

H.S.

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—HIS LIFE AND TEACHING

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB



PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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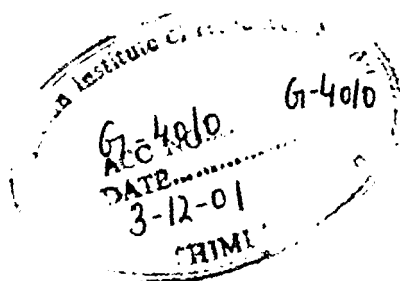
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FOREWORD

*The saint and the Lord
Are to the same task given,*

—Guru Granth, V, 867

Saints and mystics are among mankind's farseeing spirits. By their gifts of intuition and illumination they have brought forth insights which have given human life sensitivity as well as meaning. They are humanity's benefactors as have been the scientists, philosophers and artists. In moments of utter harmony and undifferentiation, they stood face to face with Reality and saw things in their pure nakedness and subtlety. Thus they discovered truths which lay beyond the reach of thought and sense-perceptions : thus they widened the limits of man's knowledge and experience. This is what humankind owes to the Vedic rishis, Upanishadic seers, Bodhisattvas, Christian mystics, Muslim Sufis and the Sikh saints.

All religious expression at its deepest level is lyrical. Mystical intimations validate practical values of love, holiness, *ekatadrishti* (oneness of vision seeing no otherness), tolerance, disregard of worldly advancement, surrender of ego and resignation. These are the principles basic to all religions. The saints and the mystics testify to these truths—the former by the certitude derived from their faith or directly imbibed from the masters and by their pious, self-abasing ways; the latter by the warmth and immediacy of their numinous experience and by their heightened and perceptive consciousness. Both have protested against the rigours of creed and dogma : both have occasionally been brought to the cross. Yet they exemplify in their lives the highest virtues of religion—that is, when the spiritual quest does not assume in the hands of the feeble-minded baroque and esoteric forms.

This Punjabi University series will include brief essays on the lives of saints and mystics from various religious traditions such as Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Sikh. A significant point is the common focus of their vision, their coherent tone of voice, poetry and symbolism, transcending barriers of time, country, race, and culture. The inspiration for this project came from Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Acknowledgements are made to him for his consistent interest in it. I must also express my indebtedness to my colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies who have helped in its implementation in a variety of ways.

*Guru Gobind Singh Bhavan
Punjabi University, Patiala*

HARBANS SINGH

PREFATORY

This monograph forms part of a series on eminent personalities in the world of Religion, sponsored by the Punjabi University, Patiala in its Department of Religious Studies. The urgency to take up Baba Sheikh Farid as the subject of one such book was made manifest by the approaching Octocentenary of his birth in 1973, apart from his great importance as one of the most eminent saints born in the Punjab, whose compositions were honoured by inclusion in the holy *Adi Granth* by the Founders of the Sikh faith. Sheikh Farid has numerous followers also in the areas close to the Punjab, such as Kashmir, Afghanistan and some parts of Muslim Central Asia. He was one of the earliest Sufis who consolidated the humanitarian thought and traditions of Sufism in India, and left the impress of his personality, which may be seen till today partly through the continuance as a religious centre of the *gaddi* (holy seat) of Pak-Pattan established by him, partly through the living influence of his Word in *Guru Granth Sahib*. It may be seen also in the great influence exercised over the Muslim mind in India and Pakistan by his disciple, the famous Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi.

For these reasons, Sheikh Farid's is not only a highly significant personality intrinsically, but also as a bridge of moral and spiritual thought between Muslims and non-Muslims. There has been a long-standing controversy in the world of Sikh scholarship about the *Bani* in *Guru Granth Sahib* entered in his name being his composition or of one of his spiritual descendants. This controversial subject involves strongly entrenched sentiments and convictions, and can at best be dealt with, though nowise finally settled, through elaborate academic research. This issue has therefore not been touched upon in this monograph; wherein the authorship of the *Bani* by Sheikh Farid Shakarganj, whose life spanned the later half of the twelfth and the earlier half of the

thirteenth centuries, has been assumed.

For part of my information on Sheikh Farid I am indebted to the two works of Professor K.A. Nizami, *Baba Shaikh Farid* (English) and *Terikhi-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht* (Urdu). I have also consulted some Persian sources, particularly *Siyar-ul-Aqtab*, a seventeenth century work, which has been drawn upon by all the writers on Sheikh Farid for the bulk of the details of his life. An Urdu work, *Sheikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar* by Shabbir Hassan Nizami Chishti has also been consulted, but this is mainly a secondary source in a highly devotional style. A map of the location of Pak-Pattan, the seat of Sheikh Farid, has been provided by Dr Gurdev Singh, Professor of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh to whom my grateful thanks are due. He has also contributed a brief note on this place.

All English renderings from Persian and from Adi Granth are my work. The transliteration of names and titles is in accordance with their pronunciation prevalent in India. The more precise classical transliteration systems have been eschewed.

Before closing, I must thank Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University and Professor Harbans Singh, my colleague for making this small book possible.

GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

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January, 1973

BABA SHEIKH¹ FARID GANJ-I-SHAKAR

A Brief sketch of his life

This famous Saint, whose name has been revered and honoured in the Punjab now for eight centuries, was a great moral and spiritual teacher. He has left some poetry, the appeal of which goes deep into the soul and induces in man the vision of the ideal life and that mood in which a surging emotion leaves the heart purified and converted. Born a Muslim, who established one of the principal seats of Muslim spiritual authority in the Punjab, he also left behind him to carry on his message a teacher with still greater fame and influence, the renowned Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, whose tomb is the resort annually of millions for prayers and fulfilment of wishes. Sheikh Farid's message was not narrow or sectarian, but had a wide humanitarian base, so that in an age marked by great brutality in its social and political organization, he brought the touch of humanity and fellow-feeling to all who came to seek his blessing, or to lay before him the agony of their suffering hearts. It was because of these great qualities that Guru Nanak and his Apostolic successors, the Gurus, themselves initiating a great movement of humanity, moral regeneration and peace among warring sects, incorporated the poetic message of Sheikh Farid in the Scripture, Adi Granth which they commended for contemplation to their followers. The inclusion of these compositions, almost all in the form of Slokas or distiches has been a great blessing, since this has not only preserved them from oblivion, but has provided to succeeding centuries great moral and spiritual inspiration. Besides, the preservation of these compositions has also pushed the Punjabi language and its literature several centuries back, so that through Sheikh Farid, this

1. Sheikh Farid has been called reverently Baba and Sheikh. Baba is a common honorific term for revered elders in Iran, Afghanistan and Northern India, including Punjab. Sheikh is an honoured religious title among Muslims, commonly applied to Sufis who have been called also Khwaja, Pir or Sultan. In Guru Granth Sahib Farid has been correctly referred to as Sheikh, which is Arabic for 'Elder of the Tribe'.

literature may now be reckoned to be at least eight hundred years old.

Background of the Age

The period in which Sheikh Farid was born saw the establishment and early stages of the consolidation of Muslim power in India. In the wake of the establishment of the Ghaznavid rule over several parts of the Punjab, the process of conversion of various grades of the Hindu population to Islam had begun. Along with that also settled in the Punjab, a certain number of Turks and Afghans, and thus several centres of Muslim influence grew over large areas of Punjab, Sind and the adjoining territories. Some of these well-known centres were Lahore, Multan, Uch, Hansi, Panipat and of course the capital Dihli¹. In these places Muslim centres of worship were established, and Muslim beliefs and the social ideas characteristic of Islam began to make a certain impact on the local populations.

After the defeat of the Dihli Kingdom of Rai Pithora, the tide of Muslim conquest swept over large areas of northern India. In the wake of these conquests and the establishment of the rule of the 'Slave' dynasty over the Dihli Empire, came the Mongol invasions of the Muslim homelands of Turan, Khorsan, Fars, Turkestan and Baghdad. These invasions effected by the terrible Chingiz and his son Halagu, sent into India a large stream of refugees including scholars, theologians and holy men of various Sufi Orders. These fleeing refugees settled down over various parts of the Dihli Sultanate and naturally found encouragement and hospitable treatment from the rulers. It was in this background that the forbears of Sheikh Farid found a home in the Punjab. These people brought the light of religious idealism and a new sweetness in human relationships, which helped them to make large-scale conversions from the local populations.

Birth and Early Life

Sheikh Farid was born in a family which traced its origin to Hazrat Omar Farooq, the second Caliph of Islam. In times of turmoil in the twelfth century his grandfather left his home in Ghazni in the country of Kabul and came to India. As already

1. In the context of medieval times, Delhi has been spelt here as Dihli.

mentioned, a large number of Muslim refugees from Iran and its neighbouring lands at that time poured into India to escape the depredations of the Mongols, till them unconverted to Islam, and a terror for the lands they attacked and occupied. Sheikh Farid's great-grandfather is said to have died at the hands of these Mongol hordes.

Sheikh Farid's father's name was Sheikh Jamaluddin Sulaiman. He had settled in the vicinity of Multan at a place called Kothwal or Kahatwal. Later Sheikh Farid settled at Ajodhan, close to the Sutlej. The place afterwards came to be called in his honour Pak-Pattan¹ (Sacred Ferry). Sheikh Farid's birth according to the Christian era occurred in 1173 (some calculate the year as 1175). The name given to him at birth was Fariduddin Masaud. According to one tradition Fariduddin was suggested by the name of the great Sufi Fariduddin Attar, author of the Sufi philosophical allegory *Mantiq-ut-Tayr* (Conference of Birds) whose birth had occurred in 1119. Later a member of honorifics were added to his name to indicate the people's reverence for him. But Farid, the first part of the name became most popular. ('Farid' in Arabic means 'Unique'.) One of the famous appellations by which he came to be known was Shakarganj or Ganj-i-Shakar (Treasury of Sugar). The reason for this peculiar appellation will shortly be explained.

It appears that the family into which the Sheikh was born had first come to Lahore and then moved to the neighbourhood of Multan. Sheikh Jamaluddin had three sons and one daughter—the future Saint, Farid being his second son. The child Farid received his early education at home. His mother, a pious lady named Qarsum Bibi taught him herself, and instilled into him the qualities of piety and rectitude. It was during his childhood that a miracle is said to have occurred which earned him the appellation referred to above, of *Ganj-i-Shakar*. His mother, in order to induce him to say his prayers (*namaz*) regularly and zealously gave him after every prayer some sugar as a reward, which was kept under a side of his prayer-mat. Once it appears she forgot to do this, but by Divine intervention some pieces of sugar got deposited in the place. When it was learnt that this had happened, a miracle was believed to have occurred, to bear witness to the character of his holiness.

I. A brief account of Pak-Pattan and a sketch-map are appended.

In another story he is said to have kept a long fast and at the end of it, not finding anything to break it with, he put a few pebbles into his mouth to assuage the rage of hunger. By a miracle, the pebbles turned into pieces of sugar-candy. There are similar other stories of miracles pertaining to sugar in connection with him. Perhaps the appellation Ganj-i-Shakar was a metaphorical expression, implying the sweetness of his words and the gentleness of his manner. A biographer of his, Amir Khurd has quoted this verse from the poet Sanai to pay his tribute to the great personality of the Sheikh:

سنگ در دست تو گهر گردد — زهر در کام تو شکر گردد

(Stones in thy hand turn into jewels :

Poison to thy palate turns to sugar.)

After receiving education at home he went to Multan for further study. Multan in those days was already a famous centre of Muslim learning and piety, where learned men from Baghdad and the Iranian centres would come, sometimes to reside and teach and sometimes to make their journey further towards Dihli. At Multan where the family of Sheikh Bahauddin Suharwardi, his cousin were established, he found ample scope to complete his education. One of the great teachers, both in the more purely intellectual and the spiritual fields whom he came across at Multan was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, known as *Qutbul-Aqtab* (Pole-star of Saints of the Highest Order). He was deeply impressed with the high intellectual gifts and mystical bent of mind of the young Farid¹, and took him under his wing. Such devotion and mutual rapport developed between Farid and the great Sufi Khwaja Qutbuddin that Farid followed him to Dihli, where he perhaps wished to settle down and find a large field for the propagation of his creed in the capital, then ruled over by Iltutmish,² the powerful Turk ruler. At Dihli Khwaja Qutbuddin rejoined his Preceptor Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, from whom he had got separated while both travelled out from troubled Central Asia, to learn and study

1. The Sheikh is mentioned as Farid in this monograph, though in the documents signed by him, his name occurs as Masaud. But evidently world at large who venerated him as saint, knew him as Farid

2. As pointed out by M. Mujeeb in *The Indian Muslims*, his correct name is Iltutmish.

as also to seek perfection in the various mystical exercises as ordained by the Chishtiya Silsilah or Order of Sufis, to which both the saints just mentioned belonged. So impressed was Khwaja Muinuddin with the fervent devotion and the promising nature of Farid, that he is said to have remarked to his disciple Khwaja Qutbuddin, in words nobly expressive of his high appreciation : 'Baba Bakhtiyar, you have caught a noble falcon (shahbaz) which will not build his nest except on the holy tree of Heaven. Farid is a lamp that will illuminate the Silsilah of the Dervishes.'"¹ After this the novice Farid was blessed by both saints, whose names have become part of the spiritual history of Islam in India.

