each and every atom, on the height or in the depth of this world, is another Jacob, asking about the news of his lost Joseph".

But, on the whole, the Valley of Search can never be crossed in a short time. It is going to be interminably long for the ṣālik. The reply of a villager to Sheikh Abū Sa'eed is informative in this regard. Once the Sheikh was feeling very much depressed on account of some spiritual obstruction when he saw a villager, tethering his cow, while from his body emanated a bright light. The Sheikh explained the depressing state he was in. The rustic fellow said, "If the whole space is filled with millet, not once but a hundred times and if a

bird clearly takes only one grain out of it in a thousand years and then flew a hundred times round the world, even then,

از درش بوی نیابد جان هنوز بوسید از دور باشد آن هنوز

(Your soul cannot have the fragrance of His door. Bū Sa'eed would still be far off from Him).

Under these conditions patience is the most desirable quality for the searcher.

طالبان را صبری باید بسی طالب صابر نیفتد هر کسی

(The searchers should exercise great patience. But it is very difficult to be a patient searcher).

The Quest should be unending and genuine. One success should lead to another.

گر دست آید ترا گنج گهر در طلبت یکم باشی گرم تر

(If you obtain treasure of jewels, you should be more zealous in your quest).

هر که او در ره چیزی ماند باز شد تبش آن چیز گویات باز

(If somebody is detained by something, in the way, that object becomes an idol and the man is to pull on with it).

(i.e. He becomes an idol-worshipper).

The search for the Absolute is to continue, until, the divine door is opened in front of your eyes. At this stage also, the fact is, that your own eyes are shut, otherwise the door leading to the celestial Court is not shut. A sentence of Rabi'ah is noteworthy:

ببخودی می گفت در پیش خدای
کای خدا آخر در می بر من کشی

(A Sūfī was praying, "O God, open a door for me").

رابعه آنجا مگر نبسته بود
گفت ای غافل که این در بسته بود

(Rabi'ah was, probably sitting near him, she said, "O Ignorant, was this door ever shut" ?)

40. The Second Valley : The Valley of Love

The Valley of Search, according to the Murshid, is followed by the Valley of Love. One who enters it, is soon engulfed in fire. In fact, at this stage, the salik himself is supposed to be fire. If he is not, he cannot cross this Valley. The major qualities of a spiritual lover have been explained in the following verses:

عاشق آن باشد که چون آتش بود گرم روزنده و سگرش بود

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(The lover should be like fire. He is a quick traveller, impetuous and burning).

عاقبت اندیش نبود یک زمان در کش خوش خوش بر آتش صد جهان

(He is not worried about his end even for a moment. He puts into fire a hundred worlds, happily).

لحظه ای نه کافر می داند نه دین فوره ای نه شک نشاند نه یقین

(He never thinks of faith or unfaith. He has nothing to do with belief or unbelief).

For such a lover good and evil cease to exist. His main duty is to stake his head for the sake of the Divine Beloved. But a commoner cannot aspire for this stage unless he burns himself wholly and completely in order to be free from the sadness of the world. The true lover is like a fish who has been thrown out of the ocean. In its efforts to get back into the water, this fish struggles very hard.

In this Valley, according to 'Attār, love is always preferred to reason. Here the love is compared to fire and the

reason to smoke. Naturally the smoke has got to be disappeared in that presence of fire.

عقل در سودای عشق استاد نیست عشق کار عقل مادر زاد نیست

(Reason cannot be apt in the bargain of love. Love is not an affair of human reason).

The whole world is intoxicated with the wine of love. You can share this secret only if you are endowed with the inner sight. Only then the invisible world will be manifested to you. On the contrary :

در چشم عقل بکشی نظر عشق را هرگز بینی پاسر

(If you cast a glance through the eye of reason, you cannot understand anything of love).

مرد کار افتاده باید عشق را مردم آزاده باید عشق را

(The love requires an experienced and free man).

زنده دل باید درین ره صد هزار تا کند در هر نفس صد جان نثار

(In the way of love one needs a hundred thousands living hearts so that, at every moment, one can be sacrificed).

When the people of Laila refused to allow Majnūn to come in their midst, the intoxicated lover borrowed the skin of a

sheep from a shepherd of the same desert. He stooped down and put his head in the skin, pretending to be a sheep. Having done this, he requested the shepherd to treat him as one of his sheep and in the name of God, lead the flock past Laili's tent so that he could have a glimpse of her. So Majnūn was taken to the street of his beloved among the sheep. When he reached the spot, he became unconscious and had to be lifted back by the shepherd. After sometime, one day, Majnūn was sitting with some of his friends, when one of them asked, "why do you remain naked, O dignified man ! "I can bring for you, at once, any dress that you like most". Majnūn replied "every dress is not worthy of my beloved, so no dress is better for me than skin. If it is a skin of a sheep it is preferable because like "Sipand" or wild rue it can avert a malignant eye. "The skin is the silk and the golden cloth for Majnūn, through which he has discovered the sweet perfume of Laili".

Love changes your nature and deprives you of yourself.

To love is to play with your own life. It is not a child's

play *بازی در نه گریز از زی چنین* *ز آنکه بازی نیست جان باز چنین*

(If you are so brave, put your foot on this path, because this playing with your own life is not a child's play).

The pangs of separation add fuel to the fire of love and the misfortune combined with poverty, constitute innumerable ordeals, through which only true lover can pass successfully. The end of a lover is the sacrifice of his life for which he is always ready. The anecdote of the beggar who fell in love with the beautiful Ayāz and became an enviable opponent of Mahmūd may not be out of place here.

A beggar fell in love with Ayāz and his love soon became the talk of the town. He used to wait for Ayāz on the road in order to have a glance on his beloved. Mahmūd, on receiving the information personally came to see the beggar, who even in the presence of the Sultān, transfixedly stared at Ayāz. Mahmūd said, "O beggar do you wish to drink from the royal cup." The beggar said :

زندگفتن اگر گدای گوئیم عشق بازی باز تو کمتر نیم

(Although you address me as a beggar; in the play of love, I am not inferior to you).

عشق و افلاسند در هماییگی هست این سرمایه بی سرمایگی

(Love and poverty are interconnected. This is in fact the wealth of poverty).

تو جهانزار کمالی افروخته عشق را باید چو من دل سوخته

(Your heart is luminous of royalty. The love requires a burning heart like mine).

ساز و صلت آنچه تو دار کا بس صبر کن در درد هجران یک نفس

(You are, per chance near the beloved. Test yourself, for a moment in the pain of separation).

Love requires the sacrifice of life.

یک اگر در عشق کرم جان نشان جان نشان هست مخلص از نشان

(If I sacrifice my life in love, this will be a proof of my spiritual poverty).

در تو ای مجروح کوه معنی عشق جان نشان در نه کن دعوای عشق

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(Where is the real love in you O Mahmūd? Sacrifice your life for it, otherwise do not boast of love).

So saying, the true lover, gave his life right in front of his beloved.

Love, in fact, is a feeling of strong personal attachment, induced by that which delights or commands admiration. This sentiment has various sub-divisions, but in its divine sense the Doctrine of Love has assumed many forms according

to the relative Orthodoxy of its exponents. It is often linked with Sūfism of Devotional type, and sometimes accompanying a thorough-going Pantheism. Imām Ghazzālī has treated the subject thoroughly in book VI of his Ihyā-ul-Ulūm¹⁴⁹ and a brief extract here may suffice to show the scope and development of the doctrine in the Sūfice ethics.

According to Ghazzālī, Hubb (love) is the natural desire for that which gives pleasure. When that desire grows intense it is called Ishq (passion). Physical senses derive pleasure from different objects. Similarly the spiritual senses whose organ is the Heart (qalb) has its own objects of pleasure which are imperceptible to the bodily senses. Ghazzālī enumerates the following five chief causes of love :

1. Self-Interest : Everyone desires to preserve his life or to make it as perfect as possible. Therefore men hate death and seek wealth, children etc.

2. Beneficence : Men love them who benefit them. This is indirectly a species of self-love.

3. Disinterested love of good : Sometimes a good man is loved for his own sake, not for any advantage that may be derived from him.

149. Bulāq, IV, PP.280-349, 1289 A.H.

4. Love of beauty (Moral or spiritual): When the whole pleasure which it gives, consists in the perception of it.

5. Spiritual affinity : Ghazzālī then proceeds to demonstrate that all these motives have their ultimate source in God, who is the sole object of true and perfect love, although love of God necessarily includes love of the Prophets and the Saints. The strongest and the rarest motive, he says, is the spiritual affinity. Man is called to an Imitatio dei in respect of certain attributes, according to the tradition Takhalluq bi-Akhlaq Allah i.e. 'Form yourselves on the moral'. He becomes near to God through his acquisition of knowledge, benevolence, compassion and other virtues. But underlying this, there exists between God and man, a real and intimate relation of which Ghazzālī speaks with the utmost caution as an ineffable mystery which is revealed to theosophists.

