

**The conversation between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās:  
a Ṣūfī-Yogī dialogue of the 17th - century Indian subcontinent**

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## ABSTRACT

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**Title of Thesis:** The conversation between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās: A Ṣūfī-Yogī dialogue of the 17th - century Indian subcontinent

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The present study examines the text traditionally known as *Su'āl va Javāb* – a transcript of an intellectual discussion between the Mughal crown prince Dārā Shukōh and a Hindu Yogi Lāl Dās during the 17<sup>th</sup> C.E.century. The study is based on manuscripts of the text – specifically on the manuscript identified in the thesis as C, and the few secondary sources available.

Though neither written nor compiled by Dārā himself, *Su'āl va Javāb* stands as both a unique work and a fundamental link to his later writings. It is unique in the sense that never before under the Mughals had such an exercise been undertaken purely for the sake of gaining knowledge. As for the fundamental link to his later writings, the discussions of *Su'āl va Javāb* acted as a springboard for Dārā's thought, motivating him to research and write extensively on Hinduism.

Despite Dārā's premature death – the result of a power struggle within his own ruling family – the dialogue was to be read and copied widely in the centuries that followed, providing evidence of continued interest in Hindu-Muslim dialogue. Essentially, it stands as testimony to the fact that discussion and conversation can lead to a better understanding of another's faith, which is essential to the creation of a healthy society.

## RESUME

<b>Auteur:</b>	<b>Perwaiz Hayat</b>
<b>Titre de thèse:</b>	<b>La conversation entre Dārā Shukōh et Lāl Dās: Un dialogue Ṣūfī-Yogī du 17ième siècle du sous- continent indien</b>
<b>Département:</b>	<b>Institut d'études islamiques, Université de McGill</b>
<b>Degré:</b>	<b>Docteur de philosophie</b>

La présente recherche examine le texte connu traditionnellement sous le nom de *Su'āl va Javāb* - une transcription d'une discussion intellectuelle entre le prince moghol Dārā Shukōh et le Yogi Hindou Lāl Dās pendant le 17ième siècle. Cette recherche est fondée sur des manuscrits identifiés dans la thèse à la section C et d'autres sources secondaires.

Quoique *Su'āl va Javāb* n'ait été écrit ni compilé par Dārā Shukōh, ce document demeure une oeuvre unique et un point de référence que Dārā Shukōh réutilisera par la suite. Cette oeuvre tire son unicité du fait que jamais pendant la période des moghols un tel exercice n'avait été achevé dans le but de cueillir du savoir. *Su'āl va Javāb* devient un lien fondamental pour Dārā car il utilise la recherche effectuée pour ce texte comme base pour ses autres travaux sur l'Hindouisme.

Malgré la mort prématurée de Dārā Shukōh; résultat d'une lutte dans sa famille; la conversation entre Dārā Shukōh et Lāl Dās a été lue et copiée pendant les siècles qui ont suivi, démontrant ainsi l'intérêt d'un dialogue entre un Musulman et un Hindou. Essentiellement, ce dialogue est un témoignage du fait que la discussion et la conversation permettent une meilleure compréhension de la foi d'autrui, ce qui est nécessaire pour la création d'une société saine.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	.....	<b>2</b>
<b>RESUME</b>	.....	<b>3</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	.....	<b>5</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	.....	<b>6</b>
<b>TRANSLITERATION SCHEME</b>	.....	<b>8</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	.....	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: SOURCES: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY</b>	.....	<b>13</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: DĀRĀ SHUKŌH - THE ENQUIRER</b>	.....	<b>27</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE: LĀL DĀS – THE RESPONDENT</b>	.....	<b>59</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: <i>SU'ĀL VA JAVĀB</i>: THE WORK</b>	.....	<b>83</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: THE DIALOGUE: EDITED TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY OF MANUSCRIPT “C” OF <i>SU'ĀL VA JAVĀB</i>...</b>		<b>118</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	.....	<b>205</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	.....	<b>209</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	.....	<b>224</b>

**DEDICATION**

**WITH LOVE  
TO  
MY WIFE AZIZA  
AND  
MY DAUGHTERS KANWAL AND KARIMA**

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University of London and Government Public Library at the University of Punjab Lahore, who provided me with microfilm copies of their manuscripts and access to their treasures. I would like also to acknowledge the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill, for providing me with occasional financial assistance. I am also thankful to the CUPFA for their financial support for the completion of projects that have become a part of my study.

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I appreciate the support of my sons-in-law Nazar and Sadiq. My grand- daughters Arissa and Atiyah have been a source of joy during these difficult times. Lastly, thanks are also due to my wife Aziza for typing the Persian text and to my daughters Kanwal and Karima for assisting me in the translation of various works in French. They have been a source of continuous support and assistance. They showed their faith in me and helped me in every way to complete this study and it is with love that I dedicate this work to them.

## TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

The system of transliteration of Arabic and Persian employed in the present work is generally based on that used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. However, Arabic words such as Allah, Quran and Sufi have not been transliterated and are treated as a part of the English language. The plural of a number of terms are anglicized, e.g. *silsilas*, *mullās*, etc. Wherever the plural of terms such as *‘ārīf* and *muwaḥḥid* are used, the Persian form is used. Other exceptions to the McGill system are as follows:

- (a) *‘ayn* is represented by the superscript (‘)
- (b) *Hamza* is represented by the superscript (’)
- (c) Non-English words and the names of works are italicized instead of underlined.
- (d) The *tashdīd* in *wāw* and *yā* is represented with double *wāw* and double *yā* instead of *ūw* and *īy*.
- (e) The *tā marbūṭa* of terms is dropped, e.g. *wilāyah* becomes *wilāya*.
- (f) The Sanskrit terms follow the transliteration system as followed by Steingass in his work.

When quotations are used from other works, the transliteration system of the respective authors is retained. All the Quranic verses used in this thesis are taken from the The Holy Qur’ān, text, translation and commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1975), except where indicated otherwise. The numbering of the verses is the same as found in there. Books and articles cited in the text and footnotes are given with full title only in the first reference and abbreviated thereafter.



## INTRODUCTION

The present study examines the text traditionally known as *Su'āl va Javāb* – a transcript of an intellectual discussion between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās. The study is based on manuscripts of the text – specifically on the manuscript identified below as C, and the few secondary sources available. My master's dissertation “The Concept of Wilāya in the Early Works of Dārā Shukōh”<sup>1</sup> was an effort to situate Dārā's thought within the Indian Sufi tradition. That study was based on his early writings devoted exclusively to Sufism. The present study, on the other hand, looks at the next stage in the evolution of Dārā's thought, when he tried to gain a better understanding of Hinduism. Another objective of this study is to evaluate the *Su'āl va Javāb* and explain its position and role in the genesis of his later thought, which grew out of the Sufi tradition and culminated in an understanding of the shared identity of Hinduism and Islam.

Before Dārā embarked upon the writing of works such as *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, *Sirr-i Akbar*, and *Jog Bāshist*<sup>2</sup> he held discussions with various Muslim and non-Muslim scholars via correspondence and face-to-face meetings. Among these discussions and meetings, *Su'āl va Javāb* stands out as unique in its nature and complexity. It is unique also in the sense that never before in the history of the Mughal dynasty had such an exercise been undertaken by a royal figure with such profound seriousness and for the sheer pursuit of knowledge. And while it was neither written by Dārā nor, apparently, compiled on his instructions, nevertheless *Su'āl va Javāb* clearly reflects the material and approach found in Dārā's later work *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*.

This study has been divided into five chapters. In Chapter One, a survey of the primary and secondary sources is provided. The first category includes published and unpublished (manuscript) texts of the dialogue, while the second consists of works that shed light on the participants in the dialogue and the issues addressed therein. Moreover, to understand the background to the dialogue, an attempt is made to highlight the historical contexts of both Dārā and Lāl Dās.

Chapter Two is devoted to a biographical sketch of Dārā Shukōh. As a Mughal crown prince, Dārā (the enquirer in the dialogue) is frequently mentioned in the historical sources of the

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<sup>1</sup> See my thesis, “The Concept of Wilāya in the Early Works of Dārā Shukōh (1024/1615-1069/1659),” (M.A. thesis, (Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1987) (hereinafter referred to as Hayat, “Concept”).

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter Two.

time, especially by the court historians of Shāhjahān and Aurangzēb.<sup>3</sup> However, as one of the losers in a dynastic power struggle, he is usually treated with a negative bias.<sup>4</sup> As a result, his achievements -- including his scholarly works -- were denigrated or basically ignored by contemporary historians. In the last century or so, much more has been written on Dārā, as evidenced by the works of Carl Ernst, Jean Filliozat, Louis Massignon, Jalālī Nā'inī, Pandit Sheo Narain, etc., all of whom have highlighted his contribution towards the intellectual and cultural development of Indian civilization.<sup>5</sup>

Chapter Three is focused on the respondent in the dialogue, i.e., Lāl Dās. In an effort to flesh out his biography, a few primary sources, such as *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*, *Ḥasanāt al-‘Ārifīn* and *Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn*, have been used. To shed even more light on his personality, secondary sources such as Wilson’s *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus* and Pandit Sheo Narain’s “Dara Shikoh as an Author” were of great help. Though the personality of Lāl Dās

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<sup>3</sup> Kalika Ranjan Qanungo provides a short summary of each of the court histories that mention Dārā Shukōh including: *Pādshāhnāma* (which covers the reign of Shāhjahān), written by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhōrī and Muḥammad Wārith; *‘Amal-i-Ṣāliḥ*, written by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kambū (the work was written during the reign of Aurangzēb); and *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* by Muḥammad Kāzīm, written in 1688 and focusing on the history of the first ten years of Aurangzēb’s reign. All the above works show bias against Dārā. The first work, *Pādshāhnāma*, though it records details of the political career of Dārā, e.g., the promotions, gifts and presents through which Dārā was honoured by the emperor Shāhjahān, nevertheless it remains silent on the subject of his literary and religious pursuits. The second work, *‘Amal-i-Ṣāliḥ*, presents an account of the “war of succession” from Dārā’s opponents’ point of view. The author of the third work *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, Muḥammad Kāzīm, goes even further to criticize Dārā and justify his murder by saying that: “It became manifest that if Dārā Shukōh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the Faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the rant of infidelity and Judaism... Consequently, for the defence of the Faith, and maintenance of the Shariyat, added to the urgent consideration of state policy.... He was put to death.” See Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, *Dara Shukōh* (Calcutta: S.C. Sarkar and Sons, 1952) (hereinafter referred to as Qanungo, *Dara*), 291-94. For a detailed discussion on Kāzīm’s assertion in *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* also see Craig Davis, “Dara Shukuh and Aurangzib: Issues of Religion and Politics and their impact on Indo-Muslim Society” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2002) (hereinafter referred to as Davis, “Dara”), 19-30.

<sup>4</sup> For a closer look at the attitude of Muḥammad Kāzīm towards Dārā, see Sajida Alvi’s “The Historians of Aurangzēb – A Comparative Study of Three Primary Sources,” in *Essays on Islamic Civilization*, edited by Donald P. Little (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 57-73. Alvi concludes that as a court historian Muḥammad Kāzīm demonstrates a bias against Dārā and Shujā‘. She lists the attributes (according to her these are examples of “abusive language”) assigned by Kāzīm to Dārā which includes Dārā be-Shikoh (Dārā, the un-magnificent), undignified, stupid, haughty, unfortunate, wanderer of the desert of adversity, etc. It is interesting to note that the bias against Dārā has survived until today amongst those who see Aurangzēb as their hero. David Pinault, in his work *Notes from the Fortune-telling Parrot – Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan* (London: Equinox, 2008) (hereinafter to be referred as Pinault, *Notes*), shows that in Pakistan generally Dārā’s image is less positive than what one finds in India. He gives examples of such images in recently published books generally on Mughal history and specifically on Dārā Shukōh. He even shows that such negative images are present in the history text books currently used in Pakistan schools (see Pinault, *Notes*, 210-26). Also see Chapter II for a complete discussion on the issue of Dārā’s image.

<sup>5</sup> See Bibliography of this work for the complete list of secondary sources.

remains shrouded in various layers of identity the chapter reveals some of the facts about his life in the context of his era and the communities where he was active.

Chapter Four examines the dialogue as an example of oral tradition and of the literature of ‘interfaith meetings’ specifically Hindu-Muslim dialogue during Mughal times. It highlights the activities of Mughal emperors such as Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān, but demonstrates in contrast that Dārā’s efforts were driven by a genuine thirst for knowledge and were therefore different from the interfaith discussions held in Fatehpur Sikri during Akbar’s time. It establishes that Dārā Shukōh’s goal for Hindu-Muslim dialogue was different from that of his predecessors. The chapter also sheds light on the time frame of the conversation, its stated venues, and the possible identities of the compilers. Furthermore, it highlights the difference in content of the various types of dialogues that brought Muslims and Hindus together.

The final – and most important - chapter contains an edition of Manuscript C with its English translation and a commentary on the content. Manuscript C contains only twenty-five sets of questions and answers, but the answers given by Lāl Dās are for the most part quite long and packed with examples and similes. The edition was prepared with the help of other available manuscripts, at times applying simple corrections, and offers a readable version of a work that was written in a very non-literate style. The English translation is as close as possible to the text, although preference has been given to correct understanding and meaning over literal faithfulness. The commentary reflects the fact that the primary area of enquiry was mysticism and it clarifies many of the issues discussed. It also unpacks many of the underlying ideas that reveal the impressive depth of knowledge of both Lāl Dās and Dārā Shukōh. At the same time, it seems to portray the two protagonists as unique individuals and as representatives of their different milieus. The Muslim prince Dārā, perhaps concerned about his role as a Sufi and obviously inclined to learn more about Hindu wisdom, frequently appears to challenge the sage by pointing to logical contradictions, whereas the latter, keeping his composure, shows perfect confidence as he attempts a personal – and at times even inspired (*ta’vīl*) -- interpretation of his own tradition.

Based on the study of manuscript C, the conclusion demonstrates that the inter-faith dialogue between Dārā and Lāl Dās is a record of genuine intellectual curiosity on the part of two very tolerant individuals living in a generally intolerant age. It shows the degree to which Dārā was ready to revise preconceived notions and appreciate Hinduism to the extent that he saw almost

no difference in the essences of the two religions. It was after these discussions that Dārā came to see Lāl Dās as equal in status to the *awliyā'*, the Upanishads as equivalent to the hidden book mentioned in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad as the *Siddha* of his times. Taking a longer view, this dialogue stands as testimony to the fact that discussions of this kind can lead to reciprocal understanding on the part of people of different faiths and by extension to the creation of a more healthy society.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SOURCES: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

#### 1. PRIMARY SOURCES FOR *SU'ĀL VA JAVĀB*:

At least eight variant texts of the *Su'āl va Javāb*<sup>6</sup> were consulted for the purposes of this study. A comprehensive examination of these manuscripts has yet to be done; however, based on a preliminary collation, it can be asserted that many of them differ considerably in their content.

Amongst the eight variants, there are six manuscripts and two published texts. As the manuscripts are considered to be primary sources, they will be dealt with in this section whereas the two published texts are dealt in the following section on secondary sources. Out of the six manuscripts, two are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, one bearing Ouseley's catalogue number 1241 (represented hereinafter by the letter A) and the other Ouseley's catalogue number 1821 (represented hereinafter by the letter F). Two other manuscripts are housed in the India Office Collection of the British Library, one corresponding to Rieu's catalogue no. Add.18404 (designated hereinafter by the letter B) and the other to catalogue no. Add.1883 (designated hereinafter by the letter C). The fifth manuscript consulted is housed in the King's College collection of the University Library, Cambridge, identified in Palmer's catalogue as manuscript no.14 (represented hereafter by the letter E). The sixth manuscript is housed in the Orientabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and bears the catalogue no. 1081 [Sprenger 1659] (represented hereafter by the letter D).

##### 1.1 *Manuscript A*:

Manuscript A forms part of a *Majmū'a-i rasā'il* (lit. collection of epistles), which is itself a very rich and interesting collection of tales, treatises, political extracts, etc.<sup>7</sup> The volume is written in *nasta'liq* script and is 7 by 10 inches in size. Each folio has 20 to 23 lines, with each

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<sup>6</sup> Apart from the manuscripts mentioned here, there exists one more manuscript in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta. See Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens de Lahore (entre le prince imperial Dara Shikuh et l'ascete hindou baba La'l Das)," *Journal Asiatique*, 288 and 333 (hereinafter referred to as Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens"). Rizvi and Sheo Narain also mention that they have manuscripts in their own personal collections. See A.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983) (hereinafter referred to as Rizvi, *Sufism*), 416; Sheo Narain, "Dara Shikoh as an Author," *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society* 1 (1912): 28 (hereinafter referred to as Sheo Narain, "Dara").

<sup>7</sup> *Su'āl va Javāb*, in manuscript 1241 *Majmū'a-i rasā'il*. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. Copied by Momin Chand in 1784 C.E. (hereinafter referred to as ms.A), 145(b) - 151(b).

line being 4¼ inches in length. It is furnished with a handwritten table of contents, likely prepared by Sir George Ouseley himself, giving the titles of thirty-six prominent sections in the codex, while leaving out many others. The text of *Su'āl va Javāb* is the fourteenth of these sections, beginning on leaf 145(b) and ending on 151(b). The copyist, who refers to himself on the margin of fol.149b as Momin Chand, completed his task on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan 1198 A.H/1784 C.E.<sup>8</sup>

In this version of the text, Dārā raises specific questions about Hindu philosophy and mythology, especially pertaining to the importance of the *avatār*, salvation, idol worship, renunciation of the world, rebirth, issues regarding the *Rāmayāna* and the story of Krishna, etc. However, as we will see in the following section, the manuscript leaves out important topics such as the *murshid-i kāmīl* (lit. the perfect master) and *faqr* (lit. poverty). Nor does it provide a clear division into seven meetings, not to mention any specific information about the dates and locations of the dialogue in Lahore.

## 1.2 Manuscript B:

This manuscript, also written in *nasta'liq* script, was copied (according to the colophon) in 1172 A.H./1758 A.D. It is a part of a *majmū'ah* consisting of 259 folios, and measures 10 by 61/2 inches, with each folio containing 17 to 21 lines of about 4 inches in length. The codex as a whole contains three works related to Dārā: *Sirr-i Akbar* (i.e., his translation of the *Upanishads*), *Majma' al-Bahrayn* and *Su'āl va Javāb*. Most of the volume is taken up by the *Upanishads'* translation. Of the remainder, *Majma'* occupies 18 and *Su'āl va Javāb* only 11 folios (foll.248b-259a).