In accordance with the tradition of the Chishtiya Order, Sheikh Farid supplicated his Preceptor that he be permitted to keep a *chillah*, which is forty days' segregation, fast and devotional exercises to purify the soul. It is said that Khwaja Qutbuddin ordered him to keep *chilla-i-makus* (lit. inverted seclusion) which involved hanging oneself head down in a lonely place, such as a well, for forty days during days or nights, and praying. This excruciating experience, which naturally the greatest and the most devoted adepts alone could undertake was, successfully gone through by Sheikh Farid, which may be said to mark the peak of his self-discipline. In some of the *Slokas* of Sheikh Farid, reproduced in translation in this monograph, there appear to be allusions to such an experience.

With Khwaja Qutbuddin, Sheikh Farid is stated to have stayed a considerable time in Dihli. During this period, Khwaja Muinuddin had gone over to Ajmer to establish his famous spiritual centre there, which till today is considered to be among the two or three greatest Muslim shrines in India. Khwaja Muinuddin left Dihli, it is said, because of the malicious machinations of a Muslim ecclesiastic, the Sheikhul Islam of the place. Both Khwaja Qutbuddin and Khwaja Muinuddin wanted to migrate from Dihli on this account, but the persuasion of the Sultan, Iltutmish prevailed and Khwaja Muinuddin permitted Khwaja Qutbuddin to stay on in Dihli.

After some stay in Dihli, where he acquired deeper insights into the spiritual and mystical realms, Sheikh Farid sought his Preceptor's permission to go back home, in Punjab. Having obtained

1. From *Baba Sheikh Farid*, by K. A. Nizami who has derived this story from *Siyarul Aqtab*

ned permission, he proceeded west. He made a stay in the town of Hansi, now in the district of Hissar, and after establishing a Sufi Centre there, he went on to join his people in the vicinity of Multan.

At Ajodhan (Pak-Pattan)

Various reasons have been stated for Sheikh Farid's choice of Ajodhan as his place of residence. It is possible that he wanted a quiet sequestered spot both for meditation and for carrying on his missionary work, away from the turmoil of the disturbed politics of the day. Other holy men have been known also to select for their spiritual work certain very unlikely spots. Ajodhan, situated near the river Sutlej, amid sand dunes, was the small market centre of an area inhabited by semi-civilized tribes, needing the ministrations of a man of God. The area has scanty rainfall and till the consolidation of British rule in the Punjab and the digging of canals, had very poor agriculture. While now it is colonized by people from several districts of the Punjab (before Independence there were a large number of Sikh cultivators and ex-soldiers) the original inhabitants, locally-converted Muslims, still continue to be called Jangalis (with 'a' lengthened or as in 'ah') that is, people of the jungle. By occupation they are herdsmen and cultivators and are well-known for cattle-lifting in which they have great skill.

Ajodhan came later, to be called Pak-Pattan. It was a small market-town and the junction of several roads. Near it on the Sutlej was the ferry to cross over into the area lying south of the river, into what now would be Firozpur District and the Bhawalpur region. It appears that at some time the old name of Ajodhan was dropped and the place came to be called Pattan or Ferry. In *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, the oldest known biography of Guru Nanak, where the Guru is stated to have met Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim) a successor to the spiritual throne of Sheikh Farid, the place has been called Pattan. Later, obviously in honour of the great Saint, it came to be called Pak-Pattan (The Sacred Ferry). Abul Fazl too has recorded the place as Pattan.

This place contains the Mausoleum of Sheikh Farid, which has always been venerated. Under Sikh rule the endowments of this Mausoleum and the Dargah (Abbey) of Sheikh Farid were continued and even augmented. In British times this place was made into a Tahsil of Montgomery District, and is on the railway

leading down from Lahore and Kasur. The descendants of Sheikh Farid are still in the holy seat of their ancestor, and are a family of note and influence in the area. The endowments and offerings are reported to bring to them considerable income. They are maintaining, in the tradition of their family, the institution of Langar (free kitchen) and Khanqah (Travellers' Rest House.)

The Sheikh's Career at Ajodhan

After migrating to Ajodhan, Sheikh Farid sent back his younger brother, Sheikh Najibuddin, to bring his mother from Kothwal where the other members of the family were staying. As mother and son were crossing the desert dunes of this wild area, her son went out in search of water. When he returned, he found his mother missing. She had evidently been devoured by some wild beast, and sometime later only a few bones were found in the place. Sheikh Farid bore this misfortune with the fortitude born of religious discipline and in the new place set himself to the task of bringing godliness and moral elevation into the lives of the people. Moving into this inhospitable area, Sheikh Farid set up a modest *kacha* house for himself and his family, which in time grew fairly numerous. Here he lived the life of a Sufi in its essentials of purity, which comprised great piety and spiritual exercises, and a vow of poverty. Poverty appears to have been the constant feature of the Sheikh's life, despite this that he got a numerous following, became famous over vast areas of the country and large voluntary offerings, called in Muslim parlance *futuh*, came to him. But in keeping with the true Sufi's tenor of life, he did not keep any part of the offerings to himself, but distributed it all among the poor. To hoard anything would militate against the Sufi's principle of *tawakkul* or implicit faith in Divine providence.

Several stories illustrative of the Sheikh's state of voluntary poverty, a form of martyrdom in the way of God, are related. At times there would be no food or only coarse food like some millet. At other times there was no salt to leaven the food. Often the Sheikh and those in the household, including the disciples had to live on wild substances growing in the arid soil around—*peelu* and *dela* which could survive the heat and long spells of drought in that sandy waste.

The state of the poverty of the Sheikh's family was such that on occasions he sent out the begging-jug (called *zanbil* among

Muslims) to raise small amounts for his maintenance. This, however, is an intriguing phenomenon, since by the account of his devotees the offerings or donations (*futuh*) were quite plentiful, and the Sheikh's fame had spread far and wide. But evidently the Sheikh deliberately embraced poverty after the example of the Prophet, who is reported to have said in one *Hadith*, 'Poverty is my pride' (*alfaqru fakhri*).

There is a story that Sultan Nasiruddin while on way to Uch, came to Ajodhan to pay respects to the Sheikh. His minister Balban, later to become Sultan, brought with him the title-deed of several villages to be given to the Sheikh for the maintenance of himself and his charities. The Sheikh in keeping with his attitude of voluntary poverty and trust in God (*tawakkul*) returned the gift. The following verses is quoted from him as expression of his feelings on this occasion :

شاه ارا دہ دہر منت نہر — رازق رازق ہے منت نہر
(The King presents villages to us and lays us under
obligation : Our Provider gives us subtenance
free of any obligation.)

Sufis avoided as a rule any contact with the rich and the powerful, and maintained an attitude of lofty personal independence. Anyone of their order consorting with the rich or accepting favours from them was at once declared *persona non grata* by the Head of the Order. There are numerous examples of Sufis turning their back on royal favours and standing up to rulers' threats. That was an expression not only of religious conviction, but also of the immense popularity enjoyed by Sufis, whom no potentate dared defy or persecute. Sheikh Farid's independence is a shining example of such attitude of lofty unconcern, and it brought to him the reverence not only of the generality of the Indian Muslims and many non-Muslims, but also of people in far-away Kabul and Central Asia. It was Sheikh Farid who could advise the Sultan who offered him gifts :

ملک بوزیر خرا ترس ضبط کن
(Put thy Kingdom under the charge of a
God-fearing Vizier.)

There was a visible contrast between the poverty of Sheikh Farid and the affluence of his cousin Sheikh Bahauddin of the Suharwardi Order, whose seat was in Multan and who also was venerated by vast multitudes. There was something exclusive and

aristocratic about Sheikh Bahauddin, whose line continued like Sheikh Farid's to enjoy influence. This contrast was between a holy man who was of the people, and one whose ministrations were selective and who received the homage of others from a distance.

His fame had spread far and wide. It is related that Timur (Tamerlane) in the course of his invasion of India in 1398 when passing along to Dihli, stopped to pay respects to the tomb of Sheikh Farid, and spared the town of Ajodhan the pillage and murder which attended his progress all along.

At Ajodhan Sheikh Farid set up a Kanqah or Prayer-house-cum-Hospice, as has been customary with Sufis, who set up the tradition of founding houses of piety where itinerant Sufis and other travellers could stay and get food. Here assemblies particularly of holy music would be held, and to its devotional poetry and emotional rhythm men would catch a kind of enthusiasm or even frenzy, and very often dance in that state. Sheikh Farid himself is said to have danced on listening to such music, called among Sufis *Samaa*. Orthodoxy has frowned on the practice, but tradition has permitted it to the Sufis, provided they remain within the limits of *Shariat* or the Muslim Cononical Law. This phenomenon may still be observed in the religious assemblies of Sufistically-inclined Muslims in the concerts called Qawalis, a taste for which has been brought to the common people by films at the present time.

Life at Ajodhan for Sheikh Farid was not easy. Like other great and noble souls he too had his detractors and enemies. The Qazi of Ajodhan is reported to have accused him of heresy and un-Islamic practices. To these malicious charges he reacted with sweet forbearance. Ultimately the Qazi was put to shame by the people around for carrying on a foul campaign against such a holy man, and he stopped his calumny.

One necromancer is reported to have sought to injure the Sheikh through black magic in which he was an adept. As a result, the Sheikh began to lose appetite and to suffer from an unaccountable ailment. After sometime on a hint, the Sheikh's followers succeeded in discovering a human figurine made of wheat flour, into which a large number of needles had been stuck. As the needles were extracted, the Sheikh began to improve and got

well. The local officer of Ajodhan arrested the necromancer and sought the Sheikhs' permission to put him to death as a punishment for his crime in seeking to encompass a holy man's death. But Sheikh Farid, out of a spirit of forgiveness, got the man released. The latter took a vow to abjure his black magic henceforth.

Devotion and Penance

Sheikh Farid never in his life sought a life of ease. His clothes were generally old and tattered. His bed-clothes were made up of one worn-out blanket. A rough straw-cot used to serve as his bedstead. The blanket was too small to cover his entire body, but he continued to bear such hardships in the spirit of resignation to the will of God. Sheikh Farid, discoursing on the virtue of fortitude in the face of the afflictions of life and living in the spirit of resignation, once mentioned to his disciples that Sher Khan, the ruler of the nearby city of Uch, became somehow hostile to him. The enmity of this man the Sheikh bore with equanimity, and expressed his faith in God's providence in these words.

اے بسا درد رکں تر دادرست—اے بسا شیر کں تر آہو ست

(Many an affliction is turned into remedies for man ;
Many a threatening lion grows inoffensive as a deer.)

His devotion to the spiritual life touched the limits of the sublime. Sometimes long penance left him weak and emaciated. This added to the general poverty of his food and frequent fasting would mean a very poor physical condition generally. Some stories are related of his devotion to his Preceptor, Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. One such story has the touch of the miraculous, but its human interest is overpowering. It is related that during a winter as his Preceptor got up in the morning to wash for prayer, the novice Farid sought to give him warm water. There was no fire in the house. So he got up to borrow a live charcoal from somewhere to make a fire. As he got into a house, the woman who was its mistress, got infatuated with him, and like the Potiphar's wife with Joseph, sought to seduce him. The pious Dervish Farid naturally resisted such an overture. He desperately needed the fire to heat the water for his Master. The woman in her frustration asked him to surrender an eye for a live coal. To this he consented. Since there was no firewood also at home, he

broke his own cot to obtain fuel. As after sometime Khawaja Qut-buddin came to know of what had happend, he is said to have prayed to God to make his disciple's eye whole. This prayer was granted.

In the biographical literature on Sheikh Farid in Persian, written by devotees there are a number of stories about him, all of which may not find credence because of the improbable itineraries they imply and the overwhelming element of the miraculous and the supernatural in them. Stories about his travels in Iran and Baghdad and his performing the Haj pilgrimage are related. At Baghdad he is reported to have received instruction from certain Sufi preceptors and to have worked as a volunteer day-labourer at the tomb of the great Sufi saint Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, known as Pir-i-Dastgir and Ghaus-i-Azam. It is related that while there, he would work but not present himself to receive his wage at the end of the day. Then it was that people learnt of his identity and honoured him. The stories of such extensive travels are not likely to be found true, as according to the argument rightly advanced by Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, in those times of Mongol invasions, travel towards Iran and Baghdad was not an encouraging venture. The process of travel was rather in the direction towards India, by refugees from Mungol terror than out of it. He may, however have visited distant places within India—Ajmer for example—which was the centre of the following of Khwaja Muninuddin Chishti, and areas lying in what is now called Uttar Pradesh and was then called Hindustan. Sind and the western areas of Punjab and Lahore may have been included in his itinerary. As a matter of fact, a strong and credible account relates his visit to the tomb of Data Ganj Bakhsh of Lahore, who was a great early writer on Sufism under his name of Ali ben Usman Hujwiri, and wrote the famous Sufi compendium *Kashful Mahjub*.