Having defined love as the soul's desire for that which gives it pleasure, Ghazzālī points out that the term is metaphorical in its application to God who wants nothing and regards nothing except His essence and His essential attributes. The chief signs of the true love of God have been enumerated by Ghazzālī as follows :

The true lover yearns to meet God and therefore desires death or if he be unwilling to die, it is because he feels that

he is not yet ripe for the heavenly vision. He is assiduous in worship and good works, for disobedience cannot coexist with perfect love. He loves recollection (Dhikr) of God and he loves the Qurān, which is the word of God, and the Prophet and his fellow Muslims and all God's creatures, yet he has no joy, but, in solitary communion, with his Beloved, knowing that the more he loves God in this world, the greater will be his bliss in the world to come. Some long for paradise and they shall enter it, but God will give Himself only to those, who have fixed their desires on Him.

According to Ghazzālī, true love always contains an element of fear. The lover dreads lest God should turn away from him or deprive him of contemplation, not on account of such sins as are committed by ordinary men, but to punish him for the hidden deceit (al-makr al-khafī) of insincerity, spiritual pride, preoccupation with spiritual delights, and similar offences against divine love, from which no one except the firmly grounded theosophists is secure.

In his concluding chapters Ghazzālī explains the meanings of two terms Uns and Ridā which denote states, connected with the fruition of mystical love. Uns is the joy of immediate contemplation of the divine beauty. Persons, practising Uns flee from the company of mankind. God allows them to address

Him familiarly and to use a freedom of speech that would be considered blasphemous in anyone less enraptured.

Ridā signifies 'willing acquiescence in whatever God has ordained'. The lover accepts cheerfully all the troubles and sufferings at the hands of men, because he sees that God is the only real agent and that all good and evil is divinely decreed. Ghazzālī also shows that prayer is not incompatible with Ridā.

In the pantheistic form of Sūfism, the term Ishq is used as a symbol for the Ashiq's (lover's) aspiration to attain union with God. The Sūfī poets like Attar exhaust all their resources of erotic imagery in order to explain the subtleties of a passion that is absolutely pure and spiritual. The selflessness associated with the highest types of human love makes it an apt emblem of the ecstasy in which the Sūfī passes away from consciousness of his individuality and lives only in the eternal and universal.

Love, according to the Sūfīs, is beyond the reach of learning. In fact this may be defined as the ardent inward feeling of adoration as distinguished from ritual ceremonies and forms of worship. In the words of Nicholson, "Love is the harmonizing and unifying element that transcends sect-

sectarian differences¹⁵⁰. Omar-i-Khayyām, the famous philosopher poet of Iran writes

None of the two and seventy sects with mine
Agrees, nor any faith, but love Divine,
Saint, sinner, true believer, infidel,
All aim at thee : away with name and sign ¹⁵¹

The Union with Beloved is paradise and the separation from her is hell. No logic or anyother kind of intellectual activity can analyse this feeling.

Thus, in the eyes of the true Sūfis, the value of the conventional systems of religions, including Islām, is relative. More or less they, may be styled as free thinkers. In their opinion, the truest religion is that which contains the power to inspire love. All other demonstrative arguments of the theologians are meaningless for them.

150. Hastings : Ency. of Religion & Ethics, Vol VII , Page 177.

151. Omar Khayyām : Ed. E.H. Whinfield, London, 1901
no. 287, Translated by R.A. Nicholson.

41. The Third Valley : The Valley of Understanding

"After the Valley of Love, there appears another Valley", said Hoopoe, the guide, "which goes by the name of the Valley of Understanding. It is a Valley which has no beginning and no end. The enormous distance is beyond reckoning. The traveller of this Valley will be known as the "spiritual Sālik". But this journey will keep everybody to his own personal limits.

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بیرہ کس ناکمال ادب اور قرب ہر کس حسب حال ادب اور

(The extent of the journey depends upon the self-perfection of an individual. Nearness to Him is according to the personal attainments).

گر بہر دہشہ چندان کہ بہت کی کمال صبر و شہادت

(A gnat flying, to the best of his capacity, cannot reach the speed of the boisterous wind).

لا جرم جو مختلف افادہ سپہ ہم روش ہرگز نہ گرد و بچ طیر

(When everybody's sphere is different, no bird will fly with another).

Personal understanding, in this Valley, plays a very important

part.

معرفت اینجا تفاوت یافت
آن یکی جواب و آن یت یافت

(Here, the insight in divine matters, differs with every man. Some have found the faith, others, the blasphemy).

چون تابد آفتاب معرفت
از سپهر این ره عالی صفت
هر یکی بنیادش بر قدر خویش
باز یابد حقیقت صدر خویش

(When the sun of Understanding shines from this elevated sky, Every body can see his own merits and comes to know of his real destination).

Thus comes the true knowledge of the divine mysteries, One becomes acquainted with oneself. This removes the worldly afflictions.

سر ذاتش چون بر در روشن شود
گلخن دنیا بر گلشن شود

(When the personal mystery reveals itself to the salik the furnace of the world becomes a garden for him).

Now he reaches a stage where he can have access to the realities of things.

مغز بیند از درون پوست او
خودنه بیند ذره ای جز پوست او

(He sees the chief substance contained in a shell. He finds his Beloved everywhere).

This revelation leads the salik to extreme type of Pantheism. Now he is wholly and solely pre-occupied with his Friend, looking at His face in each atom. In this state, again

صد هزار اسرار از زیر نقاب روی می بنماید همچون آفتاب

(Hundred of thousands mysteries will show their face like the sun, from under the veil).

Revelation of this type is not an easy thing :

صد هزاران مرد گم گردیدند تا یکی اسرار بین گردد تمام

(Innumerable men have lost their lives until one of them becomes the knower of the mysteries).

That lucky fellow has to be perfect, possessing fiery longings and indefatigable efforts to reach the goal.

کاملی باید درین راه شگرف تا کند غواصی این بحر ژرف

(This strong way requires an accomplished man who can dive into this deep sea).

Revelation of the mysteries gives further impetus to the salik to know more of the divine secrets. Knowledge of them leads

one to understand them. The thirst for perfection always remains unquenched. But even if you reach the highest heaven, from your tongue, you are not supposed to utter "Is there anything more". The duty of a salik is to know and understand the divinity silently.

Real knowledge is much-sought-after. The salik should not hesitate to gather it even if he has to go, in search of it, right up to 'China'. This world of sorrows is completely dark. Real knowledge shines in it like a lamp, showing the way to the travellers. To be successful in this way, one has to practise complete abstention.

شب‌خیز در روز هم چیزی بخور این طلب در تو پیدا آید مگر

(Do not sleep at night and keep fast by day. Perhaps in this way you may find what you seek).

می‌طلب تا طلب گم گردد خور و روز و خواب شب گم گردد

(Carry on your Quest until you lose your quest, sleep at night and food by day).

The story of the "Sleeping lover," further illustrates this point. A beloved found her lover, fast asleep, in the dust. She wrote a note, tied it to the sleeves of the lover and returned. When the lover got up and read what his beloved

had written, he started shedding the tears of blood. The beloved had written "O silent man, rise up. If you are a merchant, go and try to secure silver; if you are an ascetic, pray to God till the day breaks. But if you are a lover, be ashamed of yourself. Sleep has no concern with the eyes of a lover.

مرد عاشق باد پماید بروز شب همه مهتاب بنماید بروز

(The lover measures the wind by day. At night, the fire of his love shines like moon).

چون نه اینی و نه آن ای کی بی فروغ کم زن اندر عشق مالاف دروغ

(Since you are no such man, O cold man, do not boast of loving me).

گر نغفتد عاشقی جز در کفن عاشقش گویم ولی بر خوشبختی

(If a lover sleeps elsewhere than in his shroud, I will but call him a lover of himself).

چون تو در عشق از سز جهل آمدی خواب خوش بادت که نا اهل آمدی

(You have become a lover, out of ignorance you are incompetent for love; may you have a sound sleep).

The Salik, striving for the true understanding, cannot afford to sleep even for a moment. His heart is like a fortress

which has to be guarded against the thieves. To keep a watch over the pearls of the heart, one has to stay awake throughout one's life.