In manuscript B, the work is given the title *Nuskah-i intikhāb-i javāb va su'āl-i Bābā Lāl Dās va Dārā Shukōh dar taḥqīqāt-i ma'rifat* (a selection of questions and answers exchanged between Lāl Dās and Dārā Shukōh in the search for gnosis).<sup>9</sup> It is divided into seven *majālis* but provides no details about the original setting of each. The manuscript is written in clear, regular handwriting. The first two *majālis* focus on issues of philosophy and mythology, while the remaining five concentrate on the concepts of '*faqr*' and '*faqīrī*.'

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<sup>8</sup>See ms. 1241, margin of folio 149b. Also see Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 288, text 306, translation 327. Also note that the title *Nādir al-nikāt* as given by Clément Huart and Louis Massignon (288) is found nowhere in the manuscript (see below, Chapter IV, Section 2).

<sup>9</sup> *Nuskah-i intikhāb-i javāb va su'āl Bābā Lāl Dās va Dārā Shukōh dar taḥqīqāt-i ma'rifat*, in manuscript Add. 18404, India Office Library: British Library. Copied 1758 C.E. (hereinafter referred to as ms. B), 248(b).

### 1.3 *Manuscript C:*

Part of a *majmū'ah* comprised of 286 folios, this manuscript was written in *nasta'liq* script sometime in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It measures 11 1/2 by 7 inches, with 17 lines to a page, 4 inches in length. On folio 48a, one finds a reference made to 'Ālamgīr II (1167-1173 A.H.), which shows that the manuscript was completed, at the earliest, after 1167 A.H./1753 A.D. Essentially a collection of miscellaneous extracts put together by the copyist Ghulām Nabī in 1753 C.E.<sup>10</sup> (which information is found on folio 152b), the volume includes a version of our work entitled *Su'āl va javāb-i Dārā Shukoh va Bābā Lāl Dās*, which begins on folio 169b and ends on folio 175a.<sup>11</sup> The text of *Su'āl va javāb* as contained in manuscript C is perhaps unique in terms of what it preserves. For a detailed discussion see below, Chapter 5.

### 1.4 *Manuscript D:*

Manuscript D is housed in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, numbered as 1081 [Sprenger 1659], #2 on p. 1028 of Pertsch's catalogue.<sup>12</sup> Occupying folios 176b to 183a, it measures 7 by 9 inches with each folio page having 16 lines, 3 inches in length. It incorporates paragraphs (sets of questions and answers) 1- 49 in an order similar to manuscript A but differs in the content of a few questions and answers. The *Su'āl va Javāb* begins with an invocation of Sri Ganesh<sup>13</sup> followed by a copyist's note providing the information that Chandarbhān translated the discussion between Lāl Dās and Dārā Shukōh from Hindi to Persian. The copyist's colophon gives the date of completion as 17<sup>th</sup> Rabi II 1215 A.H. (17<sup>th</sup> September 1800 A.D.).<sup>14</sup>

### 1.5 *Manuscript E:*

Manuscript E is housed in the Cambridge University Library.<sup>15</sup> It is approximately 5 3/4 by 7 1/2 inches in size and contains 24 folios with 15 lines a page, each of approximately 3 1/2

<sup>10</sup> *Su'āl va javāb Dārā Shukoh va Bābā Lāl Dās*, in manuscript Or. 1883, India Office Library Collection, British Library (hereinafter referred to as ms.C), 152b.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 169b to 175a.

<sup>12</sup> *Su'āl va Javāb*, in manuscript 1659 (Sprenger's Catalogue), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Copied 1800 C.E. (hereinafter referred to as ms. D), 176-183.

<sup>13</sup> See also below, Chapter 4, section 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ms. D., fol.183a.

<sup>15</sup> *Su'āl va Javāb*, in manuscript 14 (Palmer's Catalogue), King's Pote Collection, University Library, Cambridge University. Copied 1868 C.E. (hereinafter referred to as ms E), 105 – 131.

inches in length. It begins with the line “*Srī Krīshan Jīv sahāye kōsht Bābā Lāl Jīv.*”<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the copyist was a follower of Vishnuite tradition for he begins his work with the remembrance of Krishna and names the conversation as “*kōsht Bābā Lāl Jīv.*” At the end of the dialogue the copyist explains the meaning of *kōsht* as question and answer by saying “*tamām shud kōsht y’anī jawāb-o sawāl Dārā Shukōh rehmatullah*” (lit., “*kosht*, meaning the question and answer of Dārā Shukōh, may God’s blessings be upon him, ends here”).<sup>17</sup> One of its characteristics is that it contains more Hindi verses than Persian. Another feature is that it differs greatly in terms of style and language from the other manuscripts. For example, the Hindi word *chakōr* (a moon-loving bird) features here in the response of Lāl Dās, whereas in manuscript A it is given as a ‘*murgh-i ātish khwūr*’ (fire-eating bird).<sup>18</sup> In another passage, in response to a question regarding the concept of rebirth, Lāl Dās replies that only those people reach the highest level (where the concept of re-birth does not exist) who rid (lit. burn) themselves of desires with the help of a perfect master. This is a very different version from the answer quoted in manuscript A, where Lāl Dās says of those who attain the highest level that they can only do so by cleansing their souls by their own selves.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.6 Manuscript F:

This manuscript is held by Oxford’s Bodleian Library and consists of 44 folios containing Dārā’s works *Majma’ al- Baḥrayn* and *Su’āl va Javāb*. The first work ends on folio 29b, while the rest of the leaves (i.e., 30a-44b) are occupied by the *Su’āl va Javāb*.<sup>20</sup> An undated copy, it is written in *shikasta* script and measures 8 3/8 by 4 1/2 inches. Each folio has 16 lines of 3 inches in length. The dialogue begins with the title *Guftār-i Bābā Lāl Dyāl wa Muhammad Dārā Shukōh* (Discussion of Bābā Lāl Dyāl wa Muhammad Dārā Shukōh).<sup>21</sup> The majority of the question and answer sets here are also present in ms E, although they are arranged in a different sequence.<sup>22</sup> The handwriting of the copyist is elegant and it would seem that the whole work was written in a format best suited to easy reading.

<sup>16</sup> Ms E, folio 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., folios 22-23.

<sup>18</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 308.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 306.

<sup>20</sup> *Su’āl va Javāb* (ms F), in manuscript Or.c.9, Bodleian Library, Oxford University. Undated (herein after referred to as ms. F), 30 (a) – 44 (a).

<sup>21</sup> See Ms F, folio 30a.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix where a table provides a comparison of the contents of ms. E and ms. F.



## 2. SECONDARY SOURCES FOR *SU'ĀL VA JAVĀB*:

The earliest manuscript of *Su'āl va Javāb* seems, based on the above survey, to be manuscript B, which bears the date 1172 H./1758 C.E. The other manuscripts, by contrast, belong to the second half of the eighteenth century. However, the dialogue itself did not become well known until about the beginning of the twentieth century when it was reffered and produced in various publications. It may be that since it was not written by Dārā himself it did not receive the same attention as *Sirr-i Akbar* or *Majma' al- Baḥrayn*. In 1861, H. H. Wilson became the first scholar to introduce a few examples of the dialogue's questions and answers in his writings about Lāl Dās. But it was not until Huart Louis Massignon published an edited text of manuscript A with its French translation that the work caught the attention of modern scholars. In the following section a survey of the secondary sources is provided which shows that, except for two sources, there are very few details available in this body of literature that shed light on *Su'āl va Javāb*.

### 2.1 H.H. Wilson:

In his work *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus*, H. H. Wilson mentions *Su'āl va Javāb* for the first time in western scholarship and for unstated reasons refers to it by the title *Nādir un Nikāt*.<sup>23</sup> He introduces the work while writing about the Bābā Lālīs – followers of Lāl Dās – in the course of a biographical sketch of Lāl Dās.<sup>24</sup> Wilson was a professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. From 1813 to 1832 he had served in India as an Assistant Surgeon in the service of the East India Company, and from 1832 until his death in 1860 he taught and pursued his research at East India House and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. His papers were published in various periodicals issued by different oriental societies. Later, these writings were reprinted in the work *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus*, in two volumes.<sup>25</sup> Regarding Wilson's sources, Dr. Reinhold Rost, the editor of the work, informs us that the author gleaned his materials from a variety of manuscript sources in Persian, Sanskrit, Bengali and different dialects of Hindi.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See also below, Chapter 4, section 2.

<sup>24</sup> H.H. Wilson, *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus*, (New Delhi: Asian Publication Services, 1976) (hereinafter referred to as Wilson, *Religions*), 344.

<sup>25</sup> See "Preface" by Dr. Reinhold Rost in Wilson, *Religions*, vii – x.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, *Religions*, ix.

In the course of his discussion of Lāl Dās, but without providing references to any published material or manuscript, he provides twenty-nine extracts from *Su'āl va Javāb* – a few short and a few long – some of which match almost exactly certain questions found in manuscript B and in *Rumūz-i tasavvuf* – both of which are sources for the present study and are further discussed below. It seems that his manuscript was different from those which have been consulted for this study. At least once he reports Lāl Dās as referring to the Persian poet Hafiz<sup>27</sup> and as mentioning at other times Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi<sup>28</sup> - poets who are not referred to in the available manuscripts. Out of twenty-nine questions, a majority (twenty-five) focus on the nature and etiquette of the ideal *faqīr* while the remaining four (with the answers having longer explanations) focus on Hindu philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.2 Pandit Sheo Narain:

In February 1912, Pandit Sheo Narain read a paper<sup>30</sup> on “Dara Shikoh as an Author,” which was later published in the first volume of the *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*.<sup>31</sup> In his presentation he highlights the importance of Dārā’s thought and provides a survey of his works and his contribution to the arts and architecture of the city of Lahore. He lists *Su'āl va Javāb* among the fourteen works ascribed to Dārā, which include his works on Sufism, his translations of Hindu works and his well-known comparative and controversial work on Hinduism and Islam entitled *Majma‘ al-Bahrayn*.<sup>32</sup> After referring to *Su'āl va Javāb* as “Dialogue with Bābā Lāl” in the list, he provides us with some extra information, basing himself on the work *Asrār-i Ma'rifat*, an Urdu version of *Su'āl va Javāb* (published by a fellow resident of Lahore, Maya Das) due to not having the original text at hand. He also refers to an article by Jadunath Sarkar in *The Modern Review* of February 1912<sup>33</sup> -- in essence Chapter 12 of the latter’s *History of Aurangzib*<sup>34</sup> – in which the author ambiguously states in a footnote (on the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 350-51.

<sup>30</sup> The date of his presentation is mentioned by the editor (most probably), but the place where the paper was presented has not been reported. See Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 21.

<sup>31</sup> Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 21-38.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>33</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, “History of Aurangzib,” *The Modern Review* ed. Ramananda Chatterjee (Calcutta, (1912) (hereinafter referred to as Sarkar, “Aurangzib”), 165 – 73.

<sup>34</sup> Later this work was published as *History of Aurangzib, based on original sources* (Longman: Bombay Orient, 1973).

authority of Rieu<sup>35</sup>) that Chandrabhan had recorded the conversation. Narain furthermore provides a sample of four sets of questions and answers. The first two sets are about the issue of whether or not a king can also be a *faqīr* at the same time. This material is akin, with some differences, to a question and answer set found in manuscript B.<sup>36</sup> The third set of question and answer chosen by Sheo Narain is about the “interest on loans” which Hindu businessmen used to charge their clients. One finds a similar discussion in a set of three questions and answers in manuscript B.<sup>37</sup> The last set of question and answer is about the code of conduct that pleases God, with the reply

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<sup>35</sup> Sarkar writes: “This account of Dara’s philosophical studies is based on the extracts from the prefaces of his works as given by Rieu in his *British Museum Catalogue*. Dara wrote in Persian... *Dialogue with Baba Lal* (really recorded by Chandarbhan).” Sarkar, “Aurangzib,” 167.

<sup>36</sup> For example, compare following version mentioned in Sheo Narain’s article with ms. B. On pp. 27-28 Sheo Narain quotes:

- Q. Kings, according to you, with their burdens and obligations cannot be faqirs.
- A. Their devotion lies in their generosity to their subjects and in administration of even justice.
- Q. Can a king therefore who practices these virtues rank as a faqir?
- A. A faqir is faqir after all, though all the fruits of a faqir’s life are attainable by a king who is just and generous.

In manuscript B, a similar set of question and answer appears in the First Majlis (Question #25).

Q. They say that during kingship mendicancy ceases as kingship is not free from involvement in the dirt (impurities) of the world. How can this be corrected?

A. It is true that during kingship mendicancy ceases except whenever meeting with the people of God happens. [This is] because leaving the world is practicing mendicancy and remaining imprisoned in it is to become attached to the world. Thus, whenever desire for the friendship of the people of God occurs [and as long as] at that time the world does not interfere, that time is (seen as practicing) mendicancy.

<sup>37</sup> Sheo Narain quotes:

- Q. Are Hindus also prohibited from taking interest like Muhammadans?
- A. Taking interest is equally interdicted to Hindus. The real object was to create a fear in the mind of the debtor to discharge his debts, lest they swell by accumulation of interest, because to carry debt is not a sin which can be expiated. People through ignorance have begun to treat taking of interest as a source of profit.

Manuscript B (Seventh Majlis; Questions # 13, 14 and 15) reports a set of three questions:

- Q. The transaction of interest is forbidden then why it is lawful for Hindus?
- A: For Hindus, it is more than forbidden.
- Q. Then why they do not avert?
- A: (Firstly,) they are custom bound and (secondly) they are not aware of it.
- Q. From where did the custom come?
- A: In the Hindu community, every punishment has retribution in charity, servitude, and hardship. It is believed that through retribution punishment can be obliterated. However, without paying back debt to the lender there is no salvation for the next world. Hence, solely interest transaction is forbidden for this reason and it is emphasized that the determined (principle amount) of the (loan) should be paid (with interest) and as much as possible it should not be usurped (lit. should not have an eye on it). Presently, due to ignorance, people have created their own practices and have thrown themselves into a furnace. Thus, it is forbidden what people of the world (are doing) for their selfish motives and for the sake of milk and sugar (worldly gain) they are unable to follow (the tradition of not going after interest).

given in the form of a couplet. This set seems to be missing from the other manuscripts consulted for this work.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.3 Louis Massignon:

Louis Massignon is perhaps the most important scholar to have written and published on the dialogue between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās. In his book entitled *Essai sur les origines du lexique de la mystique musulmane*,<sup>39</sup> he first refers to Dārā in the context of a Muslim mystic, without mentioning Dārā's efforts in detail. Later, in 1926, after Sir Thomas Arnold drew his attention to the dialogue between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās, Massignon published two articles: “Un essai de bloc islamo-hindou au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle – l'humanisme mystique du prince Dārā” in *Revue du monde musulman*,<sup>40</sup> and “Les entretiens de Lahore (entre le prince impérial Dārā Shikūh et l'ascète hindou baba La'l Das)”<sup>41</sup> in *Journal asiatique* – the former in collaboration with A.M. Kassim and the latter with Clément Huart<sup>42</sup> (hereinafter the second of these articles will be referred to as “Les entretiens”). The second article consists mainly of an edition of manuscript A based on a comparison with and occasional collation of three other manuscripts, namely, B, C and D.

Huart and Massignon's article comprises a few preliminary remarks, an edition of the text, a translation in French and a brief introduction to both personalities – Dārā and Lāl Dās. The edited text consists of seventy questions, each one beginning with the phrase *su'āl-i 'azīz* (lit., question of the king), while the response to each starts with the phrase *javāb-i kāmīl* (lit., answer of the perfect one).<sup>43</sup> The whole work occupies 25 pages of printed text with critical apparatus. Huart and Massignon explain that they have compared the manuscripts A, B, C and D. They also refer to manuscripts E and F, but apparently chose not to compare these manuscripts when preparing their edition of A.

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<sup>38</sup> Sheo Narain quotes:

Q. What (code of) conduct pleases God?

A. To live and to let live is the summum bonum of life as expressed in the couplet

میا زار کس را و از کس مرنج      همین ست سرمائه پنج گنج

<sup>39</sup> Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris. P. Geuthner, 1922).

<sup>40</sup> Louis Massignon, ‘Un essai de bloc islamo-hindou au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle.’ *Revue du monde musulman* 63 (1926) : 1-14

<sup>41</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 285-332.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 285-334.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 289-314.

It is not clear why, out of all the available manuscripts, Huart and Massignon chose manuscript A to edit. Perhaps this was due to one or both of the following two reasons: 1) according to them the dialogue or conversation is based on “two profoundly different recensions,” the first represented by manuscripts A and D and the second by manuscripts B and C, even though a portion of manuscript A is common to manuscripts B and C;<sup>44</sup> and 2) manuscript A has more questions about how the terms may be compared rather than straightforward questions about various issues.<sup>45</sup> For the editors, the most original passages are those in which Dārā tries to make Lāl Dās analyze in Hindu terms Dārā’s own religious experience as a Muslim.<sup>46</sup>

#### 2.4 *Rumūz-i Taṣavvūf*:

Another published work related to *Su’āl va Javāb* is a lithographed book entitled *Rumūz-i Taṣavvuf* (hereinafter referred to as *Rumūz*). This work was published by Malik Fazl al-Dīn Malik Chanan al-Dīn Malik Tāj al-Dīn in Lahore, most probably in 1924 (the work bears no date of publication, although the catalogue entry at the India Office Library indicates that it appeared in 1924). The editor of *Rumūz*, who is unknown, also provided an Urdu translation with the text. It formed one of the titles in the publisher’s ‘*Taṣavvuf Silsila*’ -- a series of works on Sufism.

The style and content of this lithographed version (31 pages in length) is very different from the text in Huart and Massignon’s “Les entretiens,” as well as from manuscripts A, C and E. However, with the exception of a few questions, almost all of it tallies with the last five meetings (*majālis*) recorded in B. The publisher leaves out all details as to the source (manuscript or otherwise), as well as the name of the translator of the work.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the work does not give the impression that it is a complete transcription of the entire series of dialogues. At the end of the text – which is a record of the last known meeting (*majlis*) - one

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>45</sup> See below for the comparison to other manuscripts.

<sup>46</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 289.