A legend, again very credible, associates him with the town of Faridkot, lying within that belt which in those days was one distinct region of Punjab—the area of Bars and Jungle, in which Ajodhan was also situated. Faridkot would be on the road from Dihli and Hansi to Ajodhan. Across the river Sutlej it is distant less than a hundred miles from Ajodhan. Here Sheikh Farid is reported to have been drafted into forced labour by the men of a Hindu chief, Mokāl. But seeing the miraculous lifting of a basket

of sand a cubit over his head, the people fell at his feet as a great saint, and the chief too begged his forgiveness. The Saint blessed the place at the show of repentance by the chief, and in grateful remembrance the place was named after him, Faridkot (The Fort of Farid). That name it still bears, and its inhabitants deeply love and cherish the association of their town with the great Saint who was also selected for honour by Guru Nanak.

Sheikh Farid was the most favourite disciple of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. As the Khwaja, who was then at Dihli found the end approaching, he sent his cloak, prayer-mat, staff and cap as a mark of appointing him his successor in his spiritual domain. In a touching story it is related that as Sheikh Farid was earlier leaving Dihli for Ajodhan, Khwaja Qutbuddin embraced Him and said, 'I know you will not be by my side when I leave this world. You will come a few days after. I shall leave what I owe you with Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri.' This had reference to the articles signifying succession which were delivered to the Sheikh. As the Master's end came, Sheikh Farid had a premonition in Hansi, of the impending event. He at once set off for Dihli where he reached on the fifth day after the Master's death. He was installed as the Pir or Head of the Order, as had been decreed by Khwaja Qutbuddin. After a few days he left Dihli for Hansi, but not finding the atmosphere quiet and peaceful, he proceeded to Ajodhan, where he finally established himself as Preceptor and Guide to his followers.

Proselytization Work

The Muslim biographers of Sheikh Farid are unanimous in depicting him as a great preacher of the Muslim faith and one whose missionary work helped convert large numbers of the non-Muslim tribes living in the neighbouring areas of Ajodhan. This aspect of his work would naturally be stressed by the Muslim writers, who refer to him by various high theological titles, such as *Seikhul Islam* (Patriarch of Islam) and *Sheikhu-Shiyukh* (Chief Patriarch). This aspect does not bear very great relevance to the theme developed in this book. Hence it is not discussed in any detail.

This aspect of Sheikh Farid's work, however has one important implication which must be noted. Guru Nanak knew fully

well about the vast proselytization work of the *Gaddi* of Sheikh Farid for more than two hundred years, as also of that of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria Suharwardi of Multan. He nevertheless met the successors of these religious heads, held colloquies with them on the universal and humanitarian aspects of religion. It was the moral core, above sectarian bias of the compositions of Sheikh Farid which filled him with the desire to communicate it to his own followers and to introduce it into the tradition which he was originating. To Guru Nanak Islam or Hinduism in their formal, institutionalized aspects were not of great significance. What mattered was the moral and spiritual teaching, and it was for this that the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid was valued by him.

Last Days and Death

Sheikh Farid had a large number of disciples who propagated his message of piety and rectitude over a great part of northern India, and brought comfort and solace to the lives of thousands of people through their gentle ministration of human sympathy and love. A list of twenty of his disciples—'Khalifas' or Successors—is found given in books on him in Persian. Among these the more famous were Sheikh Jamaluddin of Hansi and Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Dihli. The latter has been honoured by the appellations 'Sultan-ul-Mashaikh' (King of Religious Preceptors) and 'Mahbub-i-Ilai' (Beloved of Allah). Sheikh Nizamuddin in one of the greatest names in the religious history of Islam in India. His mausoleum, situated about three miles outside the central area of New Delhi, is the resort of millions, and draws each year a large number of pilgrims, and is occasionally visited by the President, Prime Minister and other high dignitaries, who are honoured there in the manner traditionally associated with the shrine. Sheikh Farid tested the devotion and strength of purpose in the way of God of this disciple. Such love subsisted between Preceptor (Pir) and the disciple, that once when after an exceptionally long absence, the novice Nizamuddin came to visit Sheikh Farid, he is said to have greeted him in the words of this couplet ;

اے آتشِ فراقِ دلہا کبابِ کردہ
سیلابِ اشتہا قتِ جاہنا خرابِ کردہ

(The the fire of thy absence hath roasted hearts, And
the tide of thy love hath swept away lives.)

Sheikh Nizamuddin is reported to have replied to this expression of affection in these verses expressive of the dedication of devotion :

زان روز که بنده تر دانند مرا — بر من دلک دیره نشا ندر مرا
لطف عامت عماهتے فرمودست — ورنه کیم وچه ام چه خوانند مرا

(From the day that the world knows me to be thy slave, I
have been seated in the pupils of the peoples' eyes :
Thy overflowing kindness hath shown me bounty;
Else who and what am I ? of what worth am I ?)

About two months before the end came, Sheikh Farid in his ninetieth year had a deeply touching meeting with Sheikh Nizamuddin. He fell into deep ecstasy as was often the way with him. After this was over, he affectionately addressed Nizamuddin this :

‘Maulana Nizamuddin, I shall soon give you leave to depart. This is my farewell to you’. Then he embraced him and as mark of the conferment of his spiritual succession, he entrusted to him his cloak, his staff and wooden sandals. A deed of appointment (*Khalifat Nama*) was drawn in his favour, styling him as Imam (spiritual guide) of the Age, and containing guidance as to how as Khalifa or successor he must comport himself. At the end Sheikh Farid, using the last part of his name, signed himself as Masaud.¹

Sheikh Farid lived to the great age of ninety. On 5th Muharram, 664 Hijri (1265) after his Isha prayer, which is the time before giving to bed, he became unconscious. When he recovered consciousness a little, he again said his prayer. Then peacefully he passed away, or in Sufi parlance had his Union (*Wisal*) with the Creator.

His family and disciples were by his side when the end came. According to one account, his chief disciple, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya was by his side at the time, but according to another and probably more authentic account, he was in Dihli. Sheikh Farid had decided to appoint him to his spiritual domain as his Khalifa or successor. Another of the beloved disciples

1. The information is based on K. A. Nizami's monograph on Sheikh Farid (Pp. 98-99).

of Shikh Earid was Sheikh Jamaluddin of Hansi...He had pre-deceased the Master. He was so highly valued by Sheikh Farid that he had instructed that his *Khilafat Namas* (Instruments of appointment to carry on the Mission) were to be regarded as genuine only if counter-signed by Sheikh Jamaluddin. His son Burhanuddin who later was to become a famous Sufi, was brought to Sheikh Farid by his nurse at Ajodhan. He instantly appointed him Khalifa. The nurse as a demurrer pointed out in the Hindi current then : 'Master, he is yet a child(Bala).' The Sheikh instantly remarked : 'Never mind; the full moon too on the first night is Bala (young)'.

Thus ended the career of this great Sant, who left behind a powerful spiritual movement which is alive over large areas of Punjab till today. Muslims and non-Muslim are united in a common reverence to him. The broad human approach of his message has been of universal value in paving the way for understanding across the barriers of faiths.

THE CHISHTI ORDER (SILSILAH) OF SUFIS

Before giving a brief account of the Chishti Order of Sufis of which Sheikh Farid was one of the most distinguished early Fathers in India, and which he did so much to consolidate in the Punjab and its adjoining areas, it would be appropriate to state in a few paragraphs the main tenets of Sufism which is the name by which Islamic Mysticism is known. Sufism is almost coeval with Islam itself and in the Koran certain passages give expression to deep mystical experience, which naturally would form one of the several sources to which the Sufis would affiliate their doctrine and tradition.

There are divergent opinions as to the origin of the word 'Sufi,' but the prevalent view appears to be that it is derived from *suf* (Arabic for rough wool) which the early Sufis wore like the Christian hermits in contempt of worldly luxury. Sufis have as a matter of fact, continued to wear wool or rough garments of various textures. That 'Sufi' is derived from *suf* is also borne out by the term *Pashmina-posh* (wool-wearers) by which Sufis in Iran have been known. In Sheikh Farid's Slokas too, rendered in this monograph, there occurs a hint as to this derivation. Sloka 50 runs as below :

Farid, those who carry the prayer-mat on their shoulder,
wear rough wool,

But bear deggers in their hearts and utter falsehood with
their glib tongues—

Such are bright outside but have the dark night in their
souls.

In popular Muslim hymnology one of the loving terms used in referring to the Founder of Islam is '*Kamliwala*', that is wearer of the woollen sheet. This term occurs also in one of the lays of Iqbal in *Bang-i-Dira* while referring to him, as also in one of Zafar Ali's songs.

Sufism appeared in Islam in response partly to the powerful universal urge in the human soul for the intimate experience of the ultimate Reality, and partly as a reaction against the rising despotism and the consequent social evils which gripped the Arab ruling

classes right from the eighth century onwards. Later, as a result of the ravages of the heretical Mongols, who laid waste whole Muslim states and their cultural life, there soul-searching was and inward-turning among the Muslim intelligentsia. It is to this second period of the rise of Sufism that the movement into which Sheikh Farid has figured, arose. God-fearing men, spiritually inclined, retired into the world of that experience, holding in itself elements of transcendence and immanence at the same time, which confers inner peace amidst the tumults of the ambitious doings of worldly-minded seekers after wealth and power, as into a sealed shelter erected in the midst of blowing storms. Both these causes have continued to operate in Muslim society as in other societies to call men to retire from participation in the active affairs of the world to seek peace with God.

Sufism, it must be clearly understood, has been a movement within Islam, yet providing a corrective to the excesses on the one hand of despots and their minions and on the other to priests and preachers whose conception of religion rested on the observance of external formalities and codes, to the neglect of the cultivation of the spiritual and moral life. The Sufis thus have kept the flame of spiritually alight within Islam and have erected a vast body of philosophy and poetry which is a highly valuable cultural heritage of the Muslim world. Some Sufis like Mansur-ul-Hallaj of Baghdad and Sarmad of Dihli have suffered the extreme penalty for what was considered to be heresy or reprobate practices. In general, Sufis have turned their back on worldly greatness and have refused to be lured by the offers of royal favours. Sheikh Saadi in his *Gulestan* has narrated the story of a Vizier who was removed from office on incurring royal displeasure, but was later sought to be recalled by the ruler for his wisdom. The former Vizir declined the offer saying : 'The truly wise are those who eschew such work as this.' This man was evidently struck with the spirit which lies at the core of Sufistic idealism.

While in course of time Sufism developed a metaphysic and code of its own, which was a synthesis of the core of Islamic teaching with certain postulates derived from Plato's doctrine of Love in *The Symposium* and the Neo-Platonic Philosophy of Emanations, it remained firmly within the doctrine and practice

of Islam, and upheld the Muslim Canon Law (Shaeriat). It only emphasized that prayer and the other elements of orthodoxy must rest on the loving experience of God of which ecstasy should be an essential constituent. So, in the centuries around the consolidation of Muslim power over the vast area from the western portions of India across the whole of northern Africa to Spain, a firm synthesis had been evolved, in which Sufism came to be accepted as an integral part of the Islamic world, and Sufis set up teaching centres of Islam to supplement the more orthodox centres devoted exclusively Shariat. Sufi centres called Khanqahs (in India also Khangahs) were prayer-houses and schools as much as centres for charity and the entertainment of itinerant Dervishes. The existence of Dervish Orders came to be an accepted institution within Islam, and people turned to them no less than to the Mullahs for religious instruction, as well as for the fulfilment of mundane needs like the achievement of desires and the warding off of impending evils. Like Bhakti within Hinduism, Sufism was the means whereby Muslim religion percolated to the masses. The common people found the Sufis not only gentle of manner and charitably inclined, but also the upholders of the doctrine of divine grace rather than the harsh retribution postulated by the Mullahs whose teaching centred in Shariat. One of the eleventh century Sufis, Sheikh Abu Said Abul Khair is reported in a quatrain¹ to express emphatically the doctrine of forgiveness and grace :

باز آ باز آهرآن چه هستی باز آ — گر کا فروگردی بیت پرستی باز آ

این درگاه با درگاه نومستری نیست — صر بارا گر تو به شکستی باز آ

(Come back, come back to God's grace, whatever thou art:

Come back even though thou be an unbeliever, Gebir or idol-worshipper :

Know that this Portal is not the Portal of Despair—

Come back even though thou hast broken vows a hundred times.)

While in a monograph like the present there is no scope for writing in greater detail about the development of the Sufi doctrine over the vast international world of early and medieval Islam, a few great names may be mentioned of those who have contributed to the development of the magnificent body of Sufistic

1. Doubts are expressed whether the Quatrains are his work.

philosophy and literature. Zul-Nun Misri, Farid-ud-din Attar, Imam Al-Ghazali, Jalaluddin Rumi, Muhiuddin Ibnul-Arabi, Ali ben Usman Hujwiri, and Shahabuddin Suharwardi are only a few of the great names out of a large number who developed this great edifice of learning and culture. Each succeeding age in the numerous lands where Islam has been professed, has added to this pile, so that the study of Sufism is by now a vast discipline in which one may only hope to make satisfactorily a study of some selected aspects.