Spiritual enlightenment which comes through the true Understanding of the divine realities, is very essential for the deliverance of the soul from its conditions of bondage. This doctrine of Redemption involves essentially a deliverance from the material world which is regarded as intrinsically evil. The Persian dualistic conception of darkness and light became that of spirit and matter under the influence of the Greek speculation and the Salik or the Gnostic now struggled for only one thing i.e. to deliver himself from the lower world of sense and to reach the higher world of pure Being.

But the conception of deliverance was blended with the further idea of escape into a world of freedom. This escape could not be successfully affected without the proper knowledge of the divine realities. It was assumed that this higher knowledge, in turn, could not be attained to by the Salik. It was communicated to him by a being from the heavenly world. This fundamental doctrine of Ma'rifat, has its classical expression in the Hymn of the Naassenes (Hippolytus^{V. 5}). "Then said Jesus: Father a searching after evil on the earth makes man to wander from thy spirit. He seeks to escape the bitter

chaos, but knows not how to flee. Wherefore send me, O father With the seal will I descend, travel through all Aeons, disclose all mysteries, show the forms of the gods, the secrets of the holy path which are called "Gnosis" I will impart"¹⁵³.

Murshids among the Sūfis claimed to be the repository of a secret knowledge, revealed from heaven and it was on this divine knowledge, accompanied by symbols and rituals, that the entrance into the higher life depended. From time to time the chosen spirits apprehended this revelation with peculiar strength and fulness. This, they recorded in the books and handed them down in the community of their disciples.

Of the three organs of spiritual communication i.e. Qalb (the heart), Rūh (the spirit) and Sirr (the inmost ground of the soul), the Qalb is the most effective and possesses the capability of knowing the essence of all things. Its illumination, by faith and knowledge, reflects the divine secrets. But, at the same time, if the Qalb is tarnished by carnal desires and sensual impressions, it makes man lower than the brutes. On the contrary, if it is illumined it leads man to heights not experienced by the angels even. These heights can be acquired through true knowledge which comes through inspiration and revelation.

¹⁵³. Hastings : Ency. of Religion & Ethics, Vol VI, Page 231.

42. The Fourth Valley : The Valley of Detachment

The next Valley, according to the Heepes, is named as the Valley of Independence and Detachment. At this stage, the Salik does not possess anything and so much so that the wish to discover is also gone. The violent wind of Independence is blowing so strong in this Valley that, in a moment, it devastates the full country. Big things, in the worldly sense, look very tiny here and the Salik is apt to be Independent and mindless to every attraction. This a careful survey of this stage shows that

154 هفت دریا یک نمراینجابود هفت اختر یک نمراینجابود

(The seven oceans are merely a pool in this Valley. Seven planets are no more than a spark here).

هفت جنت نیز اینجاموده است هفت دوزخ نیز اینجاموده است

(The seven heavens are like a dead body, the seven hells are as cold as ice here).

Some paradoxical phenomena can also be seen in this Valley.

Weaklings, like ants with their perpetual efforts, acquire such strength here that one ant can face a hundred elephants. But this stage is not easily accessible because

صد هزاران سبزپوش از غم به خست تا که آدم را چراغی بر فروخت

(A hundred thousands green-clad angels died in the smoke of grief so that, Adam could light his lamp).

صد هزاران جسم خالی شد ز روح تا درین حضرت درو گشت فوج

(Innumerable bodies because devoid of soul so that Noah might become a carpenter (and build the ark)).

صد هزاران پشه در شکر افتاد تا بر ابریم از میان بد گرفتاد

(Myriads of gnats fell on the army of Abrahah, until he was overthrown).

صد هزاران طفل سر بریده گشت تا کلیم اللہ صاحب دیده گشت

(Thousands of the first-born got their heads cut off so that Moses may secure the eyes to see God).

صد هزاران خلق در زنا رشت تا که عیسی موم امرار شد

(Thousands of people wore the girdle of heresy until Christ became the knower of God's secrets).

صد هزاران جان و دل تاراج یافت تا محمد یکتایی مراح یافت

(Thousands of hearts and souls were pillaged so that Mohammad might secure a night's ascension to heaven).

The Salik cares a very little for existence or no-existence. Thus myriads of souls falling into this boundless ocean appear him to be a drop of dew only. If everything were to be annihilated, from the fish to the moon, it will be simply the laming of an ant for him. Bursting of heaven and earth is simpler than the falling of a leaf from a tree.

But how difficult it is to cross this Valley of Detachment. The Salik fills the ocean with the blood of his heart and is stillable to make only the first stage.

گرم اول باشدت چون بگری گر جهان را راه هر دم بسپری

(If you traverse through the whole world continuously still you will be at the first step).

بیچ ناک راه را پایاں ندیر هیچکس این درد را درمان ندیر

(No traveller has seen the terminus of this way. Nobody has found a remedy for this pain).

The lightening of Detachment when blazes up, its heat is so tremendous that it consumes a hundred worlds. Consequently the Salik does not find any vestige of population in this Valley.

The example of the astrologer is suitable here. The wiseman traces the figures and designs of the planets and the stars, the heavens and the earth, on an earthen tablet, making predictions from the heavens and the earth. From the risings and settings of the stars, he deduces good or bad auguries. But when he has cast a horoscope of good or bad luck, he lifts the tablet by a corner and obliterates everything as if these signs and figures had never existed.

The Salik should follow in the footsteps of this astrologer, in order to secure a perfect detachment from the world. The impressions and signs of the worldly possessions should be washed away from the mind as if they had no existence.

The world is like a beehive and the man like a bee. The latter, in search of honey, wants to get into this hive and announces, "I am ready to give an obol to anyone who helps me to get into the hive". Somebody takes pity on her and for an obol, helps her in. But when she enters the hive, her legs get struck up in the honey and she means, "This is cruelty. This honey is worse than poison. I am caught. I gave an obol to get in, I shall gladly give to get out".

Under the circumstances, the best thing for the Salik is to

خیز و این وادی مشکل قطع کن باز پر از جان و از دل قطع کن

(Rise and cross this difficult Valley. Detach yourself from inner and outer attachments).

جان برافشان در ره و دل کن تار در نه ترا ستخا بگردانند کار

(Sacrifice your life in the way and scatter your heart otherwise you will never become self-sufficient).

43. The Fifth Valley :

The Valley of Unity

"The Fifth one is the Valley of Unity", said the guide, "where Oneness and Absolutism reign". In this Valley you will see many things, but, in reality, they are One, forming a part of the Big One. They make One which is complete in its Oneness. Apparently, that which is One is not different from that which appears as many. Moreover

چون برونت آن زحد و از عدد از ازل قطع نظر کن و از ابد
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(As He is beyond limit and numbering, cease to think of eternity and beginning).

ہر دو را خود هیچ باید در میان چون ازل گم شد ابد ہم جادوان

(When the both eternities of the beginning as well as the end have vanished for ever, there should be nothing mid-way (except Him)).

چون ہمہ ہیچی بود هیچ این ہمہ کی بود در اصل جز هیچ این ہمہ

(When all that is visible is nothing (except Him), this is , in reality, nothing except a great mystery).

The very conception of duality is absurd. The world which comprises horrors and terrors and appears to be multicoloured, is, in fact, nothing more than a palm tree of wax. The colours and shapes may be different, but they are made of only one material. Thus :

چوں یکی باشد ہمہ بود دوی نہ سنی بر خیزد اینجانه نوی

(When all the things of the world are one, there cannot be duplicity. Naturally neither 'I' nor 'Thou' can sustain here).

An old lady offered a golden paper to Bū 'Alī who refused to except it, saying that he could not accept anything from anybody except God. The woman at once said, "How can you say this? Are you squint-eyed as to see several things at a time ?

مرد را در دیده اینجا غیر نیست ز آنکه اینجا کعبه نیست و دیر نیست

(Sālik does not see here anybody except He. There is neither Ka'ba nor Pagoda here).

هم از او شنود سخنها آشکار هم بر او ماند وجودش پایدار
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(He learns from Him clearly the mystical secrets. He remains eternal on account of Him).

هم جز او کس را نه بیند یک زمان هم جز او کس نداند جادوان

(He does not see for a moment, anyone other than Him. He does not believe anyone to be eternal except Him).

هم در دهم نزد هم با او بود هم بر دهن از هر سه این نیکو بود

(Sālik is in Him, by Him and with Him and can be outside these states even).

The essence of the divine doctrine is :

هر که در دریای وحدت گم نشد گر همه آدم بود مردم نشد

(He who is not immersed in the Ocean of Unity cannot claim to be a man inspite of his manhood).