<sup>47</sup> Presumably it was the publisher Malik Chanan al-Dīn himself who translated it, unless he commissioned someone else for the task. At the end we find a note (*zarūrī iltimās*, lit., important request) to readers from the publisher asking them to point out the problems or mistakes in the translation so that it could be improved in later editions. See Dārā Shukōh. *Rumūz-i taṣavvuf*. (Lahore: Malik Fazl al-Dīn Malik Chanan al-Dīn Malik Tāj al-Dīn, 1924) (hereinafter referred to as *Rumūz*), 3.

finds only a hint that confirms this assumption: in reply to a question, Lāl Dās says: ‘the answer to this question will be given in the next meeting.’<sup>48</sup>

The text of the *Rumūz* is divided into seven meetings (*majālis*), with each *majlis* prefaced by a precise indication of the place where it was held. The first six *majālis* focus on the theme of the ‘*faqīr*’ (lit., poor person), and the concept of the ‘ideal *faqīr*’ described therein comes very close to that of the ‘perfect master.’ The content of the seventh *majlis* resembles the first *majlis* contained in manuscript B. In a few instances the Persian text of *Rumūz* is either incomplete or erroneous: as a result, the faithful Urdu translation of these passages makes little sense. But when I compared the text of *Rumūz* to manuscript B, it took on a new life: the manuscript corrected many errors in the lithographed version and filled a number of gaps. As a result, the ambiguous parts of the content became clear and the *Rumūz* more understandable to me.

## 2.5 *Kalika Ranjan Qanungo:*

Pandit Sheo Narain expressed the wish in his presentation on “Dārā Shikoh as an Author” (published in 1912) that someone write on the life and times of Dārā. Narain’s wish seemed to be answered in 1935 when a comprehensive study was published by Kalika Ranjan Qanungo under the title *Dara Shukoh*. Ironically, Narain himself is not even mentioned by Qanungo in his work. However, Massignon’s article<sup>49</sup> was a source of inspiration for him and Qanungo also gives credit for the motivation to write on Dārā to certain great historians such as Sir Jadunath Sarkar<sup>50</sup> and William Irvine.<sup>51</sup>

According to the preface to the work, Qanungo planned to publish his book on Dārā in two volumes. The first volume was to deal with the life of Dārā while the second volume, according to Qanungo, would cover “the literary and political correspondence of Dara Shukoh.”

<sup>52</sup> However, the second volume remains a mystery, as it is unavailable in libraries and has not

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<sup>48</sup> *Rumūz*, 31.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion on the article in detail see above under the section ‘Louis Massignon.’

<sup>50</sup> Sir Jadunath Sarkar suggested to Qanungo that he write a monograph on Dārā (see Qanungo, *Dara*, vii). Also Sarkar’s historical work *History of Aurangzib* was available to him to revisit many areas of Dārā’s life and times.

<sup>51</sup> Qanungo quotes William Irvine’s letter to Jadunath Sarkar in 1905 in which he wrote: “the losing side always gets scanty justice in histories” (see Qanungo, *Dara*, vii).

<sup>52</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, x.

been mentioned by later authors.<sup>53</sup> The work *Dara Shukoh* (first volume) was published for a second time in 1952.

In his work *Dara Shukoh*, Qanungo devotes Chapter XIII to the dialogue under the title “Dara and a Hindu Ascetic.” In the ten page chapter he introduces Lāl Dās, his followers and the time frame of the dialogue in Lahore, rightly pointing out the differences between the philosophies of Kabīr and Lāl Dās.<sup>54</sup> Most importantly, Qanungo provides his reader with 65 sets of questions and answers extracted from both published and unidentified sources.<sup>55</sup> All the sets of questions and answers moreover belong to manuscript A, regardless of whether these were translated directly from Persian or from the French translation provided by Massignon in his article published in *Journal asiatique* in 1926.

## 2.6 Bikrama Jit Hasrat:

Bikrama Jit Hasrat published his work *Dārā Shikūh: Life and Works* in 1953 – i.e., 19 years after Qanungo first published his work on Dārā. Hasrat devotes Chapter XI to the dialogue under the title “Mukālama Bābā Lāl wa Dārā Shikūh.”<sup>56</sup> He introduces Lāl Dās and his followers and gives a short account of his philosophy and his connection with the Vaisnava sect, in particular with other Bhakti movements such as Kabir Panthis, Khakis and Muluk Dasis, etc. Hasrat’s account is useful as it is partly based on the secondary sources available up until his time (although Qanungo is not mentioned in the text he does include him and his work in the bibliography). He also lists<sup>57</sup> three lithographed versions of the dialogue: one edited by Charanjīlāl in 1885; a second edited by Bulāqī Dāss with Urdu translation in 1896; and a third published in Lahore by Malik Chanandīn – the last one referred to above as *Rumūz*. He also

<sup>53</sup> Qanungo writes: “In this volume of *Dara Shukoh*, the reader will come across references to a vol. II which is not yet before him. That volume, containing the literary and political correspondence of Dara Shukoh ... is also in press. The present volume has been made complete in itself for the use of students and the general public by the inclusion of some chapters which were originally planned to form part of vol. II” (see Qanungo, *Dara*, x).

<sup>54</sup> For a complete discussion on the subject of Kabīr and Lāl Dās see below, Chapter III.

<sup>55</sup> He does not provide the name of the source rather he introduces the sets of questions in the following way: “As the Dialogue reveals the inner man, a few extracts in translation from the published text will not be out of place here” (see Qanungo, *Dara*, 244-45).

<sup>56</sup> The subtitle in English “Seven Dialogues on Comparative Mythology” on the same page could also be considered as the title of the chapter because it has a bigger font than the title and it has been used as a title on the header of Chapter XI. See Bikrama Jit Hasrat. *Dārā Shikūh: Life and Works*. (Calcutta: Visvabharti, 1953) (hereinafter referred to as Hasrat, *Dārā*), 239-53 and as well a title in the synopsis of the content (see Hasrat, *Dara*, xii). However, the table of contents retains “Mukālama Bābā Lāl wa Dārā Shikūh” as the title of the chapter (see Hasrat, *Dārā*, iii).

<sup>57</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 245.

notes the published version of the text of the dialogue by Massignon. He compares the three lithographed versions with Massignon's edited version and states:

while comparing the text of three aforementioned Indian editions with that of the Paris edition, I was surprised to find that the text of the latter materially differs from that of the former, which contains exclusively discourses on asceticism, while the latter, has an extensive theme of various comprehensive subjects relating to Hindu mythology and comparative religion.”

As he does not point to any significant differences between the lithographed versions it seems that all three had similar texts, although they each had a different format -- the Bulāqī Dāss and Chanandīn versions offering Urdu translations and Charanjilāl's version only the edited original. He also assumes that the manuscripts available in Berlin and the Bodleian Library (manuscripts D and A, respectively) are similar. However, as we have noted, they do differ in many respects.

He praises the discussion between Dārā and Lāl Dās and out of many he identifies at least eleven themes in the dialogue. He also provides us with twenty-one questions and answers, most of which belong to manuscript A.

## 2.7 Moinuddin:

Major Moinuddin, a Pakistani military figure turned author, published a biographical work on Dārā in 1969. Instead of following the chronological format in his study he highlights the important works of Dārā and events in his life by writing a short chapter on each.<sup>58</sup> The book contains twenty-seven chapters out of which he has dedicated nine to Dārā's intellectual pursuits and writings – ironically, on the one hand praising Dārā as a seeker of knowledge (and providing a list of his works) while on the other limiting himself to expounding only on his Sufi writings and *Majma' al-Bahrayn*, i.e., ignoring his contributions to Hindu literature.<sup>59</sup> At the end of his work, he also dedicates a chapter to the dialogue under the title “Discourse with a Yogi.”<sup>60</sup> In this chapter Moinuddin introduces Lāl Dās (without citing his sources) and then reproduces

<sup>58</sup> Much of his information is based on Hasrat's and Qanungo's works.

<sup>59</sup> Moinuddin, *Dara Shikoh – The Magnificent Prince* (Lahore: The Caravan Book House, 1969), 4-24 (hereinafter referred to as Moinuddin, *Dara*). He lists all his works in Chapter two where he portrays Dārā as a philosopher but devotes chapters to *Safīna*, *Sakīna*, *Hasanat*, *Risāla-i Ḥaqq Numā*, *Dīvān*, and *Majma ul Bahrayn*.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 100-104.



twenty selected sets of questions and answers in English translation, citing Massignon's published article as his source.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.8 Minor sources:

In volume two of his 1983 work *A History of Sufism in India*, S.A.A. Rizvi devotes a chapter to "The Sufi Response to Hinduism." In this chapter he assigns something less than four pages to the meeting of Dārā Shukōh with Lāl Dās.<sup>62</sup> After introducing Dārā and Lāl Dās, he makes an observation on the various versions of the dialogues<sup>63</sup> and then, after summarizing their content on the basis of a manuscript in his personal collection, reproduces four translated question and answer sets for the reader. He also gives a summary of *Majma' al-Bahrayn* and Dārā's translation of the *Upanishads*.<sup>64</sup> In chapter two of the same volume, which is entitled 'The Qadiriyyas,' Rizvi explains Dārā's initiation as a Qādirī Sufi and summarizes his Sufi writings including *Safīna*, *Sakīna*, *Risāla*, *Ḥasanat*, his letter to Shaykh Muhibbullah Allahabadi and his collection of poetry.<sup>65</sup>

An article by Jean Filliozat (d.1980) entitled 'Sur les contreperties indiennes du soufisme' was published in *Journal asiatique* in 1980,<sup>66</sup> providing some more background to the dialogue. In his article, Filliozat compares Dara's *Samudrasangama*, a Sanskrit version of *Majma' al-Bahrayn* edited by J. Bimal Chaudhuri and translated by Roma Choudhari,<sup>67</sup> with the Persian text edited and translated by Mahfuz-ul-Haq.<sup>68</sup>

Mahmood Ali's Urdu work *Dārā Shukōh* appeared in 1997, claiming to offer a more balanced view of Dārā's life.<sup>69</sup> The work places Dārā in the tradition of Indian Sufism and highlights his contributions to the culture of that time -- which represented (a form of)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>62</sup> Rizvi, *Sufism*, 414-17.

<sup>63</sup> For the further discussion on his comments on the various versions see chapter IV.

<sup>64</sup> Rizvi, *Sufism*, 417- 24.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 122-45.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Filliozat, 'Sur les contreperties indiennes du soufisme,' *Journal asiatique*, vol. CCLXIII (1980), pp. 259-73. See also M.Waseem (ed.), *On Becoming an Indian Muslim: French essays on aspects of syncretism* (Delhi:Oxford University Press, 2003) (hereinafter referred to as Waseem, *On Becoming*), 131- 44 and Jean Filliozat, *Religion Philosophy Yoga*, translated by Maurice Shukla (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991) (hereinafter referred to as Filliozat, *Religion Philosophy Yoga*) 199-214.

<sup>67</sup> Dārā, *Samudra Sangama*, translated by Roma Chaudhuri and Jatindra Bimal Chaudhuri (Calcutta, 1954) (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Samudra*).

<sup>68</sup> Dārā Shukōh, *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*. Edited and translated into English by M. Mahfuz-ul-Haq. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1929 (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Majma'*).

<sup>69</sup>See Mahmood Ali's preface to *Dārā Shukōh* (Delhi: Star Publications, 1977), 18.

pluralism.<sup>70</sup> However, at times, he expresses disagreement with Dārā's thought. For example, Dārā understood the Upanishads to be key to understanding the Qur'an, but Ali objects, saying that it could be proved neither historically nor by any scientific reasoning.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, he appreciates Dārā's efforts in bringing Hinduism closer to Islam by showing that both lead to one goal. He does however criticize Dārā for having been an idealist and not a realist.<sup>72</sup> For Ali, concepts such as the unity of all religions always look better on paper; indeed, whenever such a concept is put into practice it invites strong reactions from the believers of every faith. The practice of different and various kinds of rituals under the umbrella of one religion was a failure during the time of Akbar and it was a futile exercise on Dārā's part to try to prove that Hinduism and Islam were two parts of the same ocean.<sup>73</sup> He devotes only a paragraph to introducing the dialogue *Su'āl va Javāb*; however, his thought on Dārā's concept of religion and his analytical approach towards Dārā's understanding of religion is important for our discussion of and our commentary on the dialogue.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 17.f.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DĀRĀ SHUKŪH - THE ENQUIRER

Dārā Shukūh (1024 A.H./1615 A.D. – 1069 A.H./1659 C.E.), a Sufi, scholar and Mughal prince, enjoyed a short but full life, spanning a variety of fields of activity. In the following we provide an account of Dara’s life highlighting his achievements and failures followed by an assessment of his popular image in present times.

#### 1. THE CROWN PRINCE:

Sulṭān Muḥammad Dārā Shukūh, eldest son of the Mughal emperor Shāhjahān and his wife Mumtāz Maḥal, was born in the city of Ajmer on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Safar 1024 A.H./ 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1615 C.E.<sup>74</sup>

Of his early life we know comparatively little. The official chronicles for instance preserve hardly any information about the prince’s education, and it is to isolated remarks in the sources that we owe the knowledge that Mullā ‘Abdul Laṭīf Sulṭānpūrī, Mullā Mīrak Harawī and the famous calligrapher ‘Abdul Rashīd Daylamī were his tutors.<sup>75</sup> Our information starts to improve when, at the age of eighteen, he was married to Nādira Begum<sup>76</sup> (d. 1069 A.H./1651 C.E.). In the following year the couple lost their first child and it was possibly due to the shock of this that Dārā became ill. His father, Emperor Shāhjahān, took him to the Qādirī Sufi Miyān Mīr. This was Dārā’s first encounter with a Sufi master, and it probably took place sometime in 1043 A.H./1634 C.E. The second and last time he visited Miyān Mīr occurred during the month of Rajab 1044 A.H./December 1634 C.E.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> We are told of this in Dārā’s own *Safīnat al-Awliyā’*. The passage is translated by Mahfuz-ul-Haq in his introduction to *Majma’-ul-Bahrain*: “And this fakir was born in the suburbs of Ajmir by the (lake of) Sagar Tal on the last day of Safar, Monday midnight, 1024 A.H.” (Mahfuzul Haq, “Introduction” to Dārā, *Majma’*, 1).

<sup>75</sup> For a detailed account of these figures see Hasrat, *Dārā*, 3 and Qanungo, *Dara*, 4. Of the three, Dārā refers to Mullā Mīrak by name as his tutor in his works. See Dārā, *Safīnat al-Awliyā’* (Kanpur: Maṭba‘-i Munshī Naval Kishor, 1900) (hereinafter referred to as *Safīna*), 197 and Dārā, *Sakīnat al-Awliyā’*. Edited by Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī Nā’inī and Dr. Tārā Chand. Tehran: Mū’assasa-i Maṭbū‘āt-i ‘Ilmī, 1344 [1965] (hereinafter referred to as *Dārā*, *Sakīna*), 59. Mullā Laṭīf was an expert on the theological and rational sciences while ‘Abdul Rashīd Daylamī was a well-known calligrapher; however, neither is mentioned anywhere in Dārā’s works.

<sup>76</sup> Karīm al-Nisā’ Begum, daughter of Sulṭān Parvēz, was also known as Nādirah Bānū (Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 24) or as Nādirah Begum (Qanungo, *Dara*, 7).

<sup>77</sup> According to Qanungo, the date of Dārā’s first visit to Miyan Mir was “April 7, 1634” (See Qanungo, *Dara*, 72), which corresponds to 8<sup>th</sup> Shawwal 1043. However, according to Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, Dārā visited Miyan Mir

As for Dārā's political career, this began in 1043 A.H./1634 C.E. when he was given the first military rank (*manṣab*) in command of 1200 soldiers (*dhāt*) and 6000 horsemen (*sawār*).<sup>78</sup> In 1055 A.H./1645 C.E., he was appointed as governor of Allahabad, and during the next four years he saw the Punjab (1057 A.H./1647 C.E.) and Gujarat (1059 A.H./1649 C.E.) added to his responsibilities, although in 1062 A.H./1652 C.E. he was relieved of the latter charge.<sup>79</sup> In the same year, Dārā found himself in command of 30,000 soldiers and 20,000 horsemen when Kabul and Multan were annexed to his governorship.<sup>80</sup> By the year 1067 A.H./1657 C.E., the troops under Dārā's command had reached 60,000 soldiers and 40,000 horsemen.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, later in the same year, due to the illness of his father Shāhjahān, he was appointed as regent to look after the affairs of the empire. However, his brothers refused to acknowledge him in this new role.<sup>82</sup>

Dārā was not a successful warrior. His three expeditions against the Persian army brought very few positive results. During his first expedition, in the year 1049 A.H./1639 C.E., he was recalled while on the way to Kandahar when fears of Persian hostility suddenly died down.<sup>83</sup> In the year 1062 A.H./1652 C.E., he was sent again to Kandahar but had to return when the Persian king Shāh Ṣafī died and the war was called off.<sup>84</sup> Then in the year 1063 A.H./1653 C.E., he lost his final chance of capturing Kandahar due partly to disunity amongst his military officers and partly to his own undiplomatic attitude towards his commanders (*manṣabdārs*).<sup>85</sup>

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on "25<sup>th</sup> February 1634" See S.M. Ikram, *Raud-i Kauthar* (Karachi: Feroze sons, 1958), 398. For a detailed account of the dates and the discrepancy, refer to Hayat, "Concept," 9, 41.

<sup>78</sup> Qanungo mentions that the *jāgīr* (property) of Hissar was given to him to convey that Dārā was the heir-apparent; this was because the *jāgīr* of Hissar was the "Dauphiny of the House of Babur" (See Qanungo, *Dara*, 15).

<sup>79</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 18.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Iftikhar Ahmad Ghauri, *War of Succession between the Sons of Shāhjahān* (1657-1658) (Lahore: Publishers United Limited, 1964) (hereinafter referred to as Ghauri, *War*), 35. As soon as Dārā's brothers Shujā', Aurangzēb and Murād heard about their father's illness, Aurangzēb and Murād condemned Dārā as a *mulhid* (heretic) and advanced on Agra, while Shujā', after crowning himself, marched towards Banāres (Qanungo, *Dara*, 161-167).

<sup>83</sup> The Persian king Shāh Ṣafī (1039-1052 A.H./1629-1642 A.D.) was also involved in serious conflict with the Ottoman Sultān Murād (Qanungo, *Dara*, 23).

<sup>84</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 24.

<sup>85</sup> Although the expedition succeeded in taking the forts in Zamindawar, it was by and large a failure. Yet in spite of this – due to the love and affection of his father – Dārā was praised by Shāhjahān. (Qanungo, *Dara*, 33-71). A detailed account of the siege of Kandahar was written by an unknown author in a manuscript entitled *Laṭā'if al-Akḥbār*, which is available at the India Office Collection, British Library, catalogued by Rieu as Add 24,089. According to Rieu, this is the same work cited by Khāfī Khān as the *Tārīkh-i Kandahār*, who ascribes it to Rashīd Khān, a courtier of Aurangzēb who served the emperor for more than sixteen years (Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1879), 264).