This is a distinct world with its own literary traditions and systems of symbols and esoteric lore, all which have been enriched by assimilating influences from various backgrounds and cultures. As in the India doctrine of various forms of Yoga, where a guru (Preceptor) was essential to initiate the seeker into the Path (called Panth, among several systems) in the same way the adoption of a Murshid (Instructor) or Pir (Revered Elder) was enjoined upon the Murid (intending neophyte). The Murshid or Pir was to be implicitly obeyed—obedience to him being considered the sovereign quality in the seeker. Even the puzzling tests, seemingly of a heterodox nature must be gone through without demur. Hafiz, the Persian mystic poet expressed this view-point figuratively in the following verse :

ہمے سجارہ رنگیں کن گوت پیرومغاں گویر
کہ سالک بے خیر نہورز راہ و رسم منور لہا

(Dye the prayer-carpet even with wine, should the chief of the wine-servers so ask thee ;

Know that the true seeker is not ignorant of the ways and traditions of the Path.)

In the orthodoxy of Sufi doctrine, four stages are accepted as marking the path of the Seeker, called *Salik* (lit. wayferer). These are *Shariat* (following the Islamic Code of orthodox conduct), *Tariqat* (traversing the 'stages' of the Sufi's path, such as the various prescribed penances), *Haqiqat* (awareness of worthlessness of the world as against absorption in Allah) and *Marifat* (Gnosis or Full Realization, when the Sufi has transcended the world and all its demands). Another terminology is also employed wherein four rhyming terms are used : *Nasut* (ordinary physical existence) :

Malakut (the state in which the world appears unreal like the vision of a dream); *Jabrut* (in this the mind 'sleeps' to the world) and *Lahut* (the state of merging the individual soul into the universal, parallel to the *Turia* of Yoga). The way or *Tariqat* involves *Dhikr* (Zikr) constant remembrance of God, *Tazkia* (purification of the mind of worldliness), *Tauba* (abjuring all desire), *Faqr* (the vow non-possession), *Muraqaba* (concentrated meditation). The Sufi's spiritual achievement would be *Fana* (dying to the world), *Baqā bi' Allah* (living in God alone), *Shuhud* (seeing nothing but God in the universe, i.e., the vision of Immanence, to akin the Non-duality or *Advaita* of Vedanta). 'Knowledge' in Sufism is '*Marifat*', that is, intuitive knowledge acquired through spiritual concentration, as contrasted with *Ilm* (ratiocinative and conceptual knowledge).

Most Sufi Orders have prescribed a course of ecstatic experience for the adept, involving listening to sacred music (*Samaa*) loud shouting and frenzy (the Greeks' "enthusiasm") and even dancing. About these and related practices, however, there is sharp controversy and because of the possibility of moral degeneration through such practices, these tend to be discouraged. Orthodoxy and the puritanism characteristic of Islam lead in the direction of such discouragement. Otherwise, in Sufistic poetry the symbology consists of the world of the Tavern with the fullness of its terminology, but this is looked upon as an intellectual convention only and a medium of expression; for in general, Muslim Society is highly critical of the use of intoxicants. But there nevertheless is occasional breaking away from the restraints of orthodoxy, though still within the restrictions prescribed by Shariat.

In order, however to find justification for *Samaa* and ecstasy a number of fables have been circulated. One such is that Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti once on his travels saw a Phoenix, from whose beak issued such divine harmony that he fell into ecstasy. This experience he communicated to the followers of his *Silsilah*, and thus permitted *Samaa*. There are numerous other anecdotes pointing to the justification of a similar view-point.

The Sufistic state is distinguished by inducing one of the two contrasted states, and Sufi Orders adhere to one or the other.

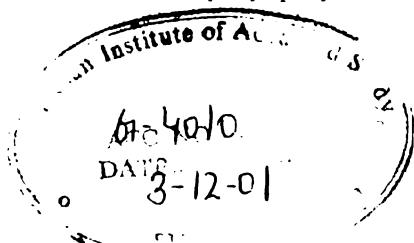
One is the state called *Sukr* (Arabic-drunkenness) in which the intense expression of ecstasy, involving relaxing temporarily the control of conventions is induced. *Sukr* in its more aesthetic forms became *Rindi* (libertinism) and while popular with the masses, was frowned upon by the orthodox establishment. The other is the state of *Sahv* (Arabic-Sobriety) in which widening of spiritual awareness, seeking greater illumination and adherence to the higher morality are ordained. This is the path followed by the majority of the Orders. This path is akin to *Shaj*, favoured for the Seeker by Guru Nanak. Sheikh Farid adhered also to this path, and in ecstasy prescribed measure and responsibility.

The Chishtis

In India four Sufi Orders found greater acceptance the Qadiriya the Suharwardiya, the Naqshbandiya and the Chishtiya. Out of these the Chishtiya has proved to be the most influential both in terms of the great men it threw up, the large numbers of and the areas in which it has been accepted. Further, this Order is its adherents almost exclusively Indian (this would include also Pakistan now) while the others have found greater acceptance in other Muslim lands. To the Chishtiya Order Sheikh Farid belonged and brought to it great lustre and wide influence.

The founder of this order was Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami who died in 940. He became the disciple of Khwaja Dinauri, a recluse Sufi in Baghdad. For reasons which are wrapped in mystery, he sent his disciple to preach the doctrine in Chisht, situated in Khurasan and ordained that the Order founded by him should be known also after its centre, Chisht.

The next name which is heard of is of the greatest saint of this Order, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, also called Sijzi. He migrated to India late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century in the time of Prithviraj, Rajput King of Dihli and Ajmer or a little later, and settled in the latter place to propagate his faith. According to another version he left Dihli for Ajmer in the time of Iltutmish to which reference has been made earlier. Khwaja Muinuddin, known all over India as Khwaja Gharib-Nawaz (Cherisher of the Poor) was a person of exemplary piety



and abstemiousness and it was owing to his lofty character and sweetness of personality that out in the midst of a vast Hindi population he was able to set up a centre to propagate the Muslim faith. He passed away in 1235. Khwaja Muinuddin, to whom innumerable devotional songs are made and whose *Dargah* or Abbey at Ajmer draws thousands from India and Pakistan each year, prescribed the general character of the Sufi centres in India. They were to maintain houses of prayer along with hospices, where wayfarers and the poor in general might be served.

At these centres, to which numbers of non-Muslims were also drawn, a gentle process of propagation of the Muslim religion was carried on. Its basis was the sweet conduct and noble tenor of life of the saintly inmates and the moral and humanitarian teaching there imparted. An added appeal would be the image of Islam as an egalitarian society, which in contrast with the built-in inequalities of the caste code of Hinduism it obviously would present. At these houses while religion was presented in the terminology which had been prescribed for it, the language in which propagation was done would be that understood by the masses. Thus Hindi or Hindwi in northern India in general and Western Panjabi in the area of Punjab where the Sufi houses were first established, was adopted for spreading the message of the new faith. In this way the current vernaculars acquired a great new impetus as vehicles of a whole vast movement of thought.

Khwaja Muinuddin appointed as his Khalifa or Regent, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Dihli. He flourished during the period of the establishment of Muslim rule over Dihli and northern India in general. His sphere of influence lay mainly west of Dihli, in areas now included in Haryana and further on in West Pakistan. He was deeply revered by the masses, and the Sultan Iluttmish erected in his honour the great Qutub Tower outside the capital, Dihli. Around this time the depredations of the Mongols drove a large number of Muslim scholars and divines to India as refugees. This made Dihli a great centre of Islamic scholarship and propagation of the Muslim faith. Large numbers of these refugee scholars had settled down in different areas between the

extreme western border of India and Dihli, and set up centres of faith and teaching.

While some details about Sheikh Farid have been given under other headings in this booklet, the Chishtiya Order which he founded and nursed in the Punjab saw a vast proliferation through the continuing influence of his personality.

The principal Khlifa of Sheikh Farid, as earlier stated, was Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya. In his reported conversations in *Fawaidul-Fuad* he has left a vivid picture of the personality of his great Preceptor, Sheikh Farid, and a number of anecdotes about him. Khwaja Nizamuddin, venerated to this day and one at whose tomb kings have sought blessing and absolution, was the saint *par excellence*, forgiving and merciful. In one of the Persian pieces of poetry ascribed to him, he has inculcated forgiveness and mercy in an extreme degree. In the original Persian it runs :

هر كه مارا رنجه دارد راحتش بسيار بار
 هر كه مارا يار بدور اينرر اودا يار بار
 هر كه خارے انگير در راه ما از دشمنى
 هر گاه كز باغ عمرش بشكفد بے خار بار

(Whoever offends me, may God give him comfort :
 Whoever turns against me, may God befriend him :
 Whoever casts a thorn in my path out of malice,
 May God grant him in his life roses free from thorns!)

Sheikh Nizamuddin bore an attitude of noble tolerance towards the Hindus in that age of the rising tide of the Muslim empire, when the Muslim divines favoured fanaticism in religion. With a deeply understanding attitude, he is reported to have said in the words of Amir Khusrau, with reference to the ceremonial of worship followed by the Hindus :

هر قوم راست راه ديلىء قبله گاه

(Every people has its own particular path, faith, and object of worship.)

Sheikh Nizamuddin was venerated by vast multitudes. Among his fervent devotees recently was the poet Ghalib, who is buried by

the side of his tomb. He left to carry on the faith another great Sufi saint, Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dihli.

The Chishtiya Order spread its influence over the length and breadth of India. Its centres (Dargahs) are found in Bengal, Gujarat, the Deccan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar besides Dihli, Rajasthan and Punjab (as it stood before Independence). Among the great names of those who held places of importance within it are Sheikh Abdul Qaddus Gangohi, who flourished in the sixteenth century, Sheikh Salim Chishti, a descendant of Sheikh Farid, who had established himself at Sikri and whose prayer is believed to have given to Akbar a son, Salim who later became Jagangir. Others have been the eighteenth century scholars and religious leaders of Dihli, Shah Waliwallah and Shah Kalimullah, themselves originaters of powerful traditions.

In Thanesar and Hansi, before the migration of the Muslim population there were important Chishti Centres. It is in West Punjab, however that a large number of centres of the Order are found, which command the veneration and allegiance of millions. The rising influence of the Chishtiya Order, with its centre at Pak-Pattan sanctified by Sheikh Farid, sent into the background the once powerful Suharwardiya Order with its centres at Multan and Uch and the principalities which got consolidated into the stae of Bahawalpur. The more important Chishti centres besides Pak-Pattan are Muhar Sharif, Taunsa, Ahmadpur, Chachran, Mokhad, Jalalpur, Golra, Kot Mithan and many others.

The hereditary Pirs, as the religious heads of these centres are known, have in the course of time acquired land grants and have set up as small chieftains in most cases. Their importance for quite a long time has been politico-ecclesiastical—as influential religious heads who have drawn the allegiance of large section of the population, and thus become centres of power which the various authorities have not failed to turn to their own political advantage. In this way, the pure stream of Sufism, begun eight centuries or more ago in the Punjab and its adjoining areas as a moral-spiritual movement of regeneration, has dwindled to one of the numerous form which institutionalized religion, turning into worldly power

has taken. To this there have been rare exceptions, where the pristine inspiration has been sustained by individuals, both among Muslim and non-Muslim religious Orders. But the decline from the ideal spiritual purity is a sociological phenomenon of constant recurrence. It would be out of place to dilate more upon this theme, which in any case is not strictly relevant to the teachings and inspiring personality of the great Sheikh Farid. It would be relevant however, to point out that a number of Muslim Pirs of Punjab, like Hindu and Sikh Mahants, were given land grants and other privileges by rulers from time to time. These were generally confirmed by the British Government. Those grants were however, 'subject to loyal behaviour.' Aristocratic dynasties were set up, of which the descendants of Sheikh Bahauddin of Multan of the Suharwardi Order are a prominent example. The descendants of Sheikh Farid were known as *Diwans* or revenue administrators of their area in Mughal times. In British times they held modest jagirs. All such find mention in the record of the notables and chiefs of Punjab. This of course, would not imply a moral judgment in all cases.

To revert to the founding of the Chishtiya Order, the code and principles stressed, centred round renunciation of wealth and worldly power. Anything in the way of the compromise of this principle, such as hoarding of the income from offerings, receiving grants and gifts, taking up state service (called *shaghal*) toadying to the powerful, was strictly forbidden. Numerous instances of such abstemiousness have come down from early times. Poverty was the badge of the holy man and a sign of purity. A noble personality alone had to be cultivated by the seeker. He must observe strict discipline in religious life, transgress nowise the *Shariat* and in general avoid contact with worldly-minded people except to raise them spiritually. Besides these, service of the people was enjoined. Tolerance in matters of religion, particularly with people of other faiths was also stressed. If one were to look into the later history of the Sufi Orders, disillusionment and disappointment has been expressed about them. The great poet Iqbal, whose principal theme in poetry has been the politico-cultural renaissance of Islam in India and elsewhere, has expressed his

dissatisfaction with the occupants of the holy seats (Pirs) many of whom he has castigated as no better than ignorant worldlings. The common Muslims he says, are 'enslaved to the Sufi and the Mulalh,' whom he has joined in a common anathema. This has meant a decline of the religious Orders from great heights of moral and spiritual power. But as hinted about, this phenomenon is not peculiar to the Muslims of Punjab or anywhere else, but is a common feature in social evolution. That may be one reason for the general decline in the influence of religion among the masses in recent times.