If the Sālik traverses the spiritual path sincerely, a day may come when the Divine Sun draws aside the veil which covers it. Good and evil arise from your separate entity. When you lose yourself in the Divine Essence, they will be transcended by love. It is at this stage that :

مرد سالک چون رسید اینجا گاه جا گاه و مرد بر خیزد ز راه

(The Salik, on reaching this station, gets lost to sight and the Valley also disappears).

گم شود زیرا که پیدا آید او گنگ گردد زیرا که گو یا آید او

(He is lost because the Unique Being will manifest Himself. The Salik will become dumb, because now this Being will speak).

جز و گرد و کل شود نه کل نه جزو صورتی باشد صفت نه جان نه عضو

(The part becomes the whole and there may be neither part nor whole. Face, soul, body or attributes do not remain here).

In the Divine School of the great secrets, the intellect cannot speak. The intellectual knowledge may be compared here to a blind child who cannot go beyond the threshold of the Divine Door. When the Divine King casts the brightness of His rays, the existence of the Salik is annihilated. Another anecdote of Mahmūd and Ayāz proves it in a lucid manner.

On a lucky day, Mahmūd was to inspect his innumerable army, consisting of ^{so} many horses, elephants and troops, that the earth looked as though covered with ants and locusts. The world had, hitherto, not seen such a huge army. The king, casting his

eye on the immense army addressed Ayāz, his favourite boy, in these words, "All these horses and elephants of mine now belong to you and you, O boy, are my king." This did not produce any impression on Ayāz who kept sitting indifferently. He did not express his thanks to the king. Hasan, the minister, on seeing this ingratitude, got fl^ashed up and said, "O slave, you have neither bowed nor prostrated yourself in order to show your gratefulness to the king. This is ingratitude". Ayāz answered, "I have two suitable answers to your reproach. First I am the king's slave and belong wholly to him. Hence I have not a separate entity as to thank him". The second reply which Ayāz gave to Mahmūd himself was :

گفت هر که ز کمال لطف شاه می کند سویی من سکین نگاه

(Every time when the king deigns to cast a glance on a wretched person like me).

در فروغ پرتو آن یک نظر محو می گردد وجودم سرسبز

(In the brightness of that one glance, my existence annihilates completely).

از ضیای آفتاب فر شاه پاک بری خیزم آن ساعت ز راه

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(In the light of the glorious sun of the royalty, I am obliterated presently).

چون نمی ماند ز من نهم در جود چون بخدمت پیش افتم در سجود

(When I no longer exist, how can I bow in reverence).

گر تو می بینی کسی را آن زبان نیستم من هست آن شاه جهان

(If you see anybody at the time of bestowing favours, it is not I, it is the king of the world himself).

گر تو یک لطف را اگر صد میکنی آن ای خداوندی تو با خود میکنی

(You may bestow one favour of a hundred; you are yourself in front of you, and doing this favour to yourself).

سایه ای گم شود در آفتاب روی لکیده خدمتی در برابرج باب

(The shadow that is lost in the sun, cannot stand as a servant in front of the king).

هست ایازت سایه ای در کوی تو گم شده در آفتاب روی تو

(Ayāz is a shadow who has been lost in the sun of your face).

This definition of the Valley of Unity clearly leads one to believe that 'Attār belonged to that predominant Sūfī School of the 13th century which has been justly given by its adversaries, the name of Wahadīya (or Wujūdīya) as professing the doctrines of existentialist monism (Wahdat-ul-Wujūd). This

doctrine claims a long descent. It turns to its advantage Qurānic verses (II, 115 ; XXVIII 88; I.16), the primitive Ash'ari Kalām, regarding every spiritual happening as an immediate act of God, and extravagances of the language of the early Sufis like Bayazīd-i-Bistāmī and Hallāj. It is, however, really derived from the identification, proposed as early as the 10th century A.D. of the Nur-i-Muhammadi of Moslem gnosticism with the active intellect of the Hellenistic doctrine of Emanation.

Ibn 'Arabī (D. 578 A.H./1240 A.D.) was perhaps the first to formulate and explain fully the doctrine of the existentialist monism. According to him, at bottom, the existence of created things is nothing but the very essence of the existence of the Creator. He teaches in fact, that things emanate from divinity in which they pre-existed (Thubūt) as ideas, by a flux evolving in five periods and that the souls by a logically constructed inverse involution re-integrate the divine essence. Farḡānī and Jīlī only add a few touches of detail to this main theory, which to this day has remained that of all Moslem mystics. It is the one which the Persian poets have sung interminably in the simplified form, which qunīyawī, putting into order the ideas of 'Attār expresses thus, "God is existence in as much as it is general and unconditional; it is that which flows, like the sea under its waves, through the fleeting forms

of individual beings"¹⁵⁸.

The pantheistic monism of 'Attār implies the identification of God with the world. God and the universe are one and inseparable; all is God and God is all, nature and God are identical. These ideas strongly emphasize the Oneness and the divineness of reality.

'Attār begins with the religious belief in God as the Infinite and Eternal Reality; hence the finite and temporal world is swallowed up in God and pantheism becomes acosmism i.e. the world is an illusion in comparison with God as reality.

The origin of pantheism is either philosophical or religious. For example Hegel's pantheistic conceptions have their root in the soil of the speculative intellect, while the pantheism of Brahmanism is firmly based on the religious spirit. Usually, according to the origin, the emphasis of the system lies on the Transcendence or the Immanence of God, but on the whole 'Attār's concept of pantheistic monism combines the two attributes of Immanence and Transcendence in an astonishing manner.

God, like the Brahman of the Indian thinker, is above all knowledge, for 'Attār, man must lose all consciousness of difference in Supra-conscious Unity as the goal of the search for the God. He claims the Immanence of God in himself and

¹⁵⁸. Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, Page 582, 1953.

strives to realise his identify with God, but not by plunging himself into the full tide of the world's life as one with God's, but rather by winging his lonely flight to God who is above rather than in and through all.

For 'Attār, identity with God is an achievement rather than an actuality and God is found away from, rather than, in the world. 'Attār refuses to regard morality and religion as the relation of the 'I' of man to the 'Thou' of God and substitutes for it that of the part to the whole. Accordingly his ideal is not self-realization of the 'I' in distinction from and in relation to the 'Thou', but the self-losing of the 'part' in the 'whole', which may, of course, be regarded as the self-recovery, since 'whole' is, as it were, the essence of the 'part'.

44. The Sixth Valley : The Valley of Amazement

The Sixth Valley is called as the Valley of Amazement by the guide. At this stage, the Salik is totally lost in bewilderment and falls a prey to sadness and dejection. Sorrow and lamentation, depression and despondency follow the traveller who has to cross this Valley under very difficult circumstances. If somebody asks him, "Are you or are you not ? Are you or are

you not existing ? Are you in the middle of the way or on the border ? Are you mortal or immortal or both", the Salik will simply reply.

گوید اصلاً می ندانم چیزی من دان ندانم هم ندانم نیز من
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(I do not know anything. I understand nothing, I am unaware of myself even).

عاشقم اما ندانم بر کیه ام نه مسلمانم نه کافر پس چه ام

(I am a lover, but I do not know my beloved. I am neither a believer nor a heretic, I am unaware as to who I am).

The state of Amazement, according to the sūfis, is the third kind of state that a Salik experiences before reaching finally the state of Tranquility. After crossing the Valley of Unity, the traveller is so much overawed by the majestic dignity of the Supreme Being and His Presence everywhere, that he is lost in eternal surprise and bewilderment. He feels as if he is in dream. The world looks nothing more than an illusion. But, at the same time, he is not certain about his spiritual visions even. These visions are constantly viewed by him but, nevertheless, when he tries to analyse them they cannot be explained logically. He can be compared with that slave who was taken to his beloved princess under the

influence of liquor. This slave revelled with that beauty for the whole night. In the morning when he came to himself and found himself in his own humble abode, he was in a state of great bewilderment and could not explain this astonishing mystery to anybody.

This state is further explained by 'Attār in the following verses :

زین عجب تر حال نبود در جهان حالتی نه آشکارا نه نهان

(What can be more surprising in the world than this state which is neither revealed nor hidden).

نه زمانی محو می گردد ز جهان نه از و یک ذره می یابم نشان

(My soul cannot forget it ^{even} for even a moment. But all the same, I cannot find even an atom of Him).

دیده ام صاحب جمال کز کمال بی نه بر بخش هیچ کس در هیچ حال

(I have seen a beauty whose perfection could not be analysed by anybody at any stage).