The later events in Dārā's life encompass his two significant defeats in the war of succession when Aurangzēb and Murād, rejecting Dārā's regency, waged war against him in Samugarh.<sup>86</sup> This caused him to flee towards Ahmadabad, where he established his own court. He suffered his final defeat a few months later in 1069 A.H./1659 C.E. at the hands of his brother Aurangzēb, in Deorai. Although personally a brave leader, his lack of diplomatic and leadership skills lost him his crown, and he fled to Dadar seeking refuge.<sup>87</sup>

His stay in Dadar was short and traumatic: first, his wife Nādira Begum died and then his host Malik Jīwan betrayed him. Dārā and his son were imprisoned by Malik Jīwan and then handed over to the new emperor Aurangzēb.<sup>88</sup> Finally, by order of the latter and in rejection of Dārā's appeal,<sup>89</sup> he was paraded in disgrace through the streets of Delhi and beheaded in Dhū al-Hijjah 1069 A.H./August 1659 C.E.<sup>90</sup>

History shows that Dārā's political career was a long string of failures. The reason for these has been, and will remain, part of the ongoing debate amongst historians. However, this debate and the issues arising from it are beyond of the scope of the present study.

## 2. A QĀDIRĪ SUFI MASTER:

Dārā appears to have been interested in the Qādiriyya Sufi silsila from his childhood. Perhaps the Mughals' traditional attachment to the Sufis played a vital role in Dārā's understanding and acceptance of Sufi thought. However, his specific inclination towards the Qādiriyya silsila was due to his teacher Mullā Mīrak Harawī.<sup>91</sup> His affiliation with this silsila

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<sup>86</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 178-89.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 208-12.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 220-25.

<sup>89</sup> *Ruqa 'āt-i 'Alamgir* contains this letter of Dārā which he wrote from prison to Awrangzeb:

My brother and my king (*bādshāh-i man*), I think of not sovereignty. I wish it may be auspicious to you and your descendants. The idea of my execution in your lofty mind is unnecessary. If I am allotted a residential place and one of my maids to attend to me, I would pray for Your Majesty from my peaceful corner. (See Hasrat, *Dārā*, 105)

<sup>90</sup> The date of Dārā's execution differs in the historical sources. This has been pointed out by Mahfuz-ul-Haq. He writes: "According to *Maathir-i-Alamgiri*, (Bib.Ind.), p.27, Dārā was executed on the night of Thursday, the 21<sup>st</sup> Dhul Hijja; the author of *Amal-i-Salih* (Elliot vii, p.244) records on the 26<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijja, Khafi Khan (*Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, ii, p.87) says that Dārā was executed on the last (*akhir*) day of Dhul Hijja, (i.e. 29<sup>th</sup>), while Mufti Ghulam Sarwar (*Khazīnat-ul-Aṣfiya*, I, p.174), records the date of execution on the first Muharram 1070 A.H." (Mahfuzul Haq, "Introduction" to Dārā, *Majma*, 4, n.2.)

<sup>91</sup> Dārā introduces Akhund Mirak Shaykh not only as his teacher but also as a Qādirī Sufi. Perhaps this is the reason that he claims an affiliation with the Qādiriyya silsila "from the beginning" (Dārā, *Sakīna*, 31, 59, 243).

became stronger in 1043 A.H./1634 C.E., when as we saw earlier, he first met Miyān Mīr in consultation over his health.<sup>92</sup>

Dārā was very much impressed by Miyān Mīr's personality. He considered Miyān Mīr "the guide of all Awliya' of this time"<sup>93</sup> In his writings he even refers to himself as a *mulāzim* (lit. servant) of Miyān Mīr.<sup>94</sup> Dārā continued communicating with him until the latter's death, considering him as his *murshid* (spiritual master), and he mentions at least two spiritual experiences in which Miyān Mīr posthumously blessed him.<sup>95</sup>

It was Mullā Shāh however, who formally initiated him into the Qādiriyya silsila sometime in early 1049 A.H./1639-40 C.E. According to Dārā, thanks to Mullā Shāh's blessings, in a very short time he reached that stage which others would only reach after years of struggle and spiritual exercise. Mullā Shāh ultimately conferred on him the authority of a Sufi master and asked him to guide others to the Qādiriyya fold.

Dārā's contribution to the field of Sufism will be discussed in the following section. However, generally speaking, the available sources make obvious his commitment to the Qādiriyya and his role as a Sufi master. In the first place, it is clear that, after his initial meeting with Miyān Mīr in Lahore, he remained loyal to the Qādiriyya silsila throughout his life. In fact, as a poet, he adopted "Qādirī" as his pen name.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, Mullā Shāh later granted him the status of Sufi master.<sup>97</sup> As a Qādirī Sufi, his works speak at length about the practice of *dhikr* (lit. remembrance, a term normally used for meditation on God) and his personal experiences with his own Sufi masters; in fact, in one of these experiences he claims to have attained the

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<sup>92</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, 72; idem, Dārā, *Sakīna*, 48-49.

<sup>93</sup> Dārā, *Sakīna*, 24.

<sup>94</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, 73.

<sup>95</sup> See Hayat, "Concept", 30-31.

<sup>96</sup> Aḥmad Nabī Khān edited and published a collection of Dārā's poems under the title *Dīwān of Dārā Shikōh*. The published work is based on the two manuscripts found in Pakistan. Aḥmad Nabī Khān has also written an excellent introduction to the work. See Ahmad Nabi Khan (ed.), *Diwān-i Dārā Shukoh*. Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of Punjab, 1969 (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Dīwān*).

<sup>97</sup> Mullā Shāh had expectations that, through Dārā, the Qādiriyya silsila would become well-known all over India. This dream of Mullā Shāh, unfortunately, was not realized as Dārā lost the war of succession to his younger brother Aurangzēb. See Dārā, *Sakīna*, 179.

highest level of Sufism.<sup>98</sup> All of these are indications that he took his role as a Qādirī Sufi and wayfarer (*sālik*) very seriously.

It seems that Dārā was aware of, and was to some extent uncomfortable with, the duality of his position as a prince and a Sufi at the same time. On one occasion he reiterates that, although he is not like *darvishān* (lit. poor people) in *ẓāhir* (lit. appearance), spiritually he belongs to them.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, he did not renounce his royal career and did not become a *faqīr* (lit., a poor person) like the celebrated Sufi Ibrāhīm ibn Adham.<sup>100</sup> His preoccupation with the *faqīrī* issue is shown, however, in the fact that he once asked Bābā Lāl Dās “whether it is possible to govern with the lifestyle of an ascetic (*jōgī*), since governing requires dealing with the corruptions of the world (*ālā’ish-i dunyā*).” To this Bābā answered him in the affirmative.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps the Qādiriyya silsila offered him the desired latitude in which he would be able to accommodate the duties of his temporal office while at the same time practically experiencing the “one-ness of the Reality.”

Despite this information on his role as Sufi master, we do not know the number of his followers (*murīdān*), nor do we have any account of his meetings with any disciples whom he might have initiated into the Qādiriyya silsila. However, according to Jalālī Nā’inī, Dārā was called *al-kāmil* (the perfect one) by his companions (perhaps other Qādirīs) after Mullā Shāh declared him a Sufi master.<sup>102</sup> Dārā himself reports in *Safīnat al-Awliyā’* that he acted as an intercessor for one person and “saved him from the affliction of hell.”<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, he wrote *Risāla-i Ḥaqqnumā’* as a guide to all those without a Sufi master to guide them on their spiritual

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<sup>98</sup> For the issue of initiation see Hayat “Concept,” 32-33. Dārā explains his personal spiritual experience in the following words: “Whatever others would attain in one month from him, I attained in one night and whatever others would attain in one year I attained in one month and if others reached the stage after years of struggle and spiritual exercise I found it without any exercise, with his bounty; and once and for all the friendship (love) of the two worlds went out of my heart, and the doors of (divine) bounty and mercy were opened upon my heart and He gave me whatever I asked” (Dārā, *Sakīna*, 6).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibrahim ibn Adham (d.790 C.E.) is regarded as an exemplary figure of poverty, abstinence and trust in God. According to legend he renounced his princely life to adopt the life of a committed Sufi. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978) (hereinafter referred to as Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 36-37).

<sup>101</sup> Ms. B, folio 251.

<sup>102</sup> Dārā, *Sakīna*, 44.

<sup>103</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, 84.

journey. The very act of writing an epistle for those who were seeking the truth on their own shows that Dārā was indeed serious about his duties as a Sufi master.<sup>104</sup>

Apart from his own works, there are a couple of other sources that also confirm that he was a recognized Sufi master. Dārā's sister Jahānārā, in the introduction to her work *Mūnis al-arwāḥ*, introduces him as “*murshid-i īn ḥaqīra*” (guide or Sufi master of this humble person).<sup>105</sup> Another Qādirī biographer, Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf, uses the phrase *rahmatullāh 'alayhi* (may God's blessings be upon him) wherever he writes the name of Dārā.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, the copyist of manuscript E adds *rahmatullāh* to Dārā's name in the colophon.<sup>107</sup>

### 3. A SCHOLAR OF TAṢAWWUF AND HINDUISM:

Dārā Shukōh started his writing career in 1049 A.H./1639-40 C.E., completing in that year his work *Safīnat al-Awliyā'*. His subsequent writings include *Sakīnat al-Awliyā'*, *Risāla-i Ḥaqqnumā'*, *Hasanāt al-'Ārifīn*, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, *Sirr-i Akbar* and his introduction to *Yoga Vāshistha* or *Jog Bāshist*.<sup>108</sup> The first four works were written on Sufism, whereas in the fifth one, he proposed a comparative study of Islam and Hinduism.<sup>109</sup> The last two works deal exclusively with Hinduism. The subject of the present study is another very important work, the *Su'āl va Javāb-i Dārā Shukōh va Bābā Lāl Dās*, a record of the question and answer sessions that Dārā held with the Yogi Bābā Lāl Dās.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See Dārā, *Risāla-i Ḥaqq nūmā'* in *Muntakhabāt-i Āthār: Risāla-i Ḥaqq nūmā', Majma' al-Baḥrayn, Upaniokhat mundak*. Edited by Sayyid Muḥammad Riḏā Jalālī Nā'inī. Tehran: Chāp-i Tabān, 1335 [1956] (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Risala*), 3-4.

<sup>105</sup> Jahānārā, *Mū'nis al-arwāḥ*, Ms. Or. 250 in the India Office (British Library), folio 6.

<sup>106</sup> Ms. Or 213 in India Office (British Library), folios 84, 86, 87, 89, 90.

<sup>107</sup> See the last line of the ms.E.

<sup>108</sup> Tara Chand, in his English introduction to *Sirr-i Akbar*, gives the original name of the work as *Yoga Vasishta*. See Dārā, *Sirr-i Akbar* (The Oldest Translation of Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian). Edited by Tārā Chand and Sayyid Muḥammad Riḏā Jalālī Nā'inī (Tehran: Tābān Printing Press, 1957) (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Sirr*), 49. Fathullah Muḥtabai gives it as *Laghu-Yoga Vasishta*; see Fathullah Muḥtabai, *Aspects of Hindu Muslim Cultural Relations* (New Delhi: National Book Bureau, 1978) (hereinafter referred to as Muḥtabai, *Aspects*), 61, n.3. However, in 1992, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna reprinted Abul Hasan's Urdu translation of *Jog Bashist* under the title *Jog Bashist (Minhāj al-Sālikīn)*. See Dārā, *Jog Basishat*. Translated in Urdu by Abul Hasan (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, 1992) (hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Jog*).

<sup>109</sup>

<sup>110</sup> For the introduction and comments see Chapter Two.



### 3.1. Dārā's works on *taṣawwuf*:

Dārā's works on Sufism show a gradual development in his thought. He started his journey as a believer in a particular religion and a committed Sufi and reached the point where he understood that all religions lead to one Reality. Thus, in his work *Safīnat al-Awliya'*, like any Sufi, he introduces himself as a "*ḥanafī al-mashrab*" (follower of the Ḥanafī law) who belongs to the Qādiriyya silsila.<sup>111</sup> In his second work his focus is on his Qādiriyya silsila and, even more so, on his broad-minded Sufi master Mullā Shāh – who was an admirer of Ibn al- 'Arabī's philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being).<sup>112</sup> The influence of Mullā Shāh and the philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* become more evident in *Ḥasanāt al- 'Ārifīn*, in his poetry (*Diwan*) and even more so in his letters to Muhibbullah Allahbadi and Shah Dilruba. In *Ḥasanāt*, he describes Bābā Lāl Dās – a Hindu Yogi – as one of the awliyā'.<sup>113</sup> In his *Dīwān* he uses the phrase *hama ūst* (He is everything).<sup>114</sup> In his letter to Shah Dilruba he introduces himself as *but parast* (idolator)<sup>115</sup> and *dayr nishīn* (a resident of the temple).<sup>116</sup> He uses terms like *majāzī islām* (superficial Islam) and *kufr-i ḥaqīqī* (true unbelief).<sup>117</sup>

*Safīnat al-Awliya'* (lit., ship of the saints) contains more than four hundred biographical accounts of Sufi awliya'.<sup>118</sup> Dārā completed *Safīna* on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan 1049 A.H./21<sup>st</sup> January 1640 C.E.<sup>119</sup> The purpose of the work was twofold: to compile the scattered biographies of the Sufi awliya'<sup>120</sup> and to show his love for and devotion to these figures.<sup>121</sup> The writing style

<sup>111</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Dārā, *Sakīna*, 179-204.

<sup>113</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 53-55.

<sup>114</sup> Dārā, *Dīwān*, 8. هر سو که نظر کنی همه اوست وجه الله عیانست روبرو را

<sup>115</sup> In this work, the English translation of the term *but* has been applied as "idol" without assigning any pejorative connotation to it. Another alternative translation of *but* could be "icon" which has much broader implication and may misrepresent the correct translation.

<sup>116</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> letter of Dārā to Shāh Dilrubā in Tariq Mehmood's *Tasānīf-i Dārā Shukoh kā taḥqīqī jā'iza: taṣawwūf key khasūsī hawāley sey* (Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Karachi University, 2006) (hereafter Tariq, *Tasānīf*), 122.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> For Hasrat, Ethé and Storey, the total number of awliya' cited in *Safīna* is four hundred and eleven. See Hasrat, *Dārā*, 53-56; Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of India Office*. 2 vols. (Oxford: Printed for the India office by H. Hart, 1903-1937) (hereinafter referred to as Ethé, *Catalogue*), 274 -315; Storey, C.A. *Persian Literature (A Bio-Bibliographical Survey)*. Vol.I. Part 1. (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1970), 997. However, the Naval Kishore published lithographed edition of *Safīnat al-Awliya'* (a copy of which is presently housed in the rare book section of McGill University) is comprised of four hundred and nine biographical accounts.

<sup>119</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, 216.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 12, 13.

of *Safīna* is akin to other Sufī biographical literature in that it is more miracle-oriented than focused on historical accuracy.<sup>122</sup> The author even explains that he has adopted Jāmī's style, though with simpler language.<sup>123</sup> However, at times he uses an analytical approach and questions a few events mentioned in the traditional biographical accounts of the awliyā'.<sup>124</sup>

Dārā's synthetic approach towards "miracles and history" can be characterized as a struggle to locate in history those persons who transcend time and space. Dārā's introduction to *Safīna* provides a remarkable insight into his thought and the understanding that he had of scholarship at that time. He was aware of Sufī writers like Jāmī, 'Aṭṭār, Hujwīrī, Ibn al-'Arabī, Kāshānī, Qushayrī, al-Yaf'ī and Muḥaddith Dihlawī, and referred to their works in writing *Safīna*.<sup>125</sup> It is important to note that, as a novice in the field of Sufī scholarship, he seems to have exercised caution by not advocating any particular type of philosophy.<sup>126</sup> This, however, changed when he wrote his later works. Nonetheless, the contents of *Safīna* show a strong commitment to the Qādirī order. The longest account in the work is devoted to the founder of the silsila, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and it conveys Dārā's subjective inclination towards this order.<sup>127</sup>

The derivative nature of this compilation may give one the impression that Dārā was not an original thinker and that he only collected what others wrote. However, this impression would be inaccurate. As stated earlier, he criticizes or corrects his sources when writing biographical accounts. Perhaps this is why his work in turn became an important source for some later biographers. Thus, we find Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf in his work *Safīnat al-Ārifīn*, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Kayranavī in his work *Taḥā'if al-Rashīdiyya* and Dārā's sister Jahānārā in *Mu'nis al-Arwāḥ*, all citing *Safīna* as one of their sources.<sup>128</sup> The importance of this work can also be assessed from the fact that Hermann Ethé, the well-known compiler of the catalogue of manuscripts in the India Office Library, praises *Safīna* and devotes 40 pages of his catalogue to

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 62-63.

<sup>123</sup> Dārā, *Safīna*, p.216.

<sup>124</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 63.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 60-68.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>128</sup> Jahānārā, *Mu'nis al-arwāḥ*, Ms. Or. 250 in the India Office (British Library), folio 6.

introducing its content.<sup>129</sup> Dārā's second work, *Sakīnat al-Awliyā'* (lit., tranquility of the minds of the awliyā'), contains twenty-eight biographies of the contemporary saints of his Qādiriyya silsila.<sup>130</sup>

Dārā started writing *Sakīna* before 1052 A.H./1642 C.E. and, while the date of its completion is not specified clearly, it seems that he was still completing parts of the work in 1059 A.H./1649 C.E.<sup>131</sup> As in the case of *Safīna*, his purpose in writing *Sakīna* was to express his love and devotion to the Sufis of his time, but more specifically to his silsila and its masters.<sup>132</sup> He explains in the preface that, ever since joining the Qādiriyya silsila, he had wanted to write a book about the order, its activities and the manners of those who had inspired him. On realizing, however, that the mystery of their practices and manners could not be articulated, he decided to confine himself to writing about their lives.<sup>133</sup> The longest account in *Sakīna* is the biography of Miyān Mīr, and another substantial account is dedicated to Miyān Mīr's sister Jamāl Khātūn; the remaining accounts deal with twenty three of his disciples.<sup>134</sup>

The work is considered by scholars as a valuable primary source for the history of the Indian Qādiri Sufis of his time.<sup>135</sup> Like *Safīna*, *Sakīna* has also been quoted by later *tadhkira* writers, for example by Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf and other authors writing about Miyān Mīr's and Mullā Shāh's time.<sup>136</sup> *Sakīna* also reflects a development in Dārā's thought. He is more open and supports more vehemently here the philosophy of Ibn al-ʿArabī than he does in *Safīna*. His inclination to the philosophy of "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" (Unity of Being) is also made more explicit, as is shown in his account of the thought of his Sufi master Mullā Shāh, who was very much influenced by Ibn al-ʿArabī's philosophy.<sup>137</sup> *Sakīna* represents faithfully the ideas and trends of Dārā's times and provides a vivid context for understanding Dārā's intellectual growth.