SHIEKH FARID: CREATOR OF POETRY OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

This monograph contains the entire composition of Sheikh Farid in English rendering, as it has been recorded in *Adi Granth*. As the reader will be able to see, in volume it is not large—less than 10 Pages in a volume of 1430 pages as traditionally set in print. The reason for this slender volume appears to be that Guru Nanak, who is reported by his early biographers, the writers of *Janamsakhis*, to have twice met Sheikh Brahm (*Ibrahim*) twelfth in the line of succession from the founder, Sheikh Farid, and held spiritual colloquies with him, did not find more such poetry extant. From the value he attached to it as the expression of deep moral and spiritual experience in the language of the common folk, above sectarian and theological bias, he would have recorded for transmission to his followers more of it, if available.

The care with which this poetry was studied by Guru Nanak himself and by two of his successors in the Holy Ministry, Guru Amar Das and Guru Arjan Dev, and the comments they left on some portions of it in appropriate places, is clear evidence of their reverent study of it as also their solicitude for the corrective to it in places where it appeared to them to sound too pessimistic a note with regard to difficult stages of the hard undertaking of the spiritual journey. Such points however, are not very numerous, as by and large the holy Gurus have commended Sheikh Farid's teaching who undoubtedly was a bright circle of light in a dark world of despotism, social iniquity and theological bigotry. His

message they felt, was a valuable exhortation to mankind towards a universal mission of moral teaching amidst the wrangling of intolerant and hair-splitting priests, totally unaware of the demands of humanity and the spiritual life.

So, in the great Scripture for the guidance of man which they set about composing and compiling, the holy Gurus gave a place of honour to this noble-spirited Muslim saint who had lived close to the throbbing heart of the Punjab, side by side with the compositions of the great Kabir, the spiritually emancipated Ravidas, Namdev and several others. All these saints so included, in the eyes of the Gurus satisfied certain criteria for inclusion in the Scripture and for commendation. These briefly were, that they must be worshippers of the One Eternal Reality known by whatever name in the various traditions, that they must reject caste and other inhuman distinctions, eschew all manner of false beliefs and in general maintain the humanitarian point of view in a world wherein harsh systems had pressed down mankind. Withal they must speak close to the heart and understanding of the people, in a language which would call them to the higher life, and avoid all exclusiveness. Despite what the Muslim historians and hagiologists have made of Sheikh Farid, as though he were no different from the common run of Muslim priesthood, or that he was a wonderful miracle worker, the holy Gurus found him an example of broad humanitarianism whose touch ennobles and purifies and brings solace to oppressed humanity. For these reasons they honoured his memory and spread his message.

The intriguing question about the small volume of Sheikh Farid's *Bani* (Sacred word) still remains. From the flow and masterly beauty of this *Bani*, a more ample discussion of whose poetic excellences is shortly following, it may confidently be concluded that this poet must have in the course of his life composed a considerably large volume of verse. For some mysterious reason this was lost. As it is, apart from what has been preserved of Sheikh Farid's *Bani* in *Adi Granth*, not a single line in Punjabi is found elsewhere—either with those who till this day have occupied his spiritual *gaddi* or with any other of his

numerous devotees¹.

A brief statement quoted from an early Persian book about a *Doha* closely resembling one of the Slokas (No. 91) in *Adi Granth* and stated to be of his composition is all the information we have from Muslim sources of having left a *Bani*. It appears that in their zeal to prove him of the fraternity of the great Sufis, philosophers and poets of Iraq, Turkestan and Iran, the Muslim writers were entirely at pains to put forth claims to his being a teacher and poet in Persian, and thought that his Panjabi could be ignored as being of little consequence. Such a superior attitude of cultural snobbery has been a recurring sociological phenomenon among most peoples, though time has proved in all cases its unreality and hollowness. While little has lasted of the Persian writings of Sheikh Farid, his Punjabi preserved by the Holy Gurus has been an expanding light and a source of noble inspiration to millions.

Adverting to the point just mentioned of the holy Gurus leaving their comments on certain places in Sheikh Farid's *Bani*, that will be found by the reader as the studies the renderings presented in this booklet. Besides the Slokas to which 'comment' has been appended by the holy Gurus, there is one *Shabda* or devotional song in Rag Suhi in response to whose 'message' Guru Nanak has composed a song himself in the same Rag, with the vocabulary and imagery of the Sheikh's piece recurring in a kind of obverse context of reference. This song from Sheikh Farid with the first line running as 'Listen O man, thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat while it was yet time' (*Bera bandh na sakion bandhan ki vela*) has been reproduced among the rendering in this monograph. Guru Nanak's 'response' to this song, as just said, is in the same Rag and similar imagery. The present writer cannot do better than to reproduce here a passage on this theme from

1. The present writer once came across an exposition in Urdu of Sheikh Farid's *Bani* from *Adi Granth*, published by some Muslim devotees from Faridkot. This however, is not now traceable. The point to note is that even these Muslims had none else of his compositions to fall back upon than what they found in the Holy Granth.

his book, *Guru Nanak-His Personality and Vision*, page 59—60. Referring to Sheikh Farid's hymn it is said there :

“The haunting beauty of this lyric, whose magic and charm no attempt at translation can convey, could not deflect the Guru's mind, ever awake, from his ideal. He saw a pessimistic strain in Farid's accents. Die man must some time, but it is never too late to seek the Portal of God, to turn his face towards Him. Good actions never go waste—each such action goes, in current Indian parlance, into man's account, forming his soul, adding to his cycle of births or annulling it, if his actions be entirely free of the taint of passion. There was the implicit Muslim belief in a future heaven or hell in Farid's lyric. The Guru provided a sequel to it, a corrective brimful of infinite faith in God. This is recorded in the same *Suhi* measure as Farid's lyric, on pag 729 of *Adi Garanth* :

Equip thy boat with meditation and
austerity, to find smooth passage :

To such a boat the lake will be as though it is not ;

The tempest will not rise; the crossing will be without
peril ;

Thy Name, Beloved, is the fast dye on my gown ;

Fast is the dye Thou hast given me ;

I have set out to have a sight of the Beloved ;

Shall I see Him ever ?

With true love in the heart, He will Himself make the
call.

Those who are merged in Him shall not be cast off :

He, the True Lord, shall annul transmigration, and keep
the yearning soul ever near Him.

Those who throw away egoism make their garments
acceptable to the Lord—

They shall taste the fruit of His Word ;

To them the Lord's word shall be as Amrita.

Saith Nanak : My friends, the Master is the sweet Beloved ;

We are His hand-maids ; He is our True Lord.

‘In the Guru’s hymn, Farid’s thought is presented in the inverted form, keeping the imagery of the original. The lake is not tempestuous; the boat is not in peril ; the colours on the garments are fast, instead of the frail colour of Farid’s conception; the journey to the Beloved is fruitful ; His words instead of being stern and harsh are sweet as Amrita. Death in Farid is terrible, eternal extinction ; in the Guru’s hymn it is only a stepping-stone to abiding peace, *moksha* in the lap of the Lord.”

The Poetry : A Brief Study

Sheikh Farid, the poet who composed the *Bani* recorded under his name in *Adi Granth*, may be seen to be a poet of extraordinary power and sensitivity. His soul moves in response to the deepest and most intimate experiences of the human soul, particularly those centred in the awareness of the subtle shades of sin, of the tragic waste of man’s brief span of life in fivulous pursuits or gross worldliness; or man’s ignorance of the inevitability of death which haunting the imagination of the poet whose mind is ever awake. Withal he is deeply human and bears a tender heart towards the suffering of man. His appeal to man is recurring in exhorting him to be forgiving, considerate and not to hurt any human heart, ‘for each human being is a precious jewel’. Forgiveness, non-injury, fear of the consequences of the evil deeds of this life, warning against hypocrisy—these and other similar themes are expressed in words which for their sweetness and the magic of their poetic structure touch the highest peak of the poetic art. An adequate appreciation of the true poetic quality of the couplets (slokas) is possible only in a study of the original in the Sheikh’s native Multani dialect of Punjabi, a language made as though on purpose for poetry and music. Not much therefore can be said on this poetry as recorded word in another tongue. A distant ‘feel’ only of it may be caught from the imagery which of course, a good rendering, such it is hoped as the present, may provide.

Sheikh Farid is a tragic poet in the higher sense—his main themes being the pitiful waste of his life by erring and thoughtless man and the evanescence of his existence on this earth. The haunting sense of waste conveyed to man's imagination is the great and sovereign function of tragedy¹, and at that level tragedy takes its place with the poetry of Religion. As poetry of this kind of tragic experience rises to point to the waste made by man of his life and 'the pity of it,' its catharsis then, is towards the search for a meaningful use of the opportunity given by the limited span of man's day on earth, away from the despair and pessimism induced by tragic poetry at a less searching level of experience. In this sense of arousing man's mind to the frivolity and waste arising from the tragedy of his situation, Sheikh Farid is in the company of the great teachers of mankind. Such a deep tragic sense may be seen in Guru Nanak's theme of '*Pahre*' (The Hours) in Siri Rag, in his '*Alahuniyan*' (Dirges) and in the *Slokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur. A deep sensitiveness to pain, separation, pity : the clear, unclouded glimpse of death which however, is seen without fear but with the equanimity born of the true philosophical vision—these are the other related themes of this *Bani*, embodied in poetry whose greatness the critical vocabulary may not find it possible adequately to set forth.

To dilate further on the themes treated of in these couplets would be superfluous, inasmuch as except here and there where the expression is highly symbolic and cryptic, they are easily comprehensible to the mind attuned to the more humane levels of thought and feeling and to moral and spiritual idealism. There is in them that tender human feeling which leaves the heart bathed in a flood of emotions, so that after hearing them, its hardness melts and the veil of thoughtless complacency is lifted. This charismatic quality of these verses must no doubt have commended itself to the holy Gurus. The tender and soft tones of the words—their emotional colouring, their vowel and consonant sounds and the rhythms—cannot be analysed or illustrated in a language other than the original. For these the student must turn to the original itself,

1 Bradley : Shakespearean Tragedy.

which for a person from another language-area would not be easy, inasmuch as the language of this *Bani* is a form of Punjabi, which is away from its current written form, but is not for that reason inferior. Its 'inflexional' character expressing significant wholes of experience compactly, gives it a capacity for poetic expression such as that of classical Persian or Sanskrit with the latter of which it has close affinities. And as said earlier, for poetry and music it is superbly suited because of its softer tones, including the nasal 'n' and the sinuousness and frequency of its vowel-lengths.

In this *Bani*, further to attempt a statement of its themes, the prevalent stress is on that disenchantment with surface pleasures and complacency of life which, according to the Indian tradition of thought would be the first step towards *Vairagya* (dispassion) and *Jnan* (enlightenment, awakening). This plea and exhortation is however, the result not of any ratiocinative process but of powerful imagery, reinforced by language whose overtones have the effect of gripping the imagination. A careful study of this *Bani* will confirm this statement at every step.

The Mysticim

One great theme recurring in this *Bani* is sublime contentment, which is the essence of the spiritual life. This contentment is no negative state, no mere deprivation of the goods of life, but a positive satisfaction, a 'possession' in the true sense, for it fills the soul with an inexpressible feeling of well-being. Mysticism all the world over is centred in such positive, soul-filling non-possession. The joy of God-consciousness is a recurring theme in the Slokas. So is also the higher morality of compassion and universal fellow-feeling. Resignation to the Divine will is still another recurring theme.

Sheikh Farid being a great mystic, there is in him the symbolization of the mystical experience. That vision which is acquired not through the process of the intellect but through the deeper 'feel' or intuition of the soul (called *anubhava* in Indian philosophy and *ilham* in the Sufistic tradition) is embodied constantly in this *Bani*. This is a state of experience above the relatively more human strata of the tragic and moral vision which itself may be only a little above the usual level of man's ordinary mental life. But the

mystical vision is as if from on high, bursting on the soul, and expressible only in the suggestive language of symbol. As the soul is in communion with the higher regions of experience, visions of superhuman joy and ecstasy, the strange hungers and urges of the spiritual life rise in it, and find expression in language. It is in such states that the kind of experience embodied in the Slokas mentioned below, for example, is vouchsafed to man. This is vision and language above the reach of what generally goes by the name of poetry and answers to Sri Aurobindo's conception of it as 'mantra', which would mean words charged with vision and power. To illustrate this point, slokas numbered 24, 30, 35, 36, 80, 90, 115 may be studied.