چیت پیش چهره او آفتاب ذره ای که الله اعلم بالصواب

(The sun is nothing more than an atom of dust as compared to His Face. God knows better).

در میان آن و این شوریده ام

من چو ادرادیده و نادیده ام

(Since I have seen, at the same time, not seen Him. I have been left in confusion).

45. The Seventh Valley :

The Valley of Poverty and Annihilation

The last Valley is the Valley of Poverty and Death, which, in the opinion of the Murshid is indescribable. The main experiences, which a Salik is expected to have at this stage, are dumbness, deafness, forgetfulness and distraction from everything that exists except the Supreme Being. Hundred of thousands eternal shadows, which you observe around you, will disappear with the rise of the celestial sun. The Ocean of Eternity when in motion, obliterates every form on its surface.

نقشها بر بحر کی ماند بجای

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بحر کلی چون بجنبش کرد رای

(When the Ocean of universality is set in motion, the different patterns on its surface lose their shape).

هر که گویند نیست این سوداست بس

هر دو عالم نقش آن دریاست بس

(Both the worlds are a pattern on the surface of this Ocean.
One who denies it, is a fool).

One who is lost in this ocean acquires Tranquility and Non-existence, which, further leads to the knowledge of many divine mysteries. The experienced travellers also get lost, in this way, like the inexperienced and burn like aloe wood and thorns, alike in the celestial fire. When they are reduced to ashes, nobody can differentiate between them. But, nevertheless,

این بصورت هر دو یکسان باشند در صفت فرق فراوان باشند

(In form they look alike, but in quality there is a lot of difference among them).

گر پلیدی گم شود در بحر گل در صفات خود فرو ماند بزل

(If a filthy object is dropped in the ocean of rose-water it remains impure because of its innate qualities).

لیک اگر پاکی درین دریا رود از وجود خویش ناپیدا رود

(But if a pure object drops in this ocean, it loses its existence).

جنبش او جنبش دریا نبود او چون بود در میان زیبا بود

(It will participate in the movement of the ocean when it ceases to exist, it retains its beauty).

نبودار واد بود چون باشد این از خیال عقل بیرون باشد این

(It does not exist and still exists. How is it ? This is beyond the comprehension of intellect).

In the opinion of Nasir-ud-Din of Tus, the Hoopee further relates, one has to melt oneself in the fire of love until one becomes as thin as hair. At this stage this hair is suitable to be fitted among the locks of the divine beloved.

He, who is lost, secures Annihilation. But when he annihilates himself from Annihilation, obtains Immortality.

جامه ای از نیستی در پوش تو کاسه پر از فنا کن نوش تو

(Put on the dress of non-existence and drink of the cup of annihilation).

پس سر کم کاستی در بر فکن طیلان لم یکن بر سر فکن

(Dress up yourself with the idea of belittlement and put on your head, the burmous of nothingness).

در رکاب محو کن پای ز پیچ رخن ناچیزی بران جای ز پیچ

(Put your feet of detachment in the stirrup of non-existence, Lead your steed of belittlement to the destination of nothingness).

همچنین میرویدین آسودگی تارسی در عالم کم بودگی

(Walk comfortably in this manner until you reach the world of annihilation).

گر بود زین عالم همی اثر نیست از ان عالمی موی اثر

(If you are even a little attached to this world, you cannot have even a little attachment with that world).

گر هر موی بماند از خودیت هفت دریا پر برآید از بدیت

(But if you possess the least egoism, the seven seas will be full of calamities for you).

The great divine mystery was solved only by those who annihilated themselves and became one with the divine beloved. The story of the moths makes this point very clear.

One night, the moths assembled at a place and out of their love for the candle, decided to send somebody in order to get information about the object of their amorous quest. One moth found the light of the candle in a castle. He returned and started describing the candle, according to his own observation. The leader of the assembly rejected his description by saying that he understood nothing about the

candle. Another moth went to the candle and began to fly in the light of the candle. On his return to the assembly, his version of the candle was also not found acceptable by the leader. The third moth, intoxicated with the wine of love hurried to the candle and at once threw himself on the flame. When his limbs caught fire he became as red as the flame. He got hold of the flame with his hands and became united with it. When the leader of the moths noticed this, he said :

تا نگروی بی خبر از جسم و جان کی خبر یابی ز جانان یک زمان

(How can you get information about your beloved until you are lost to your body and soul)).

The pre-requisite condition for self-annihilation, in the way to the union with God, is detachment from your bag and baggage. You can lose the feeling of existence only when you are reduced to ashes, including your baggage. But if you are in possession of even a single needle, like Jesus, a hundred thieves will lie in wait for you. Although Jesus had abandoned his baggage, the possession of a needle exposed him. Faqr requires of you to give up everything and then start your spiritual career in privacy.

هر چه داری یک یک از خود باز کن پس بخود در خلوتی آغاز کن

(Give up everything, that you possess one by one. Afterwards start with yourself in seclusion).

چون دوزخ جمع شد در بخودی تو برون آی نه نیکی و بدی

(When you are firm in selflessness, virtue and vice do not make any difference for you).

چونما ندنیک و بد عاشق تویی پس نهای عشق را لائق تویی

(When you are mindless to good and bad, you become a true lover. At this stage, you are most suitable for your complete absorption in love).

Faqr or 'Poverty' is used in Sūfism in temporal as well as spiritual sense. Thus "one who follows the path of Faqr not only keeps himself away from material possession but from every desire which may lead him away from God. Nicholson¹⁶¹ quotes Jāmī as saying, "Faqirs renounce all worldly things for the sake of pleasing God. They are urged to this sacrifice by one of three motives :

(a) Hope of an easy reckoning on the Day of Judgement or fear of being punished.

(b) Desire of paradise.

161. Mystics of Islām, Page 38.

(o) Longing for spiritual peace and inward composure.

Rūmī, while illustrating Poverty writes in his famous Masnavī.

"Since the broken (contrite) one will be saved, be thou broken (contrite). Safety lies in poverty; enter into poverty."¹⁶²

"The affair of (spiritual) poverty is beyond thy apprehension; do not look on poverty with contempt,

Because dervishes are beyond property and wealth; they possess an abundant portion from the Almighty."¹⁶³

"Is (the saying) 'Poverty is my pride' vain and false? No; 'tis thousands of hidden glories and disdains."¹⁶⁴

"God forbid ! I desire nothing from created beings ; through contentment there is a (whole) world within my heart."¹⁶⁵

"Have patience with poverty and abandon this disgust, because in poverty there is the light of the Lord of glory."¹⁶⁶

"The provision of leaflessness (spiritual poverty) is the sign of being a gnostic; the yellowness of gold is the

162. Masnavī - Vol. IV, Verse 1757.

163. Ibid - Vol. I, Verses 2352-53.

164. Ibid - Vol. I, Verses 2357.

165. Ibid - Vol. I, Verses 2362.

166. Ibid - Vol. I, Verses 2374.

(cause of the) money-changer's ruddiness of face (cheerful countenance)."¹⁶⁷

"For this reason poverty is everlasting glory, since the hand that cannot reach (to objects of desire) is left with fear of God (and nothing else)."¹⁶⁸

The word Fanā, which was probably used for the first time in its mystical sense by Bāyazīd-i-Bistāmī (D.675 A.H.), clearly implies that the Sūfī should annihilate his self completely and should merge himself in the existence of God. It was at this stage that Hallāj, asserted "Anā' Haqq", "I am God" (Aham Brahmasmi in Vedānta) and Bāyazīd-i-Bistāmī said, "Subhanī ma ! 'Azam-i-Shānī i.e. How great is my majesty"

There has been very serious misunderstanding about the conception of Fanā in the Orthodox circles. Those, who are opponents, assert ^{the question} that how can man become God? If it is possible what was the offence committed by Pharaoh that he was regarded as Kāfir (unbeliever). To be clear about this very important mystical conception of 'passing away from self', we are in need to bear in our minds that, according to the Islamic view, God is eternally distinct from the created beings. He is the essence of existence and He only exists, nothing else. There always remains difference between the Khalīq (Creator) and the Khalq (created being). It, therefore, is necessary

167. Ibid , Volume IV - Verse 2055.

168. Ibid , Volume III- Verses 3280-83.

to take into consideration the conception of fana in this light. Hence, Fana does not mean that the Zat (the essence) of the Sūfī is annihilated and he totally disappears or is absorbed in God, as a piece of ice disappears in water.