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<sup>129</sup> Ethé, *Catalogue*, 274-315.

<sup>130</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 68-69.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Dārā, *Sakīna*, 132.

<sup>135</sup> See Jalālī Nā'inī's "Introduction" to Dārā, *Sakīna*.

<sup>136</sup> Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf's *Safīnat al-ʿĀrifīn*, Ms. Or 213 in India Office (British Library), fol.1. See also Qādī Jāwēd, *Barr-i Ṣaḡhīr men Muslim Fikr kā Irtaqā'* (Lahore: Idāra-i Thaqāfat-i Pākistān, 1977) (hereinafter referred to as Jāwēd, *Muslim Fikr*), 174.

<sup>137</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 73-74.

The third work, *Risāla-i Haqqnumā'*, is a manual aimed at explaining the theory and practice behind the Sufi doctrine on meditation. Dārā started writing this work on 8<sup>th</sup> Shawwal 1055 A.H./27<sup>th</sup> November 1645 C.E. and completed it in 1056 A.H./1646 C.E. From a statement in the introduction, it appears that Dārā may have set out to divide the work into four chapters but in fact expanded it to six with two additional chapters dealing with the divine essence (*huwiyya*) and the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujūd*).<sup>138</sup>

The purpose of the *Risāla* was in fact twofold: to help seekers unable to find a Sufi master and to provide a summary of Sufi works for the most part written on meditation.<sup>139</sup> As for the first purpose, Dārā informs all seekers of the Truth who do not have a master that “if they will read every word of this work carefully they will find the way.”<sup>140</sup> Although not apparent, it seems that by writing such an epistle he was asserting his claim that he himself had reached the highest stage and that he could serve as a guide to others. This was perhaps his way of acceding to the wishes of Mullā Shāh, who had asked Dārā to invite others to the Qādiriyya fold.<sup>141</sup>

The second purpose – summarizing Sufi doctrine on meditation<sup>142</sup> – involves a systematic description of the four worlds of Sufism, corresponding to the stages of meditation – the physical-human world (*nāsūt*), the angelic world (*malakūt*), the world of absolute sovereignty (*jabarūt*) and the world of divinity (*lāhūt*). The *Risāla* is not as well-known as his other works on Sufism such as *Safīna* and *Sakīna*. There may be various reasons for this lack of recognition; however, a complete evaluation of the *Risāla* would require a thorough comparison of this work with other Sufi manuals.

There is also a small and lesser known Sufi writing of Dārā known as *Ṭarīqatul Haqīqah*. Hasrat informs us that “it is a small treatise, lucid and concise on the manifold stages and states of the spiritual path.”<sup>143</sup> It is comprised of 36 pages written in mystical language interspersed

<sup>138</sup> At the end of the introduction, Dārā introduces the first four sections by saying “*banā’i in risāla bar chahār fasl ast*,” but then he adds *dar bayan-i huwwuyyat* and *dar bayan-i wahdat-i wujud*. See Dārā, *Risāla*, 5, 16, 17.

<sup>139</sup> Dārā, *Risāla*, 3, 4.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>141</sup> Idem, *Sakīna*, 174.

<sup>142</sup> Idem, *Risāla*, 2-4. Ironically, he himself reached the highest stage not through books but through his Sufi master (Dārā, *Sakīna*, 6).

<sup>143</sup> It was published as *Risala’i Ma’arif* in 1857 C.E. from Brij Lal Press Gujranwala. An Urdu lithograph translation of the text was published at Lahore in 1341 A.H. According to Hasrat a manuscript in the Government Public Library Lahore, under the title of *Risa’il-i Tasawwuf* resembles the published copy however with some differences. See Hasrat, *Dārā*, 113-20. I had the opportunity to visit Government Public Library, Lahore during December 2013. Neither *Risala’i Ma’arif* nor *Risa’il-i Tasawwuf* was found in the Library however I was able to find *Ṭarīqatul Haqīqah* as a part of a manuscript entitled *Majmū’ā-i Khūsh Aslūb*. According to the cataloguer the work resembles

with poetical verses. The tract has 30 sections – each section is called as a “*manzil*” (literally means station or level). The number thirty seems to be important as Qur’an was divided into thirty parts (hence another popular name for Qur’an in India-Pakistan is *siparah*) and was quite common amongst Sufi poets – for example there were many “*si harfis*” poetical compositions composed by Ismā‘īlī and Sufi poets.

The aim of the compilation was to share Dārā’s own spiritual experience with others. Following are a few *manāzil* (stations) mentioned in his work: The first *manzil* is about the human detachment from the materialistic world, the second *manzil* focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, the third *manzil* is about the purity of the mind, the fourth is regarding the realization of the true self, the fifth is about the ways of the men of the path, the ninth *manzil* explains the resignation, the tenth is about the virtues of submission, the fourteenth on the single-mindedness of devotion, the fifteenth *manzil* is about *juz* (part) and *kul* (whole), the twentieth *manzil* talks about *baqā* (subsistence) and *fanā* (annihilation), the twenty-fourth *manzil* is about the conversion of minds (*munqalab-ul-qalūb*), the twenty-sixth *manzil* is on the discussion between reason (*‘aql*) and insanity (*junūn*), the last *manzil* is about his apology for writing about the Divine knowledge.

Similar to *Ṭarīqatul Ḥaqīqah*, another lithographed manuscript with the title *Rahnamā’-i Kaunain* was found in the Government Public Library, Lahore which is attributed to Dārā.<sup>144</sup> The work has many verses however it is written in prose on the journey of a wayfarer (*sālik*) and the mystical path. Both above works have not been signed by Dārā and his name is not mentioned the way it appears in his other works. However both works *Tariqatul Haqiqat* and *Rahnamā’-i Kaunain* need time to study and determine that these works were written by Dārā.

Dārā began working on *Ḥasanāt al-‘Ārifīn*, his last work wholly devoted to Sufism, in 1062 A.H./1651 C.E. and completed it on 7<sup>th</sup> Muḥarram 1065 A.H./17<sup>th</sup> November 1654 C.E.<sup>145</sup>

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the style of writings of the well-known and celebrated poet Shaykh Sa’dī. It does not have the name of the author and misses the style of Dārā – the way he introduces himself in the works. The contents of the Persian work are similar to the description given by Hasrat. It is comprised of 67 pages written in mystical language interspersed with poetical verses. A copy of the manuscript *Ṭarīqatul Ḥaqīqah* is in my possession.

<sup>144</sup> It is in a bad shape and is incomplete. Presumably, a few pages are missing at the end. It was published by Munshi Brij Lāl from Matbu‘a Giyānī Press Gujranwala. The sub title “*y’ānī kulliyāt-i khuldiyu dārāin a’ala hazrat Dārā Shukōh pur Shukōh*” (poetical compositions of the resident of paradise and the noble and majestic person Dārā Shukōh) shows the respect which publisher had for Dārā and erroneously gives the impression that it is only a book of poetry.

<sup>145</sup> Dārā Shukōh, *Ḥasanāt al-‘Ārifīn*. Edited by Sayyid Makhdūm Rahīn. Tehran: Chāpkhāna-i Vāḥid, 1352 [1973](hereinafter referred to as Dārā, *Hasanāt*), 2.

Dārā states that he wrote *Ḥasanāt* for two reasons: firstly, to defend his own position as a Gnostic (‘*ārif*’) capable of uttering a paradoxical aphorism (*shaṭḥ*), and secondly, to record a selection of aphorisms from the collection of Rūzbihān’s *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyyāt*.<sup>146</sup>

The first two thirds of the book are dedicated to Rūzbihān’s sayings, which are given mostly in a simplified form.<sup>147</sup> Dārā’s own contribution to the field of *shaṭḥiyyāt* (pl. of *shaṭḥ*) is his account of those *shaṭṭahān* (speakers of paradoxical aphorisms) not covered by Rūzbihān. Dārā brought the collection of *shaṭḥiyyāt* up to date by including the sayings and biographical notes of various Sufis from the 5<sup>th</sup> A.H./11<sup>th</sup> C.E. century down to his own time.<sup>148</sup> In his work his teachers Miyān Mīr and Mullā Shāh become “the most important speakers of *shaṭḥiyyāt*”.<sup>149</sup> He also includes sayings by Ḥaḍrat Bārī,<sup>150</sup> Shāh Muḥammad Dilruba<sup>151</sup> – both of the latter referred to by him as his own teachers -- Kabīr, Bābā Piyarī and Lāl Dās, whom he introduces as a Hindu yogi. All of the foregoing are identified by him as ‘*ārifān*’ (Gnostics). Nevertheless, the inclusion of Bābā Lāl Dās is the most striking feature of this work.<sup>152</sup> By bringing Bābā Lāl Dās into the domain of the ‘*ārifān*’, he challenged the traditional understanding of the ‘*ārif*’, according to which only a Muslim walī was capable of reaching the stage of *ma’rifa*. For Dārā, the teachings of the prophet Muḥammad were comprehensive, and therefore all those – without exception – who follow this comprehensive teaching in fact follow Muḥammad. Dārā’s approach was no doubt, from a present day perspective, admirably inclusive; however, for the time it was

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 2-3. According to Dārā, Shaykh Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī (d. 606 H./1209 C.E.) was one of the Qādirī awliya’. However, this was an assumption of Dārā and need not be taken as a fact. For the discussion on his spiritual lineage see Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (New York: State University of New York Press Albany, 1985) (hereinafter referred to as Ernst, *Words*), 15. Amongst his works, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyyāt* is well-known. In explaining the nature of *shaṭḥiyyāt*, Schimmel writes: “Their study is one of the most interesting, but also most difficult, topics in the history of Sufism, and the daring, partly jubilant, partly bewildered words that Rūzbihān has put together and interpreted in an existential, authentic way allow a glimpse into the depths of mystical experience, which, however, can never be appropriately expressed in human words.” See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978) (hereinafter referred to as Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*), 145. See also Henry Corbin’s introduction to Rūzbihān Baqlī’s *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyyāt*, Edited with introduction in French by Henry Corbin (Tehran: Département d’Iranologie de l’Institut Franco-Iranien, 1966), 7ff. Also, see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, v.3., 9-146.

<sup>147</sup> Carl Ernst identifies one phrase *anja ki barmad* which appears in *Sharḥ*, ch 117, 202 and which could be corrected with the help of *Hasanat*, 14. He suggests the reading *nukhalah ba ramad* (bran with ashes). See Ernst, *Words*, 150.

<sup>148</sup> Ernst, *Words*, 23.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>150</sup> Dārā, *Hasanat*, 67.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 72 ff.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 49, 53-55.

highly controversial.<sup>153</sup> Perhaps, though, there could not have been a better place than *Ḥasanāt* to introduce a Hindu Yogi as *min akmal-i 'urafā* (lit., amongst the perfect gnostics) -- a book of paradoxical aphorisms for the most paradoxical of ideas!

The work *Ḥasanāt* has continued to be a controversial work. It has been criticized right up to the present day by a few Muslim authors, even though at the same time it has been appreciated and used as a source by later *tadhkira* writers. The well-known historian Kalika-Ranjan Qanungo recalls Sayyid Najīb Ashraf Nadvī's evaluation of *Ḥasanāt* in the following words:

...the same critic sums up his criticism of Dara's *Ḥasanāt ul- 'Ārifīn* by saying that he would very strongly recommend this book to those who want to study the perversion (lit. ruin) of Sufism...<sup>154</sup>

Among those who showed their admiration for the work by exploiting it, we may point to Shaykh Muhammad Sharif, the author of *Safīnat al- 'Ārifīn*, who quotes *Ḥasanāt* frequently for the biographies of later Indian awliyā'. The title of Sharif's work itself shows that Dārā had an immense influence on this Qādirī author, since the title *Safīnat al- 'Ārifīn* recalls at once the titles of Dārā's works *Safīnat al- Awliyā'* and *Ḥasanāt al- 'Ārifīn*.<sup>155</sup>

Dārā's poetry shows that he was also an accomplished poet. He took "Qādirī" as his pen name – a proud allusion to his connection with the Qādiriyya silsila. His poetry did not become popular, although a few biographers and *tadhkira* writers have included Dārā in their lists of poets. For example Muhammad Afzal Sarkhush quotes ten verses from his *Dīwān*<sup>156</sup> and Qudratullah Khan Gopamvi mentions him while also remarking that his *Dīwān* was short (*dīwāni mukhtaṣir*).<sup>157</sup> Ghulam Sarwar observes that *Dīwān* was indeed short and also that it bore the title *Iksīr A'zam*<sup>158</sup> – which Hasrat also endorses though without giving any other reference.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>153</sup> See Hayat, "Concept," 183-87.

<sup>154</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 115.

<sup>155</sup> Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf's *Safīnat al- 'Ārifīn*, Ms. Or 213 in India Office (British Library), fol.1. The author acknowledges in the introduction to his work that he has used many sources including *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, *Fawā'id al-Fawād*, *Rāhat al-Qulūb*, *Khayr al-Majālis*, *Sayr al- 'Ārifīn*, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, *Sayr al-Awliyā'*, *Safīnat al-Awliyā'*, *Sakīnat al-Awliyā'*, *Hasanat al- 'Ārifīn* and *Mu'nis al-Arwāḥ*. Inclusion of Dārā's works in the bibliography of other well-known Sufi writings shows the importance and significance of Dārā's works.

<sup>156</sup> Muhammad Afzal Sarkhush, *Kalimāt al-Shu'arā'*, 147-48; cf. Dārā, *Dīwān*, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Qudratullah Khan Gopamvi, *Nataij al-Afkar*, 350; cf. Dārā, *Dīwān*, 3.

<sup>158</sup> Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, *Khazīnat ul-Asfiyā'*, Vol I, 175; cf. Dārā, *Dīwān*, 3. Rizvi also believes that *Dīwān*'s name was *Iksir-i A'zam*. See Rizvi, *Sufism*, 144.

<sup>159</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 129.

Ahmad Nabi Khan for his part rejects the title on the basis that it cannot be substantiated from other sources.<sup>160</sup>

Though known to biographers, Dārā's *Dīwān* was not in as wide circulation as his other works had been. In fact, it was "considered as non-existent or lost."<sup>161</sup> Hasrat only found a single copy with Khan Bahadur Zafar Hasan. It was in 1969 that Dr. Ahmad Nabi Khan compiled and published *Dīwān-i Dārā Shukoh* based on two manuscripts and Dārā's poetical compositions found in some of his works. The first manuscript was acquired from Khan Bahadur Zafar -- perhaps the same one mentioned by Hasrat. It was at the time housed at the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi. Though a defective copy, it did help to verify the second manuscript, which is better and more complete. The latter was housed in the Punjab Public Library Lahore, though its author had not been established. The compiler of the catalogue assumed that it might have been written by Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badā'ūnī.<sup>162</sup> The quatrains of Dārā which are part of this collection belong to *Ḥasanāt*, *Sakīna*, *Risāla-i Ḥaqnuma* and *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*.

In assessing Dārā's poetry in the light of his thought, it is safe to say that Dārā's Sufi works show a gradual development – beginning with general appreciation of the Sufis then moving to his specific Tariqa and then gradually moving on towards his understanding of various Sufi concepts such as *waḥdat al-wujūd*, *'ārif* and *ṣulḥ-i kul*. Dārā's poetical compositions encompass all above elements; however, the *Dīwān* has not been systematically arranged to show any chronological development. In the *Dīwān* one can find eulogies for God, Prophet Muhammad and the Sufi masters of his own Ṭarīqa. These confirm the central position that Sufi thought occupied in his intellectual outlook. Following are a few examples from his *Dīwān* that testify to this:

1. قادری گشت قادر مطلق از پی هرفنا کمال بقاست

Qādirī became the Almighty (absolute powerful). From every annihilation ensues the excellence of subsistence.<sup>163</sup>

2. قادری زود عین قادر شد چون مدد کرد قادر بغداد

<sup>160</sup> Dārā, *Dīwān*, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 129

<sup>162</sup> Dārā, *Dīwān*, 1.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 19.



Qādirī became virtually Qādir (God?) when Qādir-i Baghdad (‘Abd al-Qādir Gīlānī, founder of the Qadiriyya Ṭarīqa) helped.<sup>164</sup>

3. تسبیح من عجب در آمد بزبان      گفتا که مرا چرا کنی سرگردان  
گردل به عوض همه به گردانی تو      دانی که براے چیست خلق انسان

My rosary has asked a strange question of me. Why do you keep on moving me (my beads)? If you would have moved your heart rather than rotating me, you would have known that why Human being was created.<sup>165</sup>

4. چند نازی تو بر شریعت خود      احمد مرسل از خدا است سوا؟

How long will you take pride in your Sharī’a? Is Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad) the messenger different from God (Is he other than God)?<sup>166</sup>

5. بهشت آن جا که ملایی نباشد      زملا شور و غوغائی نباشد  
جهان خالی شود از شور ملا      ز فتویٰ هاش پروائی نباشد

Paradise is that place where no Mullah exists and no noise from a Mullah exists. May the world be rid of the noise of the Mullah so that there is no worry about his *fatwa*.<sup>167</sup>

6. کعبه من جنت لاهوردان      سجده من سوئی آن محراب هست

Know that my Ka’ba is the paradise of Lahore. My prostration is towards that *miḥrāb*.<sup>168</sup>

According to Rizvi, “Dara-Shukoh’s poems are fashioned after those of Jami and Shabistari.”<sup>169</sup> However, according to Ahmad Nabi Khan, Dārā’s poetry was influenced by his Sufi master Mulla Shah. He observes:

Mulla Shah has influenced his (Dārā’s) poetry greatly and it is true to say that the prince borrowed both the style and subject matter from Mulla Shah.<sup>170</sup>

Why did his *Dīwān* fail to receive wider recognition in literary or Sufi circles? It is generally believed that this was due to political opposition or to his unorthodox religious beliefs. However, Dr. Ahmad Nabi rejects this assumption, saying:

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 7 (Rizvi’s citation provides p 13 which is incorrect See Rizvi, *Sufism*, 145).