Muslim mystics have generally derived their imagery and allusions from the academic and intellectual life of Iran, where the mystical poetry of Islam reached the height of its power and subtlety. Certain traditional modes set up by this poetry have tended to govern the general moulds of Muslim poetic and mystical thought. In India however, the mystic-dervishes and *Sains*, *Shahs* and *Fakirs* acquired a strong colouring from their local background. While there is a common Indian background of tradition and imagery, there are also characteristic regional variations. The Muslim mystics in Punjab, down from the day of Sheikh Farid and may be earlier, till recent times when influences from Urdu became more pronounced, have spoken to the common folk in the mould of language and imagery familiar to them. This is true of Sheikh Farid's *Bani* in a high degree. Thus, in one Sloka the imagery is of the "Cranes of autumn, the fires of summer (Chet) the lightning-flashes of Sawan and the lovers' embrace of long winter nights". In another, life is a gaily painted pot for drawing water from the well and the rhythm of breathing a fine water-line (*nagar lajj*). Life running out is a small handful of *til* (sesame) a grain cultivated in the Punjab countryside specially. Life, on which death swoops suddenly is a crane in the cruel claws of the hawk. Man's folly is like the thoughtless false hopes of the ignorant peasant (Jat). A close study will bring up more and more instances of such background and imagery, which is of the Punjab, though in being that it is also of India. This *Bani* thus is part of the great national literary heritage of our land.

Another characteristic of the devotional and mystical poetry of India in contradistinction to that of Iran is the personation of the devotee as the *loving female* in a state of complete surrender to her lord, her beloved spouse. This mode is all-pervasive in the Indian poetry of love, secular as well as devotional, and being self-evident needs no illustration. The Indian Muslim mystics writing their devotional poetry in the Indian languages close to the idiom of the common folk adopted also this mode which was natural to them as Indians, although alien to their parent tradition rooted in Persian. In this adopted mode all Indian mystics sang their devotion. This is also the mode which one would find adopted in the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid. In the accents of the sensitive feminine soul did he phrase forth his love of God and man, like Guru Nanak and the other great and saintly men who stepped into this field.

Other Characteristics—Symbolism

While the poet in this *Bani* speaks in terms of the Muslim background of *namaz*, *wazu* (ablutions) *masit* (mosque) *Malakul-Maut* or *Izrael* (Angel of Death) *gor* (the grave) and such others, he is not delivering a sectarian gospel or addressing his teaching and vision to the Muslims exclusively. In his solicitude for the spiritual and moral uplift of man and in arousing him to a sense of the waste of the precious moments of life and to deep human pity and soul-searching, the poet is truly human and universal. It is in that spirit that the message of this great teacher must be read. This is the spirit in which Guru Nanak commended it for study to mankind.

A sovereign feature of Sheikh Farid's poetry is its significant use of symbol. This is not the place to go into the function of image and symbol in poetry, but briefly it might be stated that a symbol is a kind of image which transcends and overspreads metaphor and every other kind of image. Its power to suggest, to set in motion a process of multiple signification makes it not only the last reach of mastery in the poetic art, but also the proper vehicle for communicating that depth of experience, including the mystical, which the ordinarily available resources of human language fail to convey. While simile and metaphor are the commonly employed tools of the poet, one comes occasionally also upon the successful use of symbol in the poetry of various

languages. Thus, in Shakespeare's Macbeth, in the soliloquy of the hero:

Pity, like a new-born babe,
Striding the blast

is a powerful symbol whose secret commentators are hard put to it fully to unravel. So also is Hamlet's native hue of resolution sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' In the famous couplet of the mystic Persian poet, Iraqi is a splendid symbol:

نخستین بار کانون جام کردند — ز چشم مست ساقی وام کردند

(The first draught of wine that over went into a cup was borrowed from the cup-bearer's intoxicated eyes.) Similarly, in this opening couplet of a Ghazal of Hafiz is a symbol:

دوش وقت سحر از غصه نجاتم دارند
واندر آن ظلمت شب آب حیاتم دارند

(Last night in the early hour of dawn was I from sorrow emancipated; And in that darkness given a draught of the water of life.)

In Sheikh Farid's *Bani* the occurrence of the symbol as a mode of expression is frequent. As a matter of fact, among those who have written poetry in Punjabi, he is pre-eminent in this respect. So habitually attuned is his mind to expressing experience in symbols that whole couplets are strings of integrated symbolic expression and the apparatus of metaphor with overt or implied referents is omitted. This is the authentic style of symbolism. Thus in Rag Asa 'restless cranes' stands for the uncontrolled desire and impulses of the mind. In a more striking symbol, the frail human consciousness is 'a timid female' and those who have followed the hard path of devotion to God are 'heroes crossing the swollen stream'.

In Rag Suhi, the human life devoid of moral and spiritual fulfilment is a deserted well over which is bending a lone female. In the hymn in that Rag already mentioned, there is a string of symbols. The pleasures of life are the washable dye of Kasumbha; the human personality is a frail female terror-stricken; the missed chances of spiritual uplift in life are breasts dried up of milk.

THE POETICAL WORK OF SHEIKH FARID

Rag Asa—THE SACRED WORD OF SHEIKH FARID

In the Name of the One Indivisible Supreme Being, Realized through His Grace :

Those alone are true devotees whose heart is sincerely in love with God :

The ones whose heart is belied by their tongue are false, inconstant.¹

The true devotees soaked in God's love are ever in ecstasy of realization ;

Those indifferent to Him are a burden on earth. (Pause 1)²

The true devotees are those whom God attaches unto Himself; Blessed is their birth; truly fruitful their life. (2)

Thou art the Cherisher—unfathomable, inaccessible;
I worship³ at their feet who have realized Thee. (3)

Lord, I seek shelter in Thee ;

Thou alone the bestower of forgiveness.

Grant to Sheikh Farid the charity of Thy devotion. (4—1)

In Rag Asa

Thus saith Sheikh Farid : My loved friends, attach yourselves to Allah :

A day will come when this body must turn to dust, and lodge in the lowly grave. (1)

Listen Sheikh Farid, union with Allah may come about,

1. Lit. of unbaked clay.

2. Pauses are of frequent occurrence in *Adi Granth*. These are intended to induce deeper meditation in the reader.

3. Lit. kiss.

Shouldst thou restrain the cries of these cranes of desire,
frisking about in thy mind. (1) (Pause)

Should one realize that death is inescapable,
After which return is barred,
One will then not lose the higher life in pursuit
of this worthless world. (2)

Let thy words be ever what is truthful and pure:
Shun what is false;
Let the disciple ever tread the path shown by the master. (3)

Splendid heroes¹ cross over the stream;
The faint-hearted female takes heart from their sight:
Those indifferent to God shall have their golden frames
sawn through.(4)

Listen thou Sheikh² : none ever got eternal life in this world;
This seat now under us, had numerous occupants before our
day. (5)

For everything its proper hour—the flying cranes of autumn,
the forest-fires of summer; the lightning flashes of Sawan³:
Neither these nor the long joyful embrace of long winter's
nights shall last.⁴ (6)

Consider well, what is evanescent must go from hence:
Long is the labour of joining hearts in love;
A moment may see them cast asunder. (7)

Asked the earth the sky, tell over count of the great ones who
have been.

Saith the sky, they all bide time in graves, bearing the
burden of God's reproaches. (8-2)

(Adi Granth—Page 588)

1. In this great poetic symbol, 'heroes,' are devotees of God, and the 'female' stands for persons of weak spiritual power.

2. Refers here to himself, as well as the haughty class of Muslim divines that went by this name.

3. The rainy month, July-August .

4. Here is a warning, as also in a number of other slokas, against expectation of the perpetuation of life and its pleasures.

Rag Suhi—SHEIKH FARID'S SACRED WORD

**In the Name of the One Indivisible Supreme Being,
Realized through His Grace :**

In fever of anguish I burn and in fits of regret rub my hands;
In my frenzy of passion seek I the Beloved.
Beloved, Thou hast taken some offence at me!
I am to blame for this, nor He.
To the Beloved's true value was I indifferent.
And now when youth is past, am fallen into regrets. (1) (Pause)

Thou Koel sable-winged, what hath darkened thee ?
Sorrow of separation from the Beloved hath singed my wings.
To one parted from her Lord, what comfort ?
Through His grace alone may she find union. (2)

In life am I a lone female by an unfrequented well,
Bereft of friends and companions:
God in His Grace may join me to holy company.
As I look around, God alone I find my Succourer. (3)

Our path through life is cheerless—sharper than the sword,
narrow in extreme.
Over such a path doth my way lie:
Listen Sheikh Farid, contemplate thy departure hence—
The hour of dawn is arrived. (4-1)

Rag Suhi Lalit

Listen O Man, thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat
when it was yet time.
In the lake swollen with tempests, how shall it float ? (1)
Fugitive are pleasures like Kasumbha, burning away at
a touch :
Touch it not, my beloved, lest it wither away. (1) (Pause)

This frail life-female is atremble under the stern
accents of the Master.
Past is youth; never will the breast be brimful again of milk ;
never again the love-embrace ! (2)

Saith Farid: Listen, sisters of my soul !

One day life's Swan needs must take his reluctant flight !
This frame will turn a dust-heap. (3-2)

(Adi Granth—Page 794)

**In the Name of the One Indivisible Supreme Being,
Realized through His Grace :**

SLOKAS OF SHEIKH FARID

The day this life-female shall be claimed (by Death her Spouse) is pre-ordained;

The Angel of Death¹ ye have heard speak of,
will show his face, and draw this frail life out, twisting
and torturing the frame to the marrow in the bones :

This day pre-ordained shall nowise be put off—
tell this to thy life :

This life is the bride, death the bridegroom who will carry
her away in wedlock;

On whose shoulder will the body weep after giving away the
bride with its own hands²?

On the other side of Death is the bridge³, narrower than hair's
breadth, over the chasm of hell, full with deafening cries;

Listen Farid : Terrible will be the hubbub there—
let not thyself be robbed through thoughtlessness. (1)

Sheikh Farid, hard is the way of God's devotees;
Wretched that I am, I follow only the way of the world :
Burdened with this bundle of worldliness,
where may I cast it off ? (2)

(Related to the above is the reflection contained in the
next Sloka :)

Worldliness is a hidden fire clouding thought and vision :
I thank the Master for this gift of indifference;
Else would it burn me through. (3)

1. *Malak*, here *Malakaul-Maut*—the Angel of Death according to Muslim belief.

2. The imagery in this Sloka is of the giving away of a bride, who in India is customarily loth to leave the parents' home

3. According to Muslim belief, *Sirat*, an extremely narrow path passing over hell, which the righteous alone can cross over.

Farid, had I known the store¹ of life so slender,
 sparing would I be of scattering it about;
 Did I know the Beloved so indifferent, less would I
 show of woman's vanity. (4)

(Theme continued)

Did I know the knot of love so frail,
 firmer would I tie it :
 Lord, none to me is dear as Thou—thus have
 I determined after life's sojourn. (5)

Farid, if thou be possessed of true² wisdom,
 blacken not the record of thy life;
 Look into thy heart³ (what thy deeds are.) (6)

Farid, strike not back those that strike thee;
 In utter humility and forgiveness⁴ turn towards thy home. (7)

Farid, time when thou couldst garner merit, wast thou
 engrossed in the world;
 Now with Death approaching,⁵ must thou be loaded fo
 departure the moment thy sack is full. (8)

(Related to the above in theme are Slokas upto 13)

Look Farid, what hath befallen thee; thy beard hath
 turned grey;
 The end⁶ is approaching, the past is left far behind. (9)

Look Farid, what hath come to pass :
 life sweet as sugar is turned to bitter poison⁷;
 In this state to whom but the Lord may I carry my
 tale of sorrow ? (10)

1. Original, *til*, grains of sesame.

2. Original, *latif* (Arabic : subtle, fine).

3. Lit. thy shirt-collar (*giri:an*).

4. Lit. kiss their feet.

5. Lit. with foundations of 30 edygetting firmer.

6. Lit, the next world.

7. Loss of pleasures is meant.

Farid, thy eyes have grown feeble¹;
thy ears lost power to hear;
This body is now like a ripening stalk,
changing colour. (11)

Farid, those who thought not on God while with black hair,
rarely may they turn to Him while gone grey :
Devote thyself to the Master while youth is still on thee. (12)

(The next Sloka contains a comment on the above by Guru
Amar Das, third in Guru Nanak's line of Apostles.)