According to Dr. Mīr Valī-ud-Dīn¹⁶⁹, "In what is known as fana, the essence of Sūfī is not transformed into that of God. The Sūfī does not become God. What happens is merely this : The Sūfī becomes as he was when he subsisted in God's knowledge before God brought him into being. Before creation he was an idea in the mind of God, and in the state of Fana he becomes as he was when he subsisted in God's mind - an Idea. Before creation, being an Idea, he had a limited form, did not possess his own independent existence and had no positive attributes. Further he possessed no activity of his own. When he was created, existence, attributes and essence were bestowed upon him, according to the nature or capacity or his Zat or essence. This bestowal was nothing but the manifestation of God Himself in accordance with the aptitude of His Idea i.e. the essence of the Sūfī. In the state of Fana the Sūfī reverts to his original form and sinks into nothingness".

The following verses of Rūmī quoted by the same author

169. The conception of Fana in Islamic mysticism.

are worthy of attention.

"When the disc of the sun makes its appearance in the East, no trace of the night or the stars are left. Similar is the case with the seeker of the presence of God. When God appears, the seekers passes into nothingness. In the Divine Presence he perishes and then exists and does not exist. This existence in non-existence is a strange phenomenon."

In the Diwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrizi,¹⁷⁰ Rumi again gives an excellent description of Fanā in the following manner.

What is to be done O Moslems ?

For I do not recognize myself.

I am neither Christian nor Jew,
nor Gabr nor Moslem.

I am not of the East nor of the West,
nor of the land, nor of the Sea,

I am not of Nature's mint,
nor of the circling heavens.

I am not of earth, nor of water,
nor of air, nor of fire;

I am not of the empyrean nor of the dust,
nor of existence, nor of entity.

I am not of India, nor of China,

170. Nicholson, Pages 125-127, Cambridge Edition 1898.

nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsīn;

I am not of the Kingdom of Irāqain,

nor of the country of Kherasan.

I am not of this world, nor of the next,

nor of Paradise, nor of Hell;

I am not of Adam, nor of Eve

nor of Eden and Kizwān.

My place is the placeless,

my trace is the traceless.

'Tis neither body nor soul,

for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.

I have put duality away,

I have seen that the two worlds are one;

One I seek, One I know, One I see

One I call.

He is the first, He is the last

He is the outward, He is the inward;

I know none other except 'Yā Hū'

and 'Yā man Hū'.

I am intoxicated with Love's cup,

the two worlds have passed out of my ken,

I have no business save carouse and revelry.

If once in my life I spent a moment without

thes.

From that time and from that hour,

I repent of my life.

If once in this world I win a moment with Thee,
 I will trample on both worlds,
 I will dance in triumph for ever
 O Shams-i-Tabriz, I am so drunken in this world,
 That except of drunkenness and revelry,
 I have no tale to tell".

The oldest systematic exposition of pantheistic Sūfism the Kashf-ul-Mahjūb of Hajwiri, gives all the explanation that could be desired of Fanā in the following extracts :

"The virtue of poverty understood in the mystic sense consists in averting the gaze from all created things- In that general annihilation, seeing only the all-one, the Sūfī hastens towards the fullness of eternal life."¹⁷¹

"Mystic poverty", we are further told, "consists in the annihilation of the human attributes (Sifāt) which dwell in the ego, so that one is now only rich in God and through God".

"The Sūfī is he that has nothing in his possession nor is himself possessed by anything. This denotes the essence of annihilation (Fanā). When this feeling has obtained its perfection it is called Fanā-i-Kullī (absolute annihilation)"¹⁷².

171. Nicholson's Translation of Kashf-ul-Mahjūb, Page 20.

172. Ibid, Page 25.

The author of the Kashf-ul-Mahjūb expressly states¹⁷³ that Fanā does not mean loss of essence and destruction of personality as some ignorant Sūfīs think. "It is not the essence, but the human attributes, which are a danger to the perfection of being, that are destroyed"¹⁷⁴. "In India", says the author, "I had a dispute with a man who claimed to be versed in the Qurānic exegesis and theology. When I examined his pretensions, I found that he knew nothing of annihilation"¹⁷⁵ i.e. he had understood the word Fanā in a metaphysical sense.

The expression Fanā is often associated with Safā (purity) and Baqā. In the former sense the idea is that the Sūfī should keep his soul pure and clean from all worldly defilements. In the latter sense i.e. its association with Baqā, as we shall see presently, it implies subsistence i.e. the man who has destroyed his own will, henceforth lives in God; the human will is transitory while God's will is eternal.

Fanā of Sūfism has often been compared with the Buddhist Nirvāṇa. It must be pointed out here that this comparison is entirely inadequate as both the conceptions are basically different. Sūfism does not entertain the notion of metempsychosis and the concept of a personal and all-present God.

173. Ibid, Page 243.

174. Ibid, Page 28.

175. Ibid, Page 243.

is throughout predominant. On the contrary the Buddhist idea of annihilation is independent of the idea of God and includes the idea of the transmigration of souls, to which Nirvāṇa puts an end.

Fanā of Sūfism has its equivalent in Vedantin literature as the Advaitic Mokṣa or Jīvanmukti. In the Viveka-śūdamani¹⁷⁶ we come across the following extract :

"The verdict of all discussions on the Vedānta is that the Jīva and the whole universe are nothing but Brahman, and that liberation (Mokṣa) means abiding in Brahman, the Invisible Entity". The word Mokṣa literally means 'Release'. The use of this term in the Upaniṣads implies the release of the individual soul from the bondage of selfish sensuous and finite existence. For example the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad¹⁷⁷ says, "as the flowing rivers come to their end in the sea, losing name and their form, so liberated from name and form, proceeds the wise to the divine soul, which is greater than the great". In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad¹⁷⁸ it is stated that "as a man, fully embraced by his beloved wife, does not know anything at all, either external or internal, so does this finite being (self) fully embraced by the Supreme Self, not know anything at all, either external or internal".

176. Verse 478, Advaita Ashram Publication.

177. Dr.E.Roer's Translation of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, III,11,8.

178. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV, 111,21 (Published by Advaita Ashram).

Again in the Mundaka Upanisad^{178^a}, we are told that "those who have ascertained the meaning of the knowledge derived from Vedānta, who by the Yoga which renounces all worldly concerns, are striving (for emancipation) and whose intellects are purified, all those, at the time of their final death, enjoying the highest immortality in the worlds of Brahman, become fully liberated".

A close examination of the Vedantin Mokṣa reveals that this stage, in the Upaniṣads, means the absorption of human ego into Absolute or Super-Ego i.e. becoming one with God (Brahman). On the other hand, the concept of Fana in Sūfism does not mean this. Fana is the passing away of human consciousness. By this procedure human ego does not become the Absolute-Ego. In other words man does not become God. The essence of the seeker's being survives. Salik is an idea in the mind of God and ideas are different from the mind that knows them. Consequently the ideas never become the knower and the knower does not become the ideas. Hence Fana is reversion to the original form and it is not transformation of essence.

178^a. Mundaka Upaniṣad. III. ii. 6.

46. The Destination :

When Hoopoe, the guide, finished his discription of the different stages of the spiritual path, the birds sank in sorrow and their heads drooped down. Now they came to understand that it was beyond their means and capacity to reach the destination to which the Murshid wanted to lead them. Many of them got so much excited that numbers of them died on the spot. The remaining birds set out on the long road and spent years in crossing the Valleys and Mountains. The difficulties, they experienced, cannot be possibly described, because one has to experience them personally in order to know them fully.

In the end, one out of thousands, reached that sublime place where the great 'Sinurgh' lived. The remaining birds had disappeared in the way. Many had perished in the ocean, mountains and the scorching heat. Their wings got burnt and dried up in the fire of the sun. Many were devoured by the tigers and lions, some died of thirst and heat in the wilderness and sand deserts. Others had committed suicide for the sake of a grain of barley. There were others who were wonderstruck by the curiosities of the way and stepped midway.

In a word, out of thousands of birds, only thirty reached the end of the journey in a state of weariness, dejection and bewilderment. Their feathers and wings were no more with

them. But the redeeming feature of the situation was that the celestial threshold was in front of them. In the words of Attār :

حضرتی دیدند بی وصف و صفت برتر از ادراک عقل و معرفت

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(They saw a door which was beyond description and knowledge . It was above human reason and comprehension).

برق استغاثی افزوختی صد جهان در ایک زمان میوختی

(The lightening of detachment flashed and a hundred worlds were burnt in a moment).

صد هزاران آفتاب معتبر صد هزاران ماه و انجم بیشتر

(There were thousands of real suns. More than hundreds of thousands of moons and stars).