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 21. In the “Introduction” to Dārā, *Diwān*, 7 the same verse has حضرت instead of جنت

<sup>169</sup> Rizvi, *Sufism*, 144-45.

<sup>170</sup> Dārā, *Diwān*, 9.

This supposition does not seem likely, when we find that more objectionable works like *Hasanat al-Arifin*, *Majma al-Bahrayn*, *Sirr-i Akbar*, etc. remained in circulation unchecked even during the days of Aurangzeb and were published several times in the later period. The real cause of this oblivion was lack of appreciation of the people.<sup>171</sup>

In another passage he criticizes the poetry as having an “extremely prosaic style” which perhaps did not earn him a place of eminence. Hasrat has also said this of Dārā’s poetry:

From a literary point of view, his style is prosaic in the extreme, and it is rarely that, in a ghazal, a verse or two, give a flash of real poetic imagination. Generally, his Ghazal lacks the lyrical touch, poetic emotionalism and a graceful sublimity both in thought and expression...<sup>172</sup>

Hasrat also finds Dārā’s poetry “un-polished” which shows “little fertility of imagination, and style.”<sup>173</sup> He writes:

His mystic thought lacks spontaneity and individuality – a Dārā’s Sufi poetry factor, which has tended to create a shallow moral or intellectual atmosphere in his verse.<sup>174</sup>

Maybe his Sufi thought and poetry lack spontaneity, but they are not wanting in individuality, for they represent a person who was a proud Qādirī and had Sufi notions unique to his personality. For example, his *Dīwān* shows him to have been a proponent of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and one who saw all religions moving towards one goal. It was due to this reason that he saw Mullahs as narrow-minded bigots and openly criticized and composed poetry against them.

As for the quality of Dārā’s poetry, it has also been praised. The author of *Khazīnatul Aṣafiyā*’ lauds it in the following words:

His *Dīwān* contains beautiful poems. His poetry is an ocean of *tawḥīd* which emerges from his seashell-like tongue, or it is the Sun of monotheism which shines from his poetry.<sup>175</sup>

Dārā saw various Sufi masters as reservoirs of knowledge – this includes his own Sufi master Mulla Shah and others such as Ḥaḍrat Bārī, Shaykh Muhibullah, Shāh Dilrubā and Sarmad. He refers to Ḥaḍrat Bārī in *Hasanāt* as his own Sufi master even though Bārī kept his true identity

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>172</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 135-36.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Munshi Ghulam Sarwar Chishti, *Khazīnatul Aṣfiya* (Lucknow, 1238 H), 163 cf. Tariq, *Tasanif*, 77.

and those of his *pīr* and *silsila* a secret, saying that ascetics had no need of an individual name. Dārā records his saying that he had killed both a *mulla* and a *pandit* and “has nothing to learn now.”<sup>176</sup> The note on Ḥaḍrat Bārī also provides us with his death date. It shows that he suffered this great loss while he was still writing *Ḥasanāt*.<sup>177</sup> Dārā corresponded with three other masters and almost all of them replied to him. He wrote to Sarmad asking about the problem of predestination and free will. Sarmad wrote back with a one line message to Dārā.<sup>178</sup> As for the other two masters, Shaykh Muhibullah and Shāh Dilrubā, Dārā wrote to them praising their influence on the development of his own Sufi thought. His letters show that he commanded respect amongst these Sufi masters though his behavior towards them was of a humble student who was curious to learn.

Dārā also wrote at least two letters to Muhibullah Allahabadi, a well-known scholar and Sufi of the Chishtiyya order.<sup>179</sup> It seems that after Dārā became governor of Allahabad he came into contact with the Shaykh, who advocated the concept of *wahdat al wujūd* and wrote commentaries on the works of Ibn al-Arabī in Arabic and Persian<sup>180</sup> In his first letter he raised sixteen questions on the subjects of *tawḥīd*, knowledge, salvation, pain and intense love etc.<sup>181</sup> Shaykh Muhibullah’s responses were to the point and comprehensive. Dārā wrote back to him acknowledging and thanking him for his response.<sup>182</sup>

With Shāh Muhammad Dilrubā, Dārā seems to have been more open and forthcoming. In *Ḥasanāt*, he introduces Dilrubā as one of his teachers (*ustāzān-i man ast*). In the note, apart from recording Shāh Dilrubā’s aphorisms, Dārā cites his own verses along with those of Mullā Shāh and Dilrubā. He saw himself as a *faqir* and Shāh Dilrubā as the *king of faqirs*; he even calls himself one of the dogs in the house of Shāh Dilrubā. We know that Dārā wrote at least six letters to him and almost every letter includes a couplet of his own poetry. His eulogies for this master are long and they express his appreciation for the gift of *wahdat al-wujud*, so dear to the

<sup>176</sup> Dārā, *Hasanat*, 71; also see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 143.

<sup>177</sup> Dārā, *Hasanat*, 67-72.

<sup>178</sup> Sarmad wrote: “My dear we have forgotten all that we had read save the story of the Friend which we repeat.” For some biographical detail of Sarmad see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 475.

<sup>179</sup> Rizvi shows Muhibullah’s connection with the Chishtiyya lineage through Shaikh Abu Sa’īd. He writes “Shaikh Abu Sa’īd’s influence reached as far as the eastern U.P. through his *khalifa*, Shaikh Muhibullah Mubariz of Allahabad.” See Rizvi, *Sufism*, 268.

<sup>180</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Muhibullah see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 268-70.

<sup>181</sup> Tariq, *Tasanif*, 125.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 131-32.

heart of Shāh Dilrubā. In his 4<sup>th</sup> letter, he goes to the extent of introducing himself as *but parast* (idolator) and *dayr nishīn* (resident of the temple)<sup>183</sup> and uses terms like *majāzī islām* (superficial Islam) and *kufr-i ḥaqīqī* (true unbelief) in describing his religious stance. In the same letter, he includes a verse which reads: Were Muslims to know the significance of the idol, they would have realized that real faith is in idol worship.<sup>184</sup> In terms of their overall contribution to the field of Sufism, Dārā's works –*Safīna*, *Sakīna*, *Risāla* and *Ḥasanāt* were, generally speaking, successful attempts to revive and revitalize the existing literature of his time. He provides the reader with information on the state of Sufism in his era while keeping the framework and language very simple. Furthermore, a close examination shows that, from the time he wrote *Safīna*, Dārā's thought in fact evolved.

There were many factors that contributed to the development of his thought, such as, for example: his relationship with his Sufi *ṭarīqah* and Sufi masters (Mullā Shāh and Miyān Mīr); his understanding of Ibn al-ʿArabī; his correspondence with Muḥibullāh Illāhābādī and Shāh Muhammad Dilrubā; and his discussions with Ḥaḍrat Bārī, the Sikh Guru Har Gobind and the Hindu Yogi Lāl Dās.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, Dārā, through his own reflections on Qādiri Sufi doctrine, made a unique contribution to the concept of *wilāya* in Sufism.<sup>186</sup>

Dārā's thought, however, was always the closest to that of his Sufi master Mullā Shāh. As mentioned earlier, Mullā Shāh was one of the most enthusiastic followers of “the doctrine of the oneness of being” and advocated an inclusive approach to other religions. Dārā not only embraced these doctrines but went even further in accepting a Hindu Yogi, Lāl Dās, into the domain of the *ʿarīfān*. This had not been done by any Muslim scholar before, and it was an unprecedented move on his part to grant such recognition to Hinduism as a religion akin to Islam.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 122. اکنون قدر کفر حقیقی دانستم ز نارپوش و بت پرست بلکه خود پرست و دیر نشین گشتم

According to Qāzī Jāvēd, Dārā used these terms to introduce himself in *Risāla-i Ḥaqqnumā*, which is incorrect (see Jāvēd, *Muslim Fikr*, 174). In the *Risala*, Dārā introduces himself in the following terms: “This supplicator of the court of the Eternal Absolute (*in niyāzmand-i dargāh-i šamadi*) Muhammad Dārā Shukoh Hanafī Qadiri...” (See Dārā, *Risala*, 2).

<sup>184</sup> مسلمان گریدانستی که بت چيست بدانستی که دین دربت پرستی است

<sup>185</sup> Hayat, “Concept,” 35-39.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 186.

### 3.2. Dārā's comparative study of Hinduism and Islam:

Bikramajit Hasrat has divided Dārā's writings into two phases: the early period, when he wrote on Sufism, and the later period when he wrote on Hinduism. In keeping with this division Hasrat places *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* in his list of works on Hinduism.<sup>187</sup> The fact is, however, that there was an intermediate period in Dārā's scholarly career when he learnt and wrote about the comparative aspects of Hinduism and Islam, more specifically on Advaita Vedanta<sup>188</sup> and *taṣawwuf*. It was only after this point that he wrote exclusively on Hinduism. I would therefore prefer to assign two works – the compilation *Su'āl va Javāb-i Dārā Shukōh va Bābā Lāl Dās* and *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* -- to the intermediate category.

The first work -- *Su'āl va Javāb* -- was not in fact written by Dārā Shukōh himself. It was compiled by his secretaries, including Chandarbhān.<sup>189</sup> The work is in fact a report of at least seven dialogues that took place in Lahore between Dārā Shukōh and Bābā Lāl Dās during the year 1064 A.H./1653 C.E.<sup>190</sup> The contribution of Dārā to these dialogues is remarkable. The mere fact that interfaith discussion took place at that time between a Hindu and a Muslim and entirely for the sake of expanding knowledge is extraordinary enough, but the demeanor of the questions shows that Dārā was trying to learn about Hinduism and while doing so, comparing various concepts with Islam<sup>191</sup>-- an even more remarkable phenomenon. Dārā demonstrates a very humble attitude towards the Hindu Yogi. They meet, not at the governor's palace but in the precincts of various tombs<sup>192</sup> – in a sense the perfect setting for a Sufi to learn about Advaita Vedanta from a Hindu Yogi who was a monist.<sup>193</sup> Since the focus of the present study is precisely this series of dialogue, a more detailed introduction to the work *Su'āl va Javāb* will be offered in the fourth chapter.

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<sup>187</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 9-10.

<sup>188</sup> Advaita Vedanta is one of the oldest school of Indian philosophy. For details see below, Chapter V.

<sup>189</sup> According to Mahfuz-ul-Haq, "Chandar Bhan was an inhabitant of Patyala or of Lahore, as asserted by some. He was the *Mir Munshi* (Head of the secretaries) to Dārā and was appointed in the *Dar-ul-Insha* of Shahjahan, in 1066 H. and entitled Rai Chandar Bhan. He died in 1068 A.H. or 1073. He left several works including *Chahar Chaman*, *Munshiat-i-Brahman*, *Karnama*, *Guldasta*, *Majma-ul-Wuzara*, etc., and *Diwan*" (see Dārā, *Majma*, 24).

<sup>190</sup> For a detailed account see Chapter IV.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 304, 306-308.

<sup>192</sup> In *Rumūz*, the reports of all seven dialogues also contain information as to the locations where the meetings between Dārā and Bābā took place (see *Rumūz*, 10, 11, 12, 15, 21, 25).

<sup>193</sup> For further discussion on Dārā's choice see below, Chapter IV.

Dārā's second work in this category, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, was written in 1065 A.H./1655 C.E. after his discussion with the Hindu Yogi Bābā Lāl Dās.<sup>194</sup> The work was composed for an elite audience and was not meant for the common folk of either community.<sup>195</sup> Dārā writes:

After knowing the Truth of truths and ascertaining the secrets and subtleties of the true religion of the Sufis and having been endowed with the great gift, he thirsted [decided] to know the tenets of the religion of Indian monotheists; and, having had repeated intercourse and (continuous) discussion with the doctors and perfect divines of this (i.e. Indian) religion who had attained the highest pitch of perfection in religious exercises, comprehension (of God), intelligence and (religious) insight, he did not find any difference, except verbal, in the way in which they sought and comprehended Truth. Consequently, having collected the views of the two parties and having brought together the points – a [sic] knowledge of which is absolutely essential and useful for the seekers of Truth – he (i.e. the author) has compiled a tract and entitled it *Majma' ul-Baḥrayn* or 'The Mingling of the Two Oceans,' as it is a collection of the truth and wisdom of two Truth-knowing (*Ḥaḳ Shinās*) groups. The great (mystics) have said: *Ṭaṣawwuf* is equity and (further) *Ṭaṣawwuf* is the abandonment of (religious) obligations [*tark al-taklīf*]. So, one who is just and discerning will at once understand that in ascertaining these points how deeply I had to think.<sup>196</sup>

According to Mahfuz ul-Haq, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* is of supreme importance because "it embodies the first and perhaps the last attempt to reconcile the two apparently divergent religions."<sup>197</sup> Whether this was the first and last attempt or not, it certainly was one of the most important attempts made by anyone in the history of Indian thought and specifically in the field of comparative religion. The title of the work *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* (lit., junction of the two oceans), seems to convey a certain symbolism. Dārā appears to have drawn the title from the eighteenth chapter of the Qur'ān – *Al-Kahf*.<sup>198</sup> The phrase is used there in the context of the parable of Moses and Khidr. According to the parable, Moses went out to find Khidr, in the hope that he would teach him such knowledge as he had not already obtained. To find the right place – the junction of the two oceans – Moses brought a fish with him which disappeared at the junction. This is where he met Khidr. There are various other interpretations of the term, however. Another popular one is that it represents the meeting point of the two great oceans of

<sup>194</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 38.

<sup>195</sup> Dārā, *Majma'*, 38.

<sup>196</sup> In the above paragraph the translation of *tark al-taklīf* as 'the abandonment of (religious) obligations' may be questionable. Interestingly, the last three lines of the passage are absent in the Sanskrit version! See Jean Filliozat, 'Echoes of Sufism in India' in *Religion Philosophy Yoga* (Delhi: Motilal Publishers) (hereafter Filliozat, *Echoes*), 203, Dārā, *Samudra*, 124.

<sup>197</sup> Dārā, *Majma'*, 30.

<sup>198</sup> *Qur'ān*, Surah 18, ayat 60.

knowledge personified by Moses and Khidr.<sup>199</sup> In this context, by choosing *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* for the title of his work, Dārā has most appropriately alluded to the two streams of knowledge -- Islam and Hinduism. As one might expect from the title, Dārā discusses the similarities of both religions while keeping their uniqueness intact. The translation “junction of the two oceans” is, therefore, superior to Mahfuz ul-Haq’s version “the mingling of the two oceans,”<sup>200</sup> which conveys the idea of an indistinct mixture, something that Dārā strove to avoid.

Later, perhaps after a few years, Dārā wrote *Samudrasangama* – partly different yet essentially a translation of *Majma'* in Sanskrit. This was edited by Jatindra Bimal Chaudhuri and published in the *Journal of Prācyavāṇī*; Institute of Oriental Learning, later it was translated by Roma Chaudhuri and the complete work published as *Dara Shikuh's Samudra – Sangama* in 1954. Somehow the edited Sanskrit work was not noticed by authors such as Rizvi, Moinuddin, Shayegan etc; until Jean Filliozat published an article in French entitled ‘Sur les contrepertes indiennes du soufisme.’<sup>201</sup> In the article he has criticized Hasrat. He writes:

The authenticity of *Samudrasangama* as a personal work of Dārā, had been challenged, as we mentioned, by Bikramjit Hasrat.....Actually they are two versions of the same text and the Sanskrit one could be a translation of the Persian. But in the Sanskrit version, Dārā expresses himself in the first person while in the Persian one, in the third. The Sanskrit sentences are then always a literal translation of their Persian content. They might have very easily been composed by Dārā himself whose personal competence in Sanskrit culture is confirmed by the *Majma'-al-Baḥrain* itself.<sup>202</sup>

*Majma' al-Baḥrayn* and *Samudrasangama* are regarded as Dārā’s exclusive comparative study of Hinduism and Islam in two languages, for although *Su'āl va Javāb* is also comparative in nature, it is not Dārā’s work alone. Apart from these two works, all his other works are focused either on Islam or Hinduism. It can even be said that *Majma'* is in the truest sense a bridge between his research into the two different religions – he wrote on Islam before and on Hinduism after writing *Majma'*.

<sup>199</sup> *Qur'ān*, Surah 18, ayats 60-82. For interpretation and explanation see Yusuf Ali’s translation of the *Glorious Qur'ān*, 747-53. For ‘classical’ Sufi interpretations of this story see Annabel Keeler, *Sufi hermeneutics: the Qur'an commentary of Rashid al-Dīn Maybudī*, Oxf. 2006. Annabel Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur'an Commentary of Rashid al-Dīn Maybudī* (Institute of Ismaili Studies: Qur'anic Studies, 2007).

<sup>200</sup> The title reads “MAJMA-UL-BAHRAIN OR THE MINGLING OF THE TWO OCEANS” (see Dārā, *Majma'*).

<sup>201</sup> Jean Filliozat, “Sur les contrepertes indiennes du soufisme.” *Journal asiatique* 268 (1980) : 259-273.

<sup>202</sup> Filliozat, *Echoes*, 200- 01.

As we pointed out earlier, the idea of comparing Hinduism with Islam was not an innovation on Dārā's part. There was already a well established tradition, beginning with Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī and continuing down to the reign of the emperor Akbar, of Muslim scholars producing studies on Hinduism.<sup>203</sup> Moreover, during the time of the Mughals, there was a syncretistic tradition in Bengal that was extremely vibrant during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in Gujarat and Kutch there were Ismā'īlī preachers who composed poetry in which they compared the concepts of Ismā'īlī Satpanth with Vishnuites.<sup>205</sup> Thus, in the context of Dārā's time, the idea of comparing Hinduism with Islam was not in itself something novel. However, to expose systematically and in an unambiguous way the concepts of Hinduism and to compare and equate these with Islam was unprecedented. It is noteworthy that his comparison of Islam with Hinduism was neither accepted by a few Muslim ulamā'<sup>206</sup> nor by Hindu scholars.<sup>207</sup> The approach, however, was appreciated and was popular mainly amongst Sufis and Yogis who seldom encouraged communal attitudes and who generally preached and practiced a universalist attitude towards other religions.<sup>208</sup>

Due to the nature of the study, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* is also considered the most controversial work written by Dārā. On the basis of manuscript Or. 1671, an anonymous history entitled *Ta'rīkh-i Shāhjahānī*, S.A.A. Rizvi writes:

The *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* had always been considered an important work and it was singled out by the 'ulamā' as a justification for condemning Shukoh to death. They accused him of calling infidelity and Islam twin brothers.<sup>209</sup>

Whether the 'ulamā' were directly involved in the decision made by Aurangzēb to execute Dārā or not remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, a close examination of the *Ta'rīkh-i Shāhjahānī* confirms that *Majma'* was indeed singled out by at least one 'ālim, Shaykh Burhān, a well-

<sup>203</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, "Islamic Thought in Relation to the Indian Context" in *Puruṣārtha* 9 (1986) (hereinafter to be referred as Friedmann, Islamic), 81-83.