Farid, the Master may be served in youth or old age,
as one may turn to Him :
This devotion comes not of man's own effort or desire.
This cup of the Master's love comes to whoever
He chooses to bless. (13)

Farid, I saw eyes that once captivated the world—
Eyes that would at one time not bear a daub too bold
of collyrium, pecked at by birds. (14)

Farid, despite the loudest shrieking warnings
against evil, and exhortation to good,
For the heart led astray by Satan what turning away ? (15)

Farid, wouldst thou seek the Master of All,
Look to the grass under thy feet :
Be like it cut and trampled.² (16)

Farid, speak not ill of the earth—its merit is great;
While living, it is trampled by us;
Dead, it covers us over. (17) *

Farid, love of God and greed go not together :
With greed love is rendered impure.
Such love is frail as leaking straw roof
against rain. (18)

Farid, why wanderest thou over wild places,
trampling thorns under thy feet ?
God abides in the heart : seek Him not in
lonely wastes. (19)

1. Lit. thin.

2. Humility and penance are implied.

Farid, once these frail legs of mine scoured
over hill and desert;
Today the prayer-jug¹ at hand is removed
a hundred miles. (20)

Farid, in separation from the Master
the nights seem endlessly long;
My sides are burning in pain :
Cursed is the life of those who have sought
other than Him. (21)

Farid, may my flesh burn over red embers of fire, if ever I
kept back³ anything from the friends of my heart. (22)

Farid, the ignorant peasant seeks luscious⁴
grapes while sowing thistles ;⁵
And seeks to wear silk while carding and
spinning rough wool. (23)

Farid, the lanes are muddy ; the Beloved's home
far, yet my love for Him is deep ;
If I stir out, my cloak⁶ will get wet ;
If I stay back, am I false to my love. (24)

Let the cloak be drenched through ;
let it rain never so much—
Go I must to meet the Loved One⁷,
So my love prove not false. (25)

Farid, I feared a touch of dust soiling my turban ;
simple heart!
A day will come when dust will eat too
into this head. (26)

Sugar, sweets, candy, butter, rich creamy milk—
Lord, nothing for Thy devotees approaches their
joy in Thee. (27)

1. *Kuza* : small earthenware jug for water for ablution before *namaz*, the Muslim prayer.

2. Original—*koh* (*kos*)

3. May imply keeping back one's worldly goods or secrets of the heart.

4. *Dakh Bijouri* : a fine variety of grape.

5. Original : *kikar*—acacia tree.

6. Lit : woollen sheet or blanket (*kamali*)

7. Plural in the original, but the sense rendered is meant.

Farid, my subsistence is on a dry crust of bread¹;
Hard will be the lot of those seeking to indulge
their palate with delicacies. (28)

(Theme continued)

Friend, eat thy hard crust of bread ; take simple cold water :
Envy not the delicacies another is enjoying. (29)

This night I couched not with my Lord;
My limbs are all in torture with unfulfilment :
I ask the woman cast off,
In what agony must thy nights be passed ? (30)

(Theme continued in Slokas 31 and 32²)

She who finds comfort neither in the husband's
home nor in the parents';
Neglected by her Love—what kind of wedded wife
would she be ? (31)

In the Husband's home or the Parents', she is
her Lord's—the Lord inaccessible, unfathomable ;
Saith Nanak, the happily married wife is one
on whom her Lord's favour falls. (32)³

Man's life is like a gaily-decked female,
perfect in toilet and make-up in care-free sleep;
In the end the fragrance of musk is gone;
foul odours⁴ alone remain. (33)

I fear not loss of youth were not the Beloved's love lost;
Many a youth hath withered away for lack of love's
sustenance. (34)

Farid, anguish is my bed, suffering bed-strings,
separation from the Beloved my bed-sheets :
Such is my life;
Cast Thy glance of compassion over it, Lord, (35)

1. Lit. : flat-cake of wood.

2. The import is mystical in Slokas 30 to 32.

3. This Sloka is of Guru Nanak's composition, containing comment
on the fore going Sloka of Sheikh Farid.

4. Original : *hing*—asafoetida.

Sorrow of the Beloved's separation is the Lord of Life :
Saith Farid : like to the cremation-yard is the
heart that knoweth not such sorrow. (36)

Farid, the world's pleasures¹ are poison-shoots
coated with sugar :

Some there are who spend their days
cultivating these;

Others uproot them from the field. (37)

Farid, one part² of the day didst thou waste in
wandering, part in sleep;

When God asks thee to render thy account,
What wilt thou say was thy aim in life ? (38)

Farid, hast thou noticed the Bell beaten without blame ?
What may then be the fate of us sinners ? (39)

(Theme continued)

See the bell beaten every hour, every quarter-hour :
Friend with beautiful frame sound as the Bell's,
Without devotion will thy life's night be
one of torment. (40)

Sheikh Farid hath gone old, all atremble his frame ;
Though life's span be a hundred years,
In the end will it turn to dust. (41)

Lord, Farid begs this of Thee :
Give me not to hang on another³ for favour :
Should such be Thy will, take then this life out of me. (42)

See the blacksmith with axe slung on shoulder,
A pitcher of water on his head,
Seeking to cut down a *van* tree :
Saith Farid to thee, friend blacksmith :
Spare this tree;
Under this I seek my Beloved Lord;
To thee it may yield no more than charcoal.⁴ (43)

1. Interpreted generally as referring to woman.

2. Lit. four *pahars*, constituting half the length of day and night.

3. Lit. at another's door.

4. This graphic description is variously interpreted, but the sense suggested here appears to be meant.

Farid, some there are who have excess of meal.¹
 Others do not have even salt for it² :
 In the Beyond alone will it appear,
 Which is subjected to hard blows for a life of sin. (44)

Those who commanded drums to be beaten for them,
 Umbrellas to rise over their heads;
 Trumpets to proclaim their glory—
 Ultimately have they been laid to rest in the graveyard,
 Buried under the earth, helpless. (45)

(Theme continued)

Saith Farid, those who erected vast mansions,
 halls and bowers—
 Their commerce in the world false,
 ultimately the grave their abode. (46)

Saith Farid, thy quilt hath numerous stitches to keep
 it together;
 But none to thy own frame;
 Friend, however revered and great,³ all must depart
 when their turn cometh. (47)

Saith Farid, the Angel of Death steals in despite
 our two burning lamps ;
 He comes, takes the fort, denudes the vessel,
 And leaving, extinguishes the lamps. (48)

Farid, see how cotton and sesame are crushed in the
 press as also sugarcane ;
 How paper and the pot are put into flames—
 Such will be the punishment of evildoers. (49)

Farid, those who carry the prayer-mat on
 their shoulders and wear rough wool⁴,
 But bear daggers in their hearts and utter falsehood
 with their glib tongues—
 These are bright outside but have the dark night
 in their hearts. (50)

1. Stands for worldly goods in general.
 2. This may be an 'authobiographical' touch.
 3. Original—*Mashaikh, Sheikh*—men of Muslim holy Orders.
 4. This was the usual wear of the Sufi (from *suḥ*, wool.)

Farid, my body is macerated in penance—
 Not a drop¹ of blood will ooze from it if cut;
 Those dyed in God² have no blood left in them. (51)
 (Added by Guru Amar Das)

This frame is all blood ;
 without blood a body may not be;
 Fear of God emaciates the body;
 Banishes from it the blood of greed;
 As fire purifies metals, so does fear of God cast out
 impurities of foul thinking;
 Nanak, those alone are beautiful who are soaked in
 God's dye.³ (52)

Farid, seek a vast lake wherein thou mayst find
 what thou seekest—God's Name;
 Why seek a filthy pond, muddying thy hands⁴ ? (53)
 Saith Farid, in youth this life-female loved not the Lord;
 Grown in years, she died :
 In the grave her soul wailleth,;
 Lord Thee I failed to meet. (54)

Listen Farid, the hair on thy head, thy beard and
 thy lips all are greyed;
 Thou thoughtless madman, wake up !
 Why art still at thy idle pleasures ? (55)
 Farid, how long this play of thoughtless pleasures ?
 Wake up to serve the Master !
 Thy few days of life are fast slipping by. (56)
 Farid, set not thy heart on mansions and bowers;
 Under the immeasurable heap of earth none will thy
 succourer be. (57)

(Continued)

Farid, love not mansions and wealth;
 Keep in thy mind mighty Death :
 Contemplate alone where thou hast perforce to go. (58)

1. Original, *ratti*, a grain's weight.

2. Here is a pun on *ratte* (dyed) and *rat* (blood).

3 The dye as symbol for the spiritual life is also used in the Koran
 (*Sibghatu-Allah*)

4. Lake is a great teacher or creed ; pond a petty or narrow one.

Farid, give up what brings thee no merit,
Lest thou be disgraced at the Court Divine. (59)

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

Farid, despite my black wear and clothing full of sins am I;
In the world's eyes I yet a Dervish appear. (61)

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

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

When a virgin, her heart fondly thought of marriage;
Marriage brought with it entanglements :
Alas, impossible it is for the state of virginity to return.¹ (63)

On the marge of the pool of the world have alighted Swans²;
They dip not their beaks in it,
Spreading their pinions for flight ever. (64)

(Theme Continued)

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

Gone are the birds which brought^{*} life to the pools;
The entire pool will flow off, leaving alone the Lotuses². (66)

Farid, in the grave a stone thy pillow,
The earth thy bed; the worm will eat thy flesh;
For aeons wilt thou lie on one side, unchanged. (67)

Farid, the beautiful pitcher of the body is broken.
The firm water-line of breath is snapped:
In what home Izrael, Angel of Death,
Seeks entertainment tonight ? (68)

1. The meaning is mystical : The Seeker whose heart is divided between the world and God will ever be full of regrets.

2. Symbols for men of God.

(Theme continued)

Farid, such is the end : the beautiful pitcher will break;
the firm cord be snapped :
To what end were born those who were merely a burden on
this earth ? (69)

Farid, thou shameless¹ truant from prayer :
Worthless is thy tenor of life :
Never hast thou come to the House of God to pary². (70)

(Continued)

Wake up betimes Farid, perform thy ablutions, engage in
prayers;
A head not bowing before the Lord merits not to remain on
the shoulders. (71)
What worth the head obstinate in God-denial ?
Worthy such head to burn under the pot, to be fuel to the
fire. (72)

Consider Farid, where are thy parents who begot thee ?
Gone on a never-ending journey—yet thy heart still
is unmoved to see thy own end. (73)

Farid, make thy mind straight, free of ups and downs of
passing passions :
Then mayst thou escape the furnace-blast of hell. (74)

(Theme continued by Guru Arjan Dev)

Farid, the Creator is manifest in His creation;
the creation is in Him;
Cavil not at any one—He prevadeth all. (75)
Farid, if while cutting my umbilical cord, my throat were
a little gagged,
Life would then escape these trials, this suffering. (76)
Gone are those pearly teeth, those quick-moving
feet, those sparkling eyes, vigilant ears³ :
A loud cry hath arisen from the flesh at departure of
such companions. (77)

1. Original, *ku'tia*--thou dog!

2. Never turned up in the mosque for thy daily prayers.

3. The epithets herein are 'conditioned' to suit the rendering.

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

Thus will thy body be free of maladies,
And thy life blest. (78)

Farid, this bird of life is a passing guest;
The world a lovely garden :
Hear the drum of departure beaten since dawn;
Get ready for the journey hence. (79)

Farid, at midnight is scattered fragrant musk;
Those asleep share not this blessing¹ :
What union for those with eyes slumber-oppressed? ? (80)

Farid, I had imagined alone I were unhappy;
Behold, the entire world is by suffering gripped :
From my house-top I saw, this fire hath spared no home. (81)
(Theme continued by Guru Arjan Dev in Slokas 82 and 83)

Farid, this world is so inviting :
In its midst is a garden-spot of poison-bearing plants :
This poison injures not those blessed with the Master's
grace. (82)

Farid, this life is full of delights with this body beautiful :
Rare are those who seek the Beloved and not the world. (83)
Mighty river, erode not thy banks; thou too art answerable
to thy Maker :

But what power in the river to flow this way or that ?
God's will alone guides its course. (84)

Farid, thy long life hath thus been passed :
Thy days sorrow-filled, thy nights lying on beds of thorns.
Now towards the close the Pilot shouts :
"Thy boat's in jaws of storm." (85)

(Theme continued)

The long river of life flows on,
bringing down the sandy banks;
Yet the boat is safe from the storm, if the Pilot be
attentive. (86)

1. Original, will obtain nothing.

2. A noble mystical state of joy and communion is expressed in this Sloka, one of the most beautiful in this collection.

Farid, scores profess to be my friends, but true friends
see I nowhere;

For one true and devoted friend my heart yearns as in
smouldering fire¹. (87)

Farid, the senses² keep always a tumult around the soul,
causing pain and anxiety;

Let me plug these ears—

Blow storm never so loud. (88)

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

Realize these, since each passing day vanishes into the
flowing stream of life.³ (89)

Farid, penance hath left my body a skeleton;⁴
crows peck at my soles;

God still hath not revealed Himself—
such is my destiny. (90)

(Theme continued in Slokas 91 and 92)

Thou Crow pecking at my emaciated body, eating away
its flesh,

Pray touch not these two eyes, so I may have sight of the
Beloved. (91)

Pray Crow, peck not at my body, fly off from where
thou art settled;

Swallow not the flesh of this body wherein is lodged
the Beloved (92)

Farid, the lowly grave makes a call to man to come to
this everlasting abode—

Saying, come to me thou must; fear not death ! (93)

These eyes have seen the vast world vanish into eternity;

Each is caught in his own trials;

Nor am I free from mine. (94)

1. Lit. fire made from cow-dung.

2. Lit. body.

3. This rendering is 'impressionistic'.

4. This Sloka and the two next are related in theme. This imagery is found elsewhere too in the spiritual poetry of India.

Listen Man, shouldst thou ennoble thyself,
Then mayst thou have union with the Creator and have
true bliss;

Whoever is for God, the world will be for him.¹ (95)

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

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

Farid, lofty mansions have been deserted—
Their inmates gone to occupy abodes under the earth;
In the lowly graves abide the dead.