This sight made the birds more gloomy. They were convinced once more of their futile efforts in coming to that place, because how could they appear before Him who had reduced the sun to an atom!

They were in this state of dejection and despondency for a long time. Then, at a propitious moment the celestial door suddenly opened, and a respectable Chamberlain, one of the courtiers of the Supreme Majesty came out of it. He asked

them about their homes, names and object of coming to the Supreme Gate. The birds replied :

جله گفتند آمدیم اینجا بگاه تا بود سیرغ مارا پادشاه

(We have come here to acknowledge the Simurgh as our King).

ما همه کشتگان در گهیم بیدلان و بیقراران رهیم

(We are the lovers of this door. We have lost our peace of mind in this love).

مدتی شد تا درین راه آمدیم از هزاران سی بدرگاه آمدیم

(After a very long time we, the thirty out of thousands, have reached this place).

پیر امید می آمدیم از راه دور تا بود مارا درین حضرت حضور

(We are very hopeful to secure permission in this celestial court, after traversing a very long distance).

کی پسند در رخ ما آن پادشاه اخرا از لطفی کند برمانگاه

(How can the King see us in trouble ? Certainly He would cast a glance of benevolence on us).

The Chamberlain, in order to test them, asked them to return to their respective homes. The King did not stand in need of them. They may or may not exist, the King will remain

eternally.

صد هزاران عالم پر از پناه هست موری بر در این پادشاه

(Innumerable worlds full of creatures are no more than an ant at the gate of this King).

از شما آخر چه نیز دایم زبیر باز پس گردید ای مشت حقیر

(O, unfortunate ones ! what can you accomplish ? It is better for you to return, O you, handful of dust !).

Although the talk of the Chamberlain was very disappointing, yet the birds took this ignominy as a good omen. One insult from the beloved was better than a hundred compliments from others. When they persisted in their love and longing for the Divine Beloved and got ready to sacrifice their lives, like moths, on the candle of love, there appeared on the scene, the Chamberlain of benevolence, who drew aside hundreds of veils, one after the other, for the birds to enter. The unrevealed world manifested itself and the light of the lights appeared in succession. Now all the birds were made to sit on the Throne of Glory and Majesty and asked to read a writing. This was an account of their worldly deeds. The birds had committed many acts which, now, made them so ashamed that their souls and bodies were dissolved there and there. After this the Sun of Majesty sent forth its rays, illumined their souls, and

what, they had done previously, was washed away.

A strange phenomenon was observed now. The Sun of nearness lighted the faces of the thirty birds in such a manner that in the reflection of each other's faces, they contemplated the face of the Simurgh.

هم ز عکس روی سی مرغ جهان چهره سی مرغ دیدند آن زمان

(In the reflection of the faces of the thirty worldly birds the face of the Simurgh appeared now).

چون نگه کردند آن سی مرغ بود بیک آن سی مرغ آن سی مرغ بود

(When they pondered over it, they found it to be the Simurgh. Undoubtedly that Simurgh was the thirty birds).

When they looked at the Simurgh they found it to be really there and when they turned their gaze towards themselves they saw that they themselves were the Simurgh. And

در نظر در هم دو کردند یکی بهم هر دو یک سی مرغ بودی بیش کم

(And when they perceived both at a time, themselves and Him, they found that they and the Simurgh were one).

The birds, lost in amazement, at long last questioned the Simurgh, about this strange phenomenon. They did not use their tongues and the Simurgh also replied without speaking

that this door is a mirror dazzling like Sun. He who comes here and looks into this mirror, sees his own body and soul in it. Since you are thirty in number, you are seeing thirty in the mirror. But if you were forty or fifty, the same number would have been visible in this mirror. Although you are completely changed, yet you are looking at yourselves and recognizing yourselves. Nobody can traverse this way all by himself.

هر چه دانستی و دیدی آن نبود آنچه گفتی و شنیدی آن نبود

(All that you have seen and known was unreal. All what you said and heard was not a reality).

ای همه وادی که واپس کرده اید دین همه مادی که هر کس کرده اید

(All these Valleys that you have crossed and all this Herculean task that everyone of you has accomplished).

جمله در افعال ما می خفته اید وادی ذات و صفت را دیده اید

(You have done all this by My action. You have seen the Valleys of My Essence and Attributes).

چون شماسی مرغ خیزان مانده اید بی دل و بصیر و بی جان مانده اید

(Since, you thirty birds, have been left in amazement, impatience and are more or less lifeless).

مجاگر دید در صد عز و ناز تا بباد رخو شستن یا بید باز

(Annihilate yourself gloriously and proudly in Me, so that you may find yourselves again, through Me).

In the end, the birds lost themselves in the Simurgh forever, like the shadow which loses its entity in the Sun. But the story does not end here. After a hundred thousand centuries when the mortal birds had surrendered themselves completely to annihilation, they secured Eternal Existence in the Simurgh. This Existence after Annihilation (بقا بعد الفناء) is a great secret which cannot be disclosed to every body.

Thus, comes the climax of the spiritual drama, emphasizing, the fact, that the 'Mystical Journey' which begins with Gnosis, ends with complete 'Passing Away' (Fanā). But, nevertheless, this is not the end of the mystical experiences of the human soul. It is followed by another higher stage which is termed by 'Attār' as 'Baqā-bād-ul-Fanā' (بقا بعد الفناء). Nearness to God, as we have seen above, is attained by shaking off one's own existence. The treasures of truth are found in 'Non-existence'. This kind of complete submission (Fanāfillah) of self to the Divine Self associates the Sūfī eternally to God which state is termed as 'Baqābillah'

or existence through God. "He who dies to self lives in God, and Fanā, the consummation of this death, marks the attainment of Baqā or union with the divine life"¹⁸⁰.

This conception is naturally very encouraging and fills the heart of the Sūfī with hope and zeal. Maulānā-i-Rūm says :

"Man will live an glorious life through his death as Joseph was taken out from the well and brought to the glory"

"The spirit debarred from everlasting life is exceedingly tormented; the spirit united (with God) in everlasting life is free from (every) barrier"¹⁸¹

"When the discourse reached the description of this (exalted) state, at once the pen broke and the paper tore"¹⁸².

180. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam, P. 149.

181. Nashayī, Vol IV, Verse 446.

182. Ibid, Vol V, Verse 4195.

مقامات طيور ماچناست
که مرغ عشق را معلوم بجاست
عطار

The book *Maqāmāt-i-Tayyir* (Stages of the Birds i.e. *Mantiq-ut-Tair*) is such that it serves as the culmination of the spiritual flight of the Bird of Love.

Altar

CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

‘Attār, on the whole, is a populariser, rather than a creator of the Sūfī ideas. A critical analysis of his Hantiq-ut-Tair clearly shows that most of his mystical doctrines, scattered sporadically in his verses, owe their origin to other sources. He is always in an ecstatic state to repeat them, time and again, at any suitable or unsuitable place, convincing the reader of his own overwhelming enthusiasm, about their adoption as a way of life.

‘Attār comes from a Sunni background and believes, apparently, in every tenet of Islām. His liking for the Qurānic teachings is an established fact. But, nevertheless, his dislike for dogmatism and his zeal to estimate the religious values by their significance, rather than by their forms, is equally apparent. As a true Sūfī, he interprets the texts in his own way. Paradise and Hell exist for him in man's nature¹ and that Paradise is here, but nobody knows, and whoever knows is amazed². Similarly, the punishment and the reward in the next world, are actually, the separation from

1. ‘Attār : Jawahir Nāmeh, Kulliyāt, P. 16.

2. Ibid : P. 89.

or union with the Divine Beloved³.

These ideas lead him to become tolerant towards every religion. He is no longer a bigot Moslem and believes in the welfare of every creature in the world. "God's mercy is abundant. This will cover all the people of all creeds. He will scatter it upon Jews, as well as Magians and the Christians"⁴.

Religious ordinances, at a certain Sūfī stage, matter little for Attār. If a slave grows old in the service of the Master, the latter sets him free from His service⁵. Thus an apt Sūfī does not have to perform all the religious ceremonies and practices, like ordinary men.

'Shari'at' (Qurānic Law) and 'Haqiqat' (Truth) do not differ for Attār. Obedience to Law is essential, yet "Truth" sometimes makes the knower bold enough to speak it out. This state does not conform with the outward appearance of the Law, which, in turn, declares such "people of Intimacy" as outlaws. But, in Attār's opinion, they are to be tolerated, because they are "the knowers of the divine secrets" and the "true lovers of the Supreme Being". Hallāj, therefore, is the champion of the Sūfīs⁶.