<sup>204</sup> For a comprehensive account of this development see Asim Roy's *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>205</sup> However, for some accounts of Ismaili preachers see Azim Nanji's *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (New York: Caravan Books, 1978) (hereinafter to be referred as Nanji, *Nizārī*).

<sup>206</sup> For example, see below the comments of Shaykh Burhan.

<sup>207</sup> For example, see Bimel and Roma Chaudhary's epilogue where they share the same sentiments: "What can we make of this incomparable work on Indo-Islamic Philosophy? Probably, it was not accepted with good grace either by the Muslim Mullahs or by the Hindu Pandits of those days" (see Dārā, *Samudra*, 120).

<sup>208</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 35-37.

<sup>209</sup> Rizvi is referring here to *Ta'rīkh-i Shāhjahānī*, British Museum Ms. Or 1617, f.96b (see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 422). However, when I visited the British Library and checked Ms.Or.1617, to my surprise, I found Waqīdī's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* instead of the *Ta'rīkh*. Considering various possibilities, I was able to find the *Ta'rīkh-i Shāhjahānī* under the number Or 1671!



known figure amongst the elite (*az buzurgān būd*) of his time who supported Aurangzēb. According to Shaykh Burhān:

Dārā Shukōh has stepped out of the religion of Islam and has adopted the wrong path by following the non-believers (*mulḥidān*) who have abandoned the obligations prescribed by God and (he) has given a bad name to *tasavvuf* and has called Islam and infidelity twin brothers and for this purpose wrote *Majma' al-Bahrayn*.<sup>210</sup>

Mahfuz-ul-Haq cites yet another source, *Siyar al-Muta'akhhirīn*, whose author also claims that *Majma'* was the work that brought about Dārā's death.<sup>211</sup> However, the historical sources quoted by Mahfuz-ul-Haq and Qanungo do not hold *Majma'* directly responsible for it. The text of the *fatwā* (decree) issued in support of Dārā's execution does not mention *Majma'*. Mahfuz-ul-Haq quotes *Ma'āshir-i 'Ālamgīrī* whereas Qanungo quotes the *'Ālamgīr-nāma* for details of the charges laid against Dārā:

The pillars of the Canonical Law and Faith apprehended many kinds of disturbances from his life. So the Emperor, both out of necessity to protect the Holy Law, **and also for reasons of State**, considered it unlawful to allow Dārā to remain alive any longer as a destroyer of the public peace.<sup>212</sup>

The royal decree is very clearly couched in religious terminology, with emphasis laid upon the “protection of the holy law,” which indicates to a certain degree the involvement of the ‘*ulamā*’ of that time in serving a capital conviction. However, Ghauri rejects the involvement of the ‘*ulamā*’ in the execution of Dārā and tries to prove that it was a political decision based on the advice of government officials and Raūshanārā – Dārā's youngest sister – who were long-standing enemies of Dārā.<sup>213</sup>

Hence, although *Majma'* was controversial, we can find no royal decree or *fatwā* against this work. It was neither banned nor burnt on the orders of the emperor,<sup>214</sup> nor did it ignite any debate amongst the Muslim and Hindu scholars of that time.<sup>215</sup> On the contrary, it has remained in circulation from Dārā's death in 1659 C.E. until today. This fact can be confirmed by the numerous manuscripts of the *Majma'* that were copied over the last three centuries.

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<sup>210</sup> Ms. Or 1671, f 96b.

<sup>211</sup> Jalālī Nā'inī gives the exact quote in his Persian introduction to *Sirr-i Akbar*, 189. Furthermore, he also informs us that the last ritual bath was not given to the body of Dārā Shukōh as he was considered outside the fold of Islam.

<sup>212</sup> Dārā, *Majma'*, 29-30; Qanungo, *Dara*, 228.

<sup>213</sup> Ghauri, *War*, 157 -59.

<sup>214</sup> See Jāvēd, *Muslim Fikr*, 195.

<sup>215</sup> Perhaps it was due to the narrow mindedness of the emperor that for almost half a century intellectual activity in the region was reduced only to the religious legal (*sharī'a*) schools (*madāris*) (see Jāvēd, *Muslim Fikr*, 196).

*Majma' al-Baḥrayn* consists of twenty-two sections, arranged in an order that appears to be haphazard and lacking in any particular system. It covers subjects such as God, prophethood and sainthood, resurrection, salvation, the world and time. Dārā could have chosen to arrange his material as per the order of creation in Indian philosophy: Matter, Soul and God. Had he opted for the Islamic belief system as a framework, the subjects might have been God, prophethood, creation, resurrection and the world. It seems, however, that he defied both traditions and followed his own train of thought. He attempts to compare the major concepts of each faith in almost every section except in those relating to prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and sainthood (*wilāya*), where he provides no comparison at all. However, Filliozat, basing himself on the Sanskrit translation, seems to think that he has used term *siddha* (perfect) for the Prophet Muhammad and as well for the other prophets.<sup>216</sup> According to Mahfuz ul Haqq, the twenty-two topics include the Elements (*‘anāṣir*), the Senses (*ḥawāss*), Devotional exercises (*ashghāl*),<sup>217</sup> the Attributes of God (*ṣifāt-i Allāh*), the Wind (*bād*), the Four Worlds (*‘awālim-i arba’ā*),<sup>218</sup> Sound (*āwāz*), Light (*nūr*), the Vision of God (*rūyat*), the Names of God (*asmā’-i Allāh*), Apostleship and Saintship (*nubuwwat-o wilāyat*), the Universe (*Brahmānd*)<sup>219</sup>, the Direction (*jihat*), the Skies (*āsmānhā*), the Earth (*zamīn*), the Division of the Earth (*qismat-i zamīn*), the World of interval between the death of a man and his resurrection (*barzakh*), the Resurrection (*qiyāmat*), the Salvation (*mukt*), Day and Night (*rūz-o-shab*) and the Infinity of Cycles (*bī nihāyat-i adwār*).<sup>220</sup>

*Majma’* is in fact a relatively short treatise. Dārā avoids any lengthy discussion of individual terms and stops short of referring to any philosopher or particular system of thought.<sup>221</sup> It may be seen as a simple work – at times, perhaps, superficial – as it does not offer much in-depth analysis of the subjects included.<sup>222</sup> Nevertheless, in the introduction, Dārā makes it very clear that in this treatise he has recorded his research according to his own intuition and

<sup>216</sup> Filliozat, Echoes, 203.

<sup>217</sup> The word *ashghāl* means more than “devotional exercises.”

<sup>218</sup> Wind may also mean *ātmān*. Five kinds of wind are discussed in the Dialogue.

<sup>219</sup> The term has been transliterated incorrectly and has not been translated by Mahfuz ul-Haq (see, Dārā, *Majma’*, 30). The translation here is provided by Monier Williams (See Monier Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit – English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 740

<sup>220</sup> Dārā, *Majma’*, 36.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> For example see the discourses on Air, Barhmand, Directions, Skies and Earth. The length of each discourse is limited to one paragraph only.

taste.<sup>223</sup> Both works -- *Su'āl va Javāb* and *Majma'* -- thus remain indispensable for students of the comparative study of Islam and Hinduism.

### 3.3. Dārā's works on Hinduism:

From the *Su'āl va Javāb*, it becomes clear that Dārā had already studied Hindu works like the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavad Gītā* before embarking on the dialogues.<sup>224</sup> In the process, he developed a close bond with Hinduism to the extent that he no longer saw any substantial difference between Hinduism and Islam. As a result, after finishing *Majma'*, he started translating the *Upanishads* and created an intimate connection between the Qur'ān and the *Upanishads* by claiming that the Qur'ān refers to the *Upanishads* when it talks about the "protected book" literally 'hidden' or well-guarded (*kitāb maknūn*).

Dārā's translation of fifty *Upanishads* from the original Sanskrit into Persian under the title *Sirr-i Akbar* was one of the earliest attempts to introduce it to people who did not know the Sanskrit language. Later, the French scholar Anquetil Duperron translated the Persian rendering of Dārā into French and Latin. It was this Latin version of the *Upanishads* that fell into the hands of Schopenhauer, who studied it with great interest and declared the discovery of the *Upanishads* to be "the great privilege of the 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>225</sup> According to Tara Chand, "the credit of introducing the philosophy of the *Upanishads* to Europe belongs to Shukoh."<sup>226</sup>

In his preface to the *Sirr-i Akbar*, Dārā assigns the *Upanishads* the status of *kitāb-i maknūn* -- a status that had not been given to any book by a Muslim scholar. According to him, the Qur'ān refers to the *Upanishads* when it says: "That this is indeed a Qur'ān most honorable, in a book well-guarded, which none shall touch, but those who are clean."<sup>227</sup>

Most of the commentators identify "the well-guarded book" with the "preserved tablet" (*lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) onto which the original text of the Qur'ān was inscribed by Allah.<sup>228</sup> Dārā, however, did not accept this idea and argued that the word *tanzīl* (revealed) clearly negates the very idea of "preserved tablet," as the preserved tablet was never revealed. Similarly, without explaining his reasons, he rejects the idea that the *kitāb-i maknūn* could be the *Tūrayt* (Torah),

<sup>223</sup> Dārā, *Majma'*, 38.

<sup>224</sup> Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 299-301.

<sup>225</sup> Tara Chand, introduction to Dārā, *Sirr-i Akbar*, 42.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>227</sup> *Qur'an* Surah 56, ayats 77, 78, 79.

<sup>228</sup> In this regard, Yohanan Friedmann refers to Rāzī, Ṭabarī and Ṭabarsī (see Friedmann, *Islamic*, 84).

*Zubūr* (Psalms) or *Injīl* (Gospels). For him, it could only be the *Upanishads*, as these were kept hidden by the Hindu pandits.<sup>229</sup> He considered them to be revealed books that could serve as a commentary on the Qur’ān (*tafsīr-i ān ast*). For Dārā, these two books of different religions represented the same Truth. According to Friedmann:

Dārā Shukoh’s view of the relationship between the Hindu religious literature and the Qur’an seems to be his most significant contribution to Islamic thought.<sup>230</sup>

The translation of the *Upanishads* shows that Dārā knew both the Sanskrit and Persian languages. He claimed that his translation was literal; however, it proved impossible to surpass the limitations of the “translation process.” As a result, he was forced to add words and phrases in order to clarify the meaning of the text. Göbel provides a detailed comparative analysis of the Sanskrit and Persian versions of one selected Upanishad and concludes that Dārā’s own competence in Sanskrit is questionable. Dārā probably used already existing translations and he was greatly helped by the pandits in his entourage.<sup>231</sup> However, Filliozat<sup>232</sup> and Tara Chand<sup>233</sup> think rather highly of Dārā’s ‘competence’. Nevertheless, the work *Sirr-i Akbar* constitutes a testimony to Dārā’s scholarship and is considered a masterpiece and an “achievement of the highest order.”<sup>234</sup>

Dārā’s other scholarly efforts in the field of Hinduism include a Persian translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and his commission of a translation of the *Jōg Bāshist*. The only Persian manuscript of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, preserved in the India Office (British Library), cites Dārā’s name as the translator.<sup>235</sup> However, a closer examination of the work is needed to ascertain its authorship. The *Jōg Bāshist*, also known as *Minhāj al-Sālikīn*, was translated on the orders of Dārā. Considered an important work on Hindu gnostic philosophy, the Sanskrit original had already been translated during the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar; however, Dārā felt that the

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> See Erhard Göbel –Groß, *Sirr-i Akbar, Die persische Upaniṣadenübersetzung des Mogulprinzen Dārā Šukoh* (Marburg: Philipps-Universität zu Marburg, 1962).

<sup>232</sup> Filliozat, ‘Dara Shukoh’s Samudrasangama’ in Waseem’s *On Becoming*.

<sup>233</sup> Tara Chand, introduction to Dārā, *Sirr-i Akbar*, 49.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ms. 1949 in India Office Library, folio.1a (as reported by Ethé in *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, 1089).

previous translation was inadequate and therefore commissioned a new translation under his supervision.<sup>236</sup>

The work is divided into six chapters, beginning with the idea of abandoning the world and ending with the concept of release from the cycle of re-birth. The preface to the *Jōg Bāshist* shows his broad-mindedness towards other religions without compromising his stand regarding his own. The preface begins most probably with praise for someone whose name is left unstated – most probably the Prophet Muḥammad because in majority of his works he begins his work with the eulogy of the Prophet -- and then goes on to explain the experience he had in one of his dreams.<sup>237</sup> According to him, the night he studied the work (presumably *Jōg Bāshist*), which had been translated by someone having the name Shaykh Sufi, he saw in his dream two people, Bāshist and Rāmchand: the first had a few white hairs in his beard while the second one had no beard at all. Since Dārā was studying Bāshist's work he went to him and presented his salutations to him. Bāshist came close to Dārā, placed his hand on Dārā's back and introduced him to Rāmchand saying: "O Rāmchand, he is a true seeker and in this way (being a seeker) he is your brother, so embrace him." Rāmchand came to Dārā and embraced him with love. After this, Bāshist gave a sweet to Rāmchand, who then gave it to Dārā to eat. As a result of this dream, Dārā tells us, he resolved to re-translate the *Jōg Bāshist*.<sup>238</sup>

Dārā's works on Hinduism show that he saw Hinduism and Islam as two aspects of the same Truth, with each complementing and completing the other. The *Upanishads* were not only compatible with the Qur'ān but they also served as a commentary on it. Similarly, his praise for Prophet Muḥammad, coupled with his admiration for the Hindu *avatār* Rāmchand, expressed in his preface to *Jōg Bāshist*, demonstrates that for him both personalities were guides of equal stature. It seems that, in his eyes, there was no fundamental difference between Islam and Hinduism.

Apart from his own works, there were works dedicated to him, one such work which is significant in the field of medicine is known as the *ʿIlājāt-i Dārā Shikōhī*. It is an encyclopaedic Persian medical treatise composed by Nūr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, who dedicated the work to Dārā

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<sup>236</sup> See Dārā, *Jōg*, 3-4.

<sup>237</sup> Dārā writes: "We are thankful and indebted to that person whose light has enlightened the particles of this world ....and many benedictions (*durūd*) on him whose personality is above pretension and exaggeration." See Dārā, *Jōg Bāshist*, 2.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

Shikōh.<sup>239</sup> The work is also known as *Ṭibb-i Dārā Šikōhī* and presents a synopsis of the medical knowledge circulating among Muslim physicians in Mughal India. It was compared to the well-known works such as the *al-Qānūn* of Abū ‘Alī Sīnā.<sup>240</sup> The work was composed during the span of four years (1052H. - 1056 H.) and was unique in methodology because author compared Indian method of medical treatments (‘*Ilājāt*’) with the Muslim methods. Prof Fabrizio Speziale says:

The ‘*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*’ can be considered as one of the most important attempts of describing in the same volume both the features of Muslim and Indian medical arts. Another important intellectual feature of the ‘*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*’ is its synthesis of secular and religious medical traditions of Islam.<sup>241</sup>

It was not something exceptional that Dārā was given this honour. It was usual at that time to dedicate works and books to the emperors: same author Shīrāzī dedicated his earlier work to the emperor Shāhjahān<sup>242</sup> and later Darwish Muhammad dedicated his general manual of Indian medicine *Ṭibb-i Awrangshahi* to the reigning emperor Aurangzeb.<sup>243</sup> However, it seems that Shīrāzī saw in Dārā a Sufī scholar interested in Hindu works thus the most appropriate to dedicate his work to him though Dārā was not the emperor of his time.

#### 4. POPULAR IMAGE AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY:

In his article entitled “Infantilizing Bābā Dārā: The Cultural Memory of Dārā Shekuh and the Mughal Public Sphere” Rajeev Kinra<sup>244</sup> seeks to revise the popular image of Dārā, who is depicted as, in the author’s words, a “universally positive”, “exceptionally tolerant” and “ultimately ill-fated” figure. In the author’s view, however, the early modern response to Dārā’s character was far more complex. To demonstrate this he has taken three well-known personalities – Lāl Dās, Chandarbhān and Sarmad who were close to Dārā -- and examines “the oblique critical discourse” that surrounds them.

<sup>239</sup> See Fabrizio Speziale, ‘The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī’s ‘*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*’ in *eJournal of Indian Medicine* Volume 3 (2010) (hereinafter referred to as Speziale, ‘The Encounter’), 53–67.

<sup>240</sup> Elgood, Cyril 1951. *A Medical History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 373.

<sup>241</sup> Speziale, ‘The Encounter,’ 58.

<sup>242</sup> His most famous work was the *Alfāz al-adwiya*, a dictionary of drugs that he dedicated to Shāh Jahān in 1038/1628-29. See Speziale, ‘The Encounter,’ 54.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>244</sup> Rajeev Kinra, “Infantilizing Bābā Dārā: The Cultural Memory of Dārā Shekuh and the Mughal Public Sphere” in the *Journal of Persianate Studies* 2 (2009) 148-164.

Let us begin with Kinra's statement that the popular image of Dārā was "universally positive." This needs some clarification. Perhaps this is true of India, where Dārā is viewed with indulgence, but this is not the case in Pakistan. David Pinault, in his recent work *Notes from the Fortune-telling Parrot – Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan*, gives a few examples of negative images in recent Pakistani literature touching on Mughal history and specifically on Dārā Shukōh. He even shows that such negative images are present in the contemporary history text books currently being used in the schools of Pakistan.<sup>245</sup>

The seeds of this negative image are of course present in the contemporary accounts of the Mughals written by court historians. A cursory glance at the sources listed earlier<sup>246</sup> confirms this. Kalika Ranjan Qanungo provides a short summary of each of the court histories that mention Dārā Shukōh including *Pādshāhnāma* (which covers the reign of Shāhjahān), written by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhōrī and Muḥammad Wārith; *'Amal-i-Ṣāliḥ*, written by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kambū (the work was composed during the reign of Aurangzēb), and *'Ālamgīr-nāma* by Muḥammad Kāẓim, written in 1688 and focusing on the history of the first ten years of Aurangzēb's reign. All the above works show bias against Dārā. The first work, *Pādshāhnāma*, though it records details of the political career of Dārā (e.g. the promotions, gifts and presents through which Dārā was honoured by the emperor Shāhjahān) nevertheless remains silent on the subject of his literary and religious pursuits. The second work, *'Amal-i-Ṣāliḥ* presents an account of the "war of succession" from Dārā's opponents' point of view. The author of the third work, *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, goes even further by attempting to criticize Dārā and justify his murder:

It became manifest that if Dārā Shukōh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundations of the Faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the rant of infidelity and Judaism... Consequently, for the defence of the Faith, and maintenance of the Shariyat, added to the urgent consideration of state policy.... He was put to death."<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Pinault, *Notes*, 210-26.