Tell the proud ones of the world: Engage in prayer,
for the Departure is at hand² (97)

Farid, Death is visible as the opposite bank of the river :
Beyond is said to be flaming hell, resounding with
ear-piercing shrieks:

Some there are who have realization of this;
Many go about wrapped in thoughtlessness;
Know that the deeds done in this world will bear
witness against us in the next. (98)

Farid, life is like a crane sporting on the river's bank,
Suddenly on it hath swooped the swift hawk;
As comes this hawk from God, all sporting is forgotten;
God sends on man what never he thought or imagined. (99)

This body weighing three and a half maunds³ is sustained
by food and water;

Man comes into the world with a vast store of hopes;
As visible Death approaches, smashing through all doors,
Those loving friends and brothers perforce surrender thee
to him.

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

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

1. The original is in the first person, as from God.

2. The sense is 'shaped' slightly in the rendering.

3. The 'maund' in early times weighed less than now-a-days.

Farid, I am a sacrifice to those birds¹ who pass their days in
solitary places,
Picking pebbles, living on sandy mounds, yet turning not
away from God. (101)

Farid, behold ! seasons change, woods are shaken in storms,
trees shed leaves;
Scour the world over, no escape wilt thou find from
change. (102)

Farid, tear thy clothes to strips; assume coarse woollen wear.
Assume whatever wear will bring thee near to the Beloved.
(103)

(Theme continued by Guru Amar Das)

Why tear off thy silken robes; why wear wool ?
Saith Nanak, within the course of daily life in the home
mayst thou attain to the Beloved, if thy heart be sincere.
(104)

(Continued by Guru Arjan Dev)

Farid, those proud of worldly greatness. wealth and looks
Will of the Beloved remain deprived, as sandhills of rain.(105)
Listen Farid, frightening are the faces of those
indifferent to God;
In this world would they suffer;
Hereafter shall they not be honoured. (106)
Farid, though alive, thou art no better than dead—
Thou hast not arisen from sleep at dawn to pray;
Thou hast forgotten God, but know God hath not forgotten
thee. (107)

(Theme continued by Guru Arjun Dev uptill Sloka 111)

Listen Farid, the Lord abides ever lovely, eternally fulfilled.
The purest of wears comes to those dyed in God's dye. (108)
Listen Farid, bear joy and sorrow alike; cleanse thy self
of evil thoughts;
He alone shall enter the Court Divine whose will is bent to
Allah's will. (109)

1. Hermits living in solitude are meant.

Listen Farid, the world is subject to all kinds of stresses;
so is each man.¹

He alone escapes this who is under Allah's² protection. (110)

Farid; our hearts are dyed in the world that is worthless;
Hard is the way of life of God's devotees :

This may come by the greatest good fortune³. (111)

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

Prayer continued later in the night the fruit thereof;

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

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)⁴

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

Some may not get these though awake;

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

Thou who lookest for bliss with thy husband,

What is lacking to give thee joy,

with all thy charms ?

Listen, the truly blessed in marriage look for
joy nowhere but in obedience to the Spouse.⁵ (114)

Make forbearance thy bow and bow-string;

The arrow too of forbearance—

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

(Theme Continued for two Slokas)

Those who adopt forbearance and take upon themselves
suffering—

Such alone will be near God : their secret strength none will
know. (116)

1. Original, thou.

2. Note the Guru's use of the orthodox Muslim name of God, Allah.

3. Original, *Karma*, which implies fortune made by one's meritorious actions.

4. Sloka 113 is thus ascribed in *Puratan Janam-Sakhi*, probably the earliest biography of Guru Nanak, to him. In Siri Rag, on page 83 of *Adi Granth* also this Sloka is recorded as Guru Nanak's.

5. This rendering is 'shaped' a little.

Make forbearance thy life's ideal; learn hard this lesson;
Thus wilt thou become a mighty river, not a petty channel.
(117)

Farid, know the ascetic's path is hard ;
This devotion thou hast is only of the surface;
Rare is the man who truly treads it. (118)

In separation from God my body burns like the oven,
My bones flame like firewood :
I would walk till I be dead tired,
Would walk on my head,
To find union with the Beloved. (119)

(Theme continued by the holy Gurus.)

Thou needst not burn thyself like the oven nor put in
flames thy bones :
Why torture thy poor limbs ? Behold the Beloved in thy own
heart.¹ (120)

I seek the Lord elsewhere—Behold ! He is here with me :
Saith Nanak, the Inaccessible may not be approached,
But the Divine Guide may grant thee a sight of Him. (121)²

The sight of graceful Swans on water excited in cranes
the desire likewise to swim;
The poor Cranes got only drowned, head downwards.³ (122)
I sought companionship with one whom I took for a Swan :
I would shun him had I known him for a wretched Crane.
(123)

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)

Talk not of Swans and Cranes—His grace alone suffices :
Saith Nanak, should He so wish, He may turn Crow to
Swan.⁴ (124)

1. With minor verbal variation this Sloka occurs among Guru Nanak's own on page 1411, *Adi Granth*.

2. This Sloka is of the composition of Guru Ram Das (vide *Adi Granth*, page 1318, *Rag Kanra*.)

3. Slokas 122 and 123 appear as of the composition of Guru Amar Das in *Rag Wadhans*, on page 585 of *Adi Granth*.

4. With a minor variation, this Sloka appears among Guru Nanak's in *Siri Rag*, page 82 of *Adi Granth*.

On the marge of the Lake sits a solitary bird, with
numerous snares around :
This body is caught amid waves of desire—God's mercy
alone may save it ! (125)

What the word, what the qualities, what rich jewels of speech ?
What wear to adopt, the Lord's love to win ? (126)

(Theme continued by Guru Nanak)

The word is Humility, the quality Forgiveness;
Sweet speech the jewel :
Sister, wear these ever—then alone will thy Lord by thine.¹
(127)

One who is wise yet innocent as a child :
Mighty yet forbearing as though without might;
One who shares with others his store though slender—
Rare is a devotee with such qualities. (128)

Speak never a rude word to any—the Lord Eternal abideth
in all :
Break no heart—know each being is a priceless jewel. (129)

(Theme continued)

Each heart is a jewel; evil it is to break any;
Shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no
one's heart. (130)

(Pages 1377-1384, Adi Granth)

1. The *Puratan Janamsakhi*, already referred to, ascribed this reply to Guru Nanak, in the colloquy between him and Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim, Farid the Second).



APPENDIX

In a compilation in Punjabi, entitled *Sufian da Kalam*, Dr. Mohan Singh Ubhra, formerly Head, Department of Punjabi, Panjab University has reproduced 38 lines (19 couplets) purporting to be by Sheikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar. In these he claims that with these Slokas the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid is complete—implying that he has been able to provide what was not included in *Adi Granth*. He has, however, not mentioned his authority as to the authenticity of the authorship of this matter or his reasons for its ascription to Sheikh Farid.

In their language the couplets above-mentioned bear a fairly close resemblance to the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid in *Adi Granth*, as these too are in the Multani form of Punjabi. Their themes are moral teaching, some general wisdom and various states of feeling associated with the expression of Sufism in Punjab, such as humility, hard penance, contentment etc. But on a close reading one feels that while these are in the mode and style of the great poetry of Farid, they lack his power, depth and soul-searching and 'feel' differently.

It is not unusual to meet with compositions elsewhere resembling those of Kabir, Mirabai and other Saints. There are various kinds of imitations extant. Perhaps no more can be claimed for these couplets mentioned here.

PAK-PATTAN

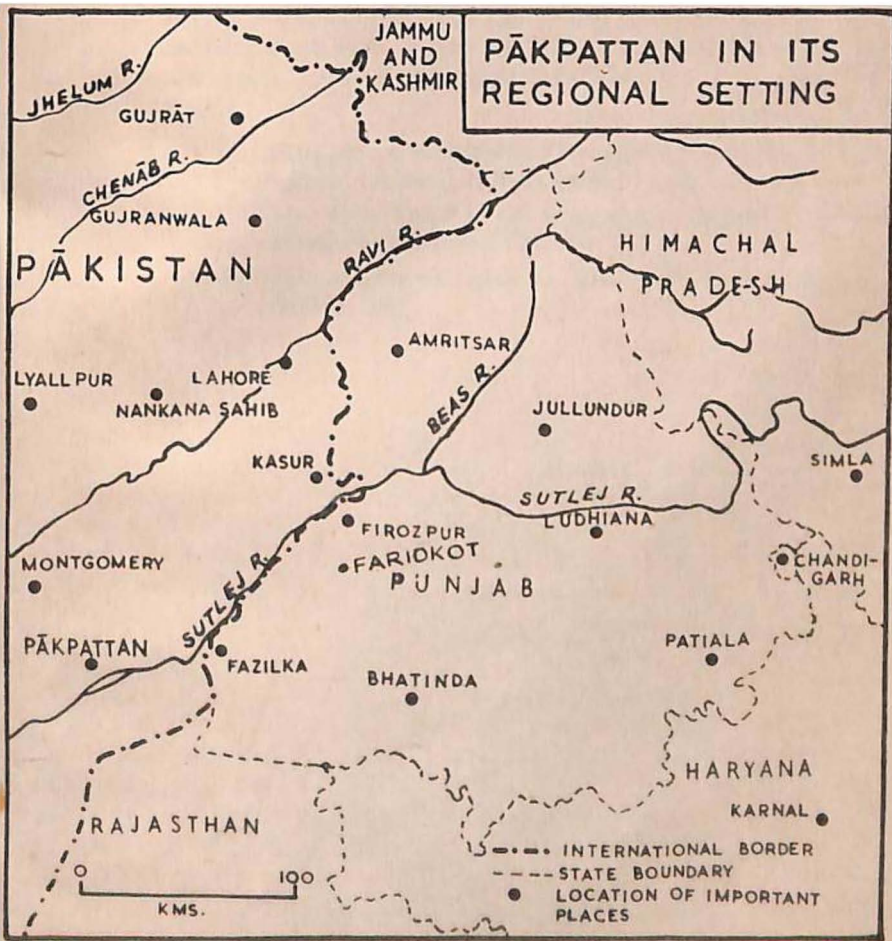
Pak-Pattan, earlier known as Ajodhan, is located at latitude 30° 21' N and longitude 73°24' E. The town lies immediately to the south of Pak-Pattan canal at a distance of 29 miles from Montgomery. Although at present it is situated at a distance of 8 miles from the Sutlej, at one time it was sited on the right bank of the river which has since shifted to its present course. For centuries it was the principal ferry of the Sutlej. The town owes its present name, 'the holy ferry' to the great Muhammadan saint Shaikh-ul-Islam Farid-ul-Hakkwa-ud-Din Shakkar-Ganj (1173-1265) who was one of the holiest men of northern India and to whom the conversion of the whole of southern Punjab* to Muhammadanism is attributed. The town became the principal residence of the saint, popularly known as Baba Farid, after he vanquished and subsequently converted a Hindu Jogi, Birnath, to be named Pir Kamal. The shrine of Baba Farid, which is the only building of antiquarian interest, attracts pilgrims from Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia during Muharram.

The town derives its importance in history also from the fact that it lies at the meeting-point of two great western roads, one from Dera Ghazi Khan *via* Multan and the other from Dera Ismail Khan *via* Harappa. It was at this point that most of the invaders crossed the Sutlej. The town was besieged by Sabuktigin in 977-78 and by Ibrahim Ghaznavi during 1078-80. It was visited by the great traveller Ibn Batuta in 1334, captured by Shaikha, the Khokhar, in 1394 and invaded by Taimur in 1398. It was also the scene of two of Khizar Khan's victories over the generals of the Delhi court in 1401 and 1405.

* Pre-Partition Punjab.

* (Map and Note on Pak-Pattan prepared by Dr Gurdev Singh, Professor of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh.)

PĀKPATTAN IN ITS REGIONAL SETTING

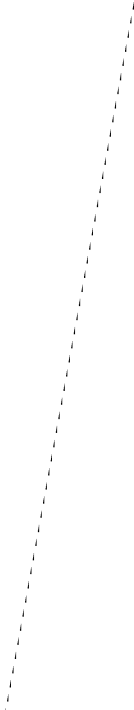


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During the pre-Partition days the town had some commercial importance too. Having been linked by railway in 1910, it soon became the only important railway station between Kasur and Lodhran. It used to import *gur* and sugar from Amritsar, Jullundur and the United Provinces and fruits from Afghanistan, and export cotton, wheat and oilseeds. The principal industries of the town included wood work, lacquer work, and weaving of bed-sheets and silk *lungis*. As per 1951 census the town had a population of 24,326.

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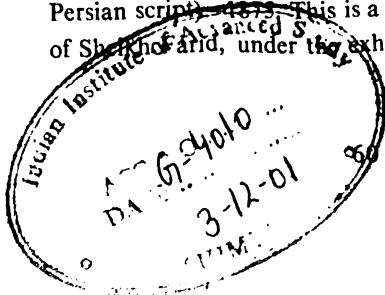
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Sheikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar : (Urdu) Shabbir Hassan Nizami
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 of Sheikh Farid, under the exhortation of his mother.





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