3. Ibid : P. 220.

4. Ibid : P. 229.

5. Attār : Mantiq-ut-Tair, P. 148, Paris Edition.

6. Ibid : P. 107-110.

'Attār belongs to the moderate class of the Sūfīs. Even all the casks of the divine wine shop cannot make him intoxicated. He loves to be sober and sincere to his spiritual Master (God). Divulgence of the esoteric doctrines is an unpardonable crime for him. Consequently, though Hallāj is the leader of the Sūfīs, yet his not keeping to the form of the Law, makes 'Attār very unhappy.

Detachment, Divine Love and Self-annihilation to achieve union with the Supreme Being, are the three cardinal principles of 'Attār. We find him preaching these ideas at every step.

Detachment from the world and the worldly things sets Sūfīs on the path of the Truth. "The hands being clear of the worldly property and the heart being free from greed" is the watchword of 'Attār. Next the Divine Love is the key-note of his Sūfī doctrines. It is the only medium through which the mortal can become immortal. The fire of Divine Love burns every deceitful form that hides the Supreme from our eyes. Far above the Faith and blasphemy, the lover annihilates himself in the love of his Beloved and ultimately secures living through Her. But, it must be noted here that 'Attār does not approve 'Ishq-i-Majāzī' (Love for the phenomenon) like Rūmī and his followers. He does not think like them, that the phenomenal love is the way to 'Ishq-i-Haqīqī' (Love

for the Neumenon or Numinous) - the Real Love. He, in unmistakable terms, teaches the Divine Love as the only means to secure Union with the Supreme.

'Fanā' or Self-annihilation or "passing away" is the goal, which, according to Attār, must be achieved by the ḡufī in order to get stripped of his phenomenal existence and secure eternal existence. This may be described as a "state of Unity" or Unitive state, in which the Ṣālik surrenders his attributes to the Divine Attributes and consequently becomes one with the Divine Sea. But this is not the end of it. Attār believes in the life after death. In the symbolic story of the birds, in the Mantiq-ut-Tair, we are told that, the Birds or the souls, were given back to themselves without themselves, after a hundred thousands of centuries. Thus they achieved their ultimate goal of Subsistence after Annihilation (Baqā ba'd al-Fanā⁷). This in other words means "to die to self and then live in the Universal Spirit of God".

Attār is not self-consistent in his description of God. Sometimes he speaks of Him as the Unknowable Creator whose Divine Essence (Zāt) is beyond our comprehension. He is signless and is not accessible to the human sight. At other places, we find him favouring the possibility of knowing the Almighty through spiritual ecstasy and divine love. The

7. Attār : Mantiq-ut-Tair, P. 168, Paris Edition.

ṣūfī, in such a state, according to Ṭṭār, can know His Attributes (Ṣifāt) as well as Essence (Zāt). The reason for this inconsistency, perhaps, can be traced, in the poet's interminable zeal, and inexhaustible treasure of mystical expressions, which inspire him to versify the subject in different styles and from various angles. In his overwhelming enthusiasm, Ṭṭār becomes extremely sentimental and is often carried away by his poetical imagination.

Thus, God is immanent as well as transcendent for Ṭṭār. ^{according to} He can never be cruel to anyone. On the contrary, He is an embodiment of mercy, kindness and generosity. He is not only the Father of His children; He is the Beloved of His lovers also.

In regard to the emanation of the world from God, Ṭṭār appears to be highly impressed by Neo-Platonism. According to his ideas, the phenomenal world is a shadow or reflection of God. All perceptible things depend upon God for their existence and have no independent existence of their own. God is the mover as well as the goal of the world. The world is only His manifestation.

Man, according to Ṭṭār, contains the Divine Spirit as well as the low matter. He is the image of God on the earth. The great Divine Mystery wanted the Essence to be

manifested in the Attributes and the Whole was made to appear in the Part. The only Divine Being in the world of matter is man whose soul is from God and whose goal is to seek re-union with God.

The man, as the essence of the world, progresses through many spiritual stages till he finally passes away into God. This idea reminds us of these famous verses of Rūmī wherein he says:

از جادای مردم دنیا می شدم در نما مردم بچیان رزدم

(I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal).

مردم از حیوانی و آدم شدم پس چه ترسم کی ز مردن کم شدم

(I died from animality and became Adam (man) : why, then, should I fear ? When have I become less by dying ?)

حلقه دیگر بسیم از بشر تا برارم از ملائک پرور

(At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;)

در ملک هم بایدم بستن ز جو کل نشی با ملک الا وجهه او

(And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel;
everything is perishing except His Face).

بار دیگر از ملک قربان شوم آبخ اندر دهم نایران شوم

(Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel; I shall
 become that which enters not into the imagination.

پس عدم گردم عدم چون از غم گویدم که انا الیه راجعون

(Then I shall become non-existence; non-existence saith to
 me, (in tones loud) as an organ, Verily, unto Him shall we
return).⁸

The worldly defilements render the human soul impure.
 It loses its purity, while descending from the spiritual realm
 and coming into contact with the matter. The love of the body
 becomes so strong that the soul feels satisfied in the bonds
 of the material life. Thus it dislikes to leave its companion,
 the body and desires to remain in the world forever. But this
 attachment does not bring anything except evil and misery.
 The salvation, according to 'Aṭṭār, can only be achieved if the
 soul, which he compares to a bird, remembers its home and
 strives to regain it.

The Return Journey of the Soul, which is a bird flown

8. Rūmī : Masnavī, Vol III- Verses 3900-3906.

from the throne, in the first place, need a capable guide, without whom, it cannot reach its destination. Next, it has to cross "the Seven Valleys of fears and tears", in the words of 'Attār, in order to secure union with the Supreme and to live eternally through Him. These Seven Valleys may be styled as the spiritual progress of the human soul towards its object of achieving the final stage of 'Baqābillah'.

'Attār, as already stated, is not original in his ideas, and the influence of the two great Sūfī thinkers, may be very easily discerned in his mystical conceptions. The Sūfī theory that "the man is the image of God and the medium through which God sees himself"⁹ was propounded and explained by Ibn 'Arabī. Similarly the following ideas of 'Attār owe a good deal to Ibn 'Arabī.

"God is both transcendent and immanent (transcendence and immanence being two fundamental aspects of Reality as man knows it)".

'Attār's pantheistic views that, "all being is essentially one, as it is all a manifestation of the divine substance." Again, "Union with God means the realisation of the already existing fact that the Sūfī is one with God".

And "The Reality of Mohammad is the creative principle

9. Ibn 'Arabī: Fusus-ul-Hikam, translated by Nicholson in his Studies in Islamic Mysticism, P. 157.

of the world. It was he who became the cause of the universe". These conception clearly prove the influence of Ibn 'Arabī on 'Attār.

The second theorist who has definitely influenced 'Attār's mind is Ghazzālī. In search of the true knowledge, 'Attār, like Ghazzālī, hates logic and reason. Philosophy and simple learning cannot take the Sūfī very far. The real way lies through immediate experience, ecstasy and inward transformation.

Another important influence of Ghazzālī on 'Attār is the latter's inclinations of reconciling his mystical doctrines with Moslem Orthodoxy and thus proving that the Islamic conception of devotion to the one God could not be followed without accepting the Sūfī way of life.

Ghazzālī's conclusion that God indwells all men and the soul, in its total denudations of all qualities is identical with God, appears to have impressed 'Attār. These ideas could be traced in the Ḥaṭṭīq-ut-Tair and elsewhere, without much difficulty, although the poet shirks to versify them in plain language.

At the end it may be remarked that 'Attār may be wanting in the variety and style of Rūmī or he may be less illustrious than Sanā'ī, as far as his poetry is concerned; but nevertheless, it can be safely said about him that he has some remark-

able noble and ennobling elements, which go to make him an outstanding *ṣūfī* of true faith and very high moral principles. His ardent preaching of Divine Love holds out a great prospect of tranquility and the eternal bliss to the suffering humanity. The pattern of thought and behaviour, which this poet of the mediaeval ages presents before us, can certainly go a long way for the re-establishment of the long-forgotten high moral and spiritual standards in these troubled times.

کردی ای عطار بر عالم نثار نافع ابرار هر دم اشکار

(O *Āṭṭār*, you have opened before the world, the musk of the Divine Mysteries).

از تو بر عطریست آفاق جهان در تو پر شورند عشاق جهان

(You have perfumed the horizons of the world. The lovers of the Divine Beloved have become restless because of your poetry).

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