<sup>246</sup> See above, Chapter One.

<sup>247</sup> See Qanungo, *Dara*, 291-94. For a detailed discussion on Kāẓim's assertion in *'Ālamgīr-nāma* also see Davis, "Dara," 19-30.

Regarding Kāzim, Sajida Alvi opines that as a court historian he shows bias towards Dārā and Shujā'. She lists the negative attributes (according to her these are examples of "abusive language") assigned to Dārā, etc.<sup>248</sup>

The negative image of Dārā in the historical sources contemporary to Awrangzeb cannot be simply dismissed or ignored, especially given his image in the later sources, whether presented in the *Mathnavi-e-Kajkolāh* written by Ānandaghana Khwush in 1794 C.E. or that in Muhammad Afzal Sarkhosh's *Kalemāt al-sho'arā* or even in Sher Khan Lodi's *Mer'āt al-Khyāl* – completed in 1690-91. In fact, it is obvious from above that the effect of the court historian's writings must have trickled down to later times. It would be worth analyzing the negative effects of the court historians on the "cultural memory" of Dārā Shukōh and the Mughal public sphere. For Kinra, the image of Dārā as the "spiritual savant and liberal idealist *par excellence* is modern" is to be contrasted with that which existed closer to his own time, which in turn was perhaps more real. Nevertheless, it can be shown that the later image is a valid corrective and not the product of wishful thinking. According to William Irvine, "the losing side always gets scanty justice in histories."<sup>249</sup> This explains in part why no comprehensive historical work was available on Dārā until the beginning of the last century. It was as late as the early 1900s, when Pandit Sheo Narain, in his presentation on "Dārā Shikoh as an Author" (published in 1912), finally expressed his wish that someone should write on the life and times of Dārā. Narain's wish was answered when two comprehensive biographies were published by Kalika Ranjan Qanungo and Bikrmajit Hasrat in 1936 and 1953 respectively. Later still, Tara Chand's edition of Dārā's translation of the Upanishads into Persian (published under the title *Sirr-i Akbar*) contains a valuable preface highlighting Dārā's scholarship. It was only after such writings that Dārā's image began to be revised, and rightly so, as a scholar prince. It is an image for our times, admittedly, but one that is just as valid, or more so, as the hostile image portrayed by his opponents' propagandists.

Kinra claims that he is an admirer of Dārā; however, his comments such as "flimsy military resume" in describing Dārā's military career or his assessment of Lāl Dās's advice to

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<sup>248</sup> For a closer look at the attitude of Muḥammad Kāzim towards Dārā, see Sajida Alvi's "The Historians of Awrangzēb – A Comparative Study of Three Primary Sources," in *Essays on Islamic Civilization*, edited by Donald P. Little (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1976), 57- 73. Also see above, Chapter I.

<sup>249</sup> William Irvine's letter to Jadunath Sarkar written in 1905. See Qanungo, *Dara*, vii.



Dārā as “sex therapy” hardly justify his claim. Almost all modern historians have seen Dārā as a weak military leader who was more interested in the affairs of his court than in the exigencies of the battlefield. No one claims that he was as sharp or astute in diplomacy as Awrangzeb; however, he was clearly respected in his father’s administration and was promoted many times to the higher ranks. The image of Dārā as a sexually unstable adolescent, as portrayed by Kinra, also needs some correction. In his article the latter gives a small resume of the *Sū’āl-o-javāb* in which he covers the essential points of discussion. However, it seems that he did not read the text carefully, otherwise he would not have made such simple mistakes as translating *sū’āl-i ‘azīz* as “noble question” and *javāb-i kāmīl* as “perfect answer.”<sup>250</sup> Moreover, in the almost seven manuscripts of the dialogue that I have consulted, there is little said about women in contrast to what is found in *Mathnavi-e-Kajkolāh*. In the manuscript B<sup>251</sup>, for instance, Dārā asks Lāl Dās “why have the wise people said that the lawful woman gives tranquility?” To this Lāl Dās offers the long reply:

How can the tranquility of the wise people of religion be dependent on women, since they (the wise) are on the level of certainty of the Truth? Since their denial is not the option, women have been accepted by a few (wise) people of the community. However, their acceptance is more common on the level of the laypeople. They (laypeople) are under the control of their ‘lower self’ and woman is the source of tranquility for them. However, the worshippers of Truth dictate their own selves. As such, then, what need do they have for women? And why should they be dependent on them? Allah is enough and the rest is greed.<sup>252</sup>

Dārā’s enquiry about women was nothing new or remarkable. Women played a role in the lives of Sufis and *bhaktas* such as Sultān Bāhū and Gurū Nānak, who were married and yet did not fail to guide others along the spiritual path. Dārā himself was a married person with a wife and children in his life. Perhaps he wanted to hear from Lāl Dās whether it was all right to have women around while striving for spiritual advancement. However, the image of Dārā portrayed in *Mathnavi-e-Kajkolāh* is very different. There Dārā complains that “Day and night my heart longs for them, and lust has completely conquered me.” According to Kinra this image was the public image in Dārā’s time. The death date of the author of *Mathnavi-e-Kajkolāh* confirms that

<sup>250</sup> The text later makes it clear that ‘*azīz* (a noble person) is meant for the emperor or Dārā and *kāmīl* (the perfect one) is a title reserved for Lāl Dās.

<sup>251</sup> Manuscript B, 258 (a) and 258 (b), Majlis:7;Q 11

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

such an image was probably in circulation at least forty years after Dārā's death. But does *Mathnavi-e-Kajkolāh* truly represent the public sphere? How popular was *Mathnavi-e-kajkolāh*? There is a need to research and find answers to such questions as: Who was responsible for fostering such an image? Was it Dārā himself or does it represent the biased reporting of court historians and a gradual deterioration of the image of Dārā? Or were there other factors?

## CHAPTER THREE

### LĀL DĀS – THE RESPONDENT

Lāl Dās plays the more important role in the work *Su’āl-o-Jawāb*. He is a perfect gnostic for Dārā, responding to his every question. Strangely though, Lāl Dās is not referred to in the works of any of his contemporaries, other than by Dārā himself and the author of the *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*.<sup>253</sup> As a result, we are left with a historical personality shrouded in various layers of identity. In the following pages we will try to reveal some of the facts about Lāl Dās’s life in the context of his times and communities.

#### 1. LĀL DĀS – VARIANCE IN NAME:

The obscurity of Lāl Dās’s life begins with his name, which varies widely from one source to another. Manuscripts A and B spell it La’l Dās, while manuscript C has Bābā Lāl, manuscript D Bābā La’l, manuscript E Lāl Jīv and manuscript F Lāl Dayāl. In *Ḥasanāt al-‘Ārifīn*, Dārā introduces him as Bābā Lāl Mundiya<sup>254</sup> or Bābā Lāl Mūndiya,<sup>255</sup> whereas in *Majma’ al-Bahrayn* he cites his name as Bāvā Lāl Bayrāgī<sup>256</sup> and in *Samudra Sangama* – a translation of *Majma’* in Sanskrit -- as sadguruvābālāl.<sup>257</sup> The author of *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*<sup>258</sup> introduces Lāl Dās as Miyān Lāl. In one of the Punjabi couplets attributed to him, furthermore, he introduces himself as Lāl Dyāl.<sup>259</sup> Lastly, we find ‘Shāh Lāl’ in the poetic compositions describing the dialogue in the *Mathnawi-i Kajkulāh*,<sup>260</sup> dating from 1794 C.E.

In addition to the variations in name found in different writings, we find others attached to the depiction of Lāl Dās in Mughal paintings. In one of the paintings included in the work

<sup>253</sup> The author of the work is popularly assumed to have been Muhsin Fānī (d.1670). Though a historical figure – a friend of Dārā and a disciple of Muhibullāh Allāhbādī who lived in Kashmir – there is some doubt as to whether he actually wrote the work: see for instance Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, p.101. The author, whoever he was, seems to have had a lot of respect for Dārā since he introduces him as Muḥyi al-Dīn (one who gives life to the religion). See *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*, ed. Rahīm Rizā’zādah (Tehran 1362 A.H./1983) (hereinafter referred to as *Dabistān*), vol.I, 1:359.

<sup>254</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 49.

<sup>255</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 54.

<sup>256</sup> Dārā, *Majma’*, 102; However, it is not in the text of *Majma’* edited by Naini. He mentions only in footnote on p.17 while comparing his text with the text edited by Mahfuz. See Jalali Naini (edited) *Muntakhibat-i Āthār* (Chāp Tābān: 1335 A.H.) (hereinafter referred to as Naini, *Muntakhibat*), 17. Sheo Narain is incorrect when he gives Bābā Lāl’s name as ‘Miyān Lāl in *Majma’ al-Bahrayn*.’ See Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 27.

<sup>257</sup> Dārā, *Samudra*, 124. Also see Filliozat, *Echoes*, 202.

<sup>258</sup> *Dabistan*, 1:181.

<sup>259</sup> Qāzī Faẓl Ḥaq, *Nakhere* (Lahore: Pakistan Punjabi Adabi Board) (hereinafter referred to as Qāzī, *Nakhere*), 211.

<sup>260</sup> See Ethe’s *Catalogue of Persian MSS.*, pages 935 and 1575.

*Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, Dārā Shukōh is said to be depicted in conversation with ‘Lāl Sāhib Faḳḳīr’ against the backdrop of a garden.<sup>261</sup> However, in another version of the scene we see ‘Lāl Swāmī’ written under the figure of Lāl Dās – perhaps the painter or artist was responsible for the identification.<sup>262</sup> Mahfuz informs us that another painting showing Lāl Dās and Dārā introduces the former as ‘Lāl Dās.’<sup>263</sup> Similarly, Sheo Narain reports about ‘a picture’ (probably a painting) in which Dārā is depicted in the company of ‘Lāl Dial.’<sup>264</sup>

All the variations presented above have in common the element ‘Lāl’ as the core of the name. In the manuscripts, the name “Lāl” can be found written in two ways: “La’l’ or ‘Lāl.’ La’l literally means ‘ruby’ in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi. When ‘La’l’ is used with the suffix ‘Dās’ the name takes on the meaning of ‘servant of the master who is like a ruby.’ Hence, La’l Dās is depicted in this way as the servant of the perfect master or a *gurū*. However, when used in the combination Bābā La’l, it signifies “a respected person who is like a ruby.” The name ‘Lāl’ means ‘red’ in Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. Thus on the popular level, Lāl may have been the name given to La’l Dās by the masses by reason of some distinguishing mark. Indeed, the element ‘Lāl’ or ‘red’ also has its roots in the *bayrāgī* tradition of wearing a saffron or red-coloured cloth symbolizing that one has become a ‘*jōgī*’ – meaning that one has left this world for the sake of the other. Both names – Lāl and La’l - seem generic in nature. Thus, any yogi might have been called Bābā Lāl (lit. a respected person wearing red).

The titles preceding the name of Lāl Dās, such as: ‘Miyān,’ ‘Shāh’ and ‘Ṣāhib Faḳḳīr’ show an inclination towards Muslim honorifics. This may have been a subjective perception of Lāl Dās on the part of painters, artists and poets, indicating that people somehow perceived him more as a Muslim than a Hindu.

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<sup>261</sup> See Plate XXII in *The Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, 82; Binyon has identified it as a meeting of Dārā with Bābā Lāl. However, if examined closely, the identification seems to be erroneous. The cap and clothes worn by the dervish in the painting could be compared to the sketches of dervishes in plate XIX of the same work and dervish seems to be Kamāl, son and follower of Kabir, rather than Bābā Lāl. See Laurence Binyon, *The Court Painters of the Grand Moguls with Historical Introduction and Notes by T.W. Arnold* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921) (hereinafter referred to as Binyon, *The Court Painters*).

<sup>262</sup> See Plate XIX in Binyon, *The Court Painters*, 72 Mahfuz-ul-Haqq is incorrect when he says that ‘Binyon gives us the following particulars about Baba’ (see Dārā, *Majma* ‘24). In fact, T.W. Arnold prepared the historical introduction and notes to the work. This is even expressed on the title page: “with historical introduction and notes by T.W. Arnold.”

<sup>263</sup> Dārā, *Majma* ‘, p. 25.

<sup>264</sup> Sheo Narain, “Dārā,” 27; Sheo Narain refers to a picture catalogued as number 38, lent to him by Sobhag Mall of Ajmer.

## 2. LĀL DĀS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY WORKS:

The anonymous author of *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*, a contemporary of Lāl Dās, introduces him in a very concise manner. He says:

..the author of these pages saw, in the year of the Hegira 1050 [1640 C.E.] in Gujarat of the Punjab, another of the leaders of this sect, called Miyān Lāl, who was venerated by a great number of his followers; he abstained from eating any sort of animal food, and showed politeness to everybody.<sup>265</sup>

What we learn from this is that Lāl Dās was a respected religious leader in Punjab and that he practiced the Hindu way of life, shown for example in his abstaining from meat, etc. The content of the dialogue confirms Lāl Dās' abhorrence of meat.

Most of what we know about him derives from his relationship with Dārā. It has been suggested that Dārā held discussions with Lāl Dās in Lahore during the period 1652 C.E. to 1653 C.E.<sup>266</sup> Dārā later mentioned his name in his works *Hasanāt al-‘Ārifīn*, *Majma‘ al-Bahrayn* and *Samudra Sangama*. In the above three works he shows how he held Lāl Dās in the highest regard. He introduces Lāl Dās with the following words in his *Hasanāt al-‘Ārifīn*<sup>267</sup>:

Bābā Lāl Mundiyya, who is amongst the perfect Gnostics – I have seen none among the Hindus who has reached such ‘*irfān* and spiritual strength as he has.

He also quotes three aphorisms that he heard directly from Lāl Dās. In the first, Lāl Dās is quoted as having said “do not become a Shaykh, or a *walī*, or a miracle worker; rather, become a sincere *faqīr* (*faqīr-i bīsākhtagī*).”<sup>268</sup> In the second aphorism, Lāl Dās tells Dārā that “in every community there is a perfect Gnostic, so that God shall grant salvation to that particular community through him. Therefore, you should not condemn any community.”<sup>269</sup> In the third and last aphorism, Lāl Dās, on the authority of Kabīr, describes four types of guide:<sup>270</sup> “The first

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<sup>265</sup> *Dabistān*, 1:181.

<sup>266</sup> For discussion of the probable locations and dates of the dialogue see below, Chapter IV.

<sup>267</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 49.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 54.

type is like gold, for they cannot make others similar to themselves; the second type is like an elixir -- whoever reaches them becomes gold, but they cannot transform others; the third type is like the sandalwood tree, which has the ability to create another sandalwood tree if that tree is prepared for it, but not otherwise; the fourth type is like a lamp,<sup>271</sup> and he is the one known as the “perfect guide,” indeed from one lamp a hundred thousand lamps are illuminated.”<sup>272</sup>

In *Majma‘ al-Bahrayn*, Dārā includes the name of Lāl Dās as the one exception in a list of *awliyā’* that have only Muslim names,<sup>273</sup> perhaps thereby sending the message that all those who reach the stage of sainthood (*walāya*)<sup>274</sup> become gnostics (*‘ārifān*), transcending the boundaries of their respective religions.<sup>275</sup> In *Samudra Sangama* Dārā shows the highest regard and respect for Lāl Dās, introducing his great preceptor in the following words:

I attained peace along with other altogether perfect Vedic seers, especially in nearness to the true guru, an image of the form itself of spirituality and of knowledge Bābā Lāl, who by the Lord, has attained the utmost askesis, of knowledge, of the fruit of right understanding, and with him I met and conversed frequently.<sup>276</sup>

Beyond this and the fact of his dialogue with Dārā Shukōh, there is very little information available in the early sources about his life. Nonetheless, one writer from the 19<sup>th</sup> century describes Lāl Dās as an eloquent speaker who had his own following. Sher ‘Alī Afsōs, the author of *Ārāish-i Mahfil*, writes:

Near it is a place (Deepaldal – place in Lahore), Dhayanpūr, where Baba Lal, a very orthodox and holy devotee, used to live, who, moreover was very good in oratory; accordingly, he used to explain the unity and knowledge of God in such a way, that his audience enjoyed great pleasure from it and spent much time in listening to his words. His poems to this purport, composed in Hindi, are also many in number; many of his followers recite them in their daily rituals. Many people, elite and common, believe in him.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>271</sup> The translation done by Hasrat uses ‘candle’ rather than ‘lamp;’ despite the fact that the text reads *chirāgh*. (Hasrat, *Dārā*, 242).

<sup>272</sup> *Hasanāt*, 54.

<sup>273</sup> Dārā mentions Kabir’s name in *Hasanāt*, but in the list of *awliyā’* in *Majma‘* he neglects to include him. See Dārā, *Majma‘*, 102.

<sup>274</sup> For a discussion of the meaning and concept of *walāya*, see H. Landolt, “Walāyah,” in *ER*, 15:316.

<sup>275</sup> Hayat, *The Concept*, 183-87.

<sup>276</sup> Dārā, *Samudra*, translated by Jean Filliozat. See Filliozat, *Echoes*, 203.

<sup>277</sup> Sherali Afsos, *The Araish-i ahfil Or the Ornament of the Assembly*. Literally translated from the Urdu by Major Henry Court (Calcutta: W. Thomas Baptist Mission Press, 1882) (hereinafter referred to as Afsos, *Ornament*), 126.

As for his poetic compositions, Mohan Singh, the author of *A History of Panjabi Literature*, informs us: “Lālji Dās is decidedly a writer of Panjabi – Panjab Awadhi and his three small tracts contain the perfect gnostic wisdom of Vedanta and Bhakti.”<sup>278</sup> Although he does not give the titles of these tracts, in another passage he classifies Lāl Dās amongst the “metaphysical poets or intellectualists.”<sup>279</sup> Despite these facts, very little is known about his poetry. Qazī Fazl Haq, the author of *Nakhere*, quotes two couplets (lit. *dohras*) in Punjabi under his name:<sup>280</sup>

Jān Jān sājan akhīn dīsey, men tān tān ghāfil hoī  
 Lad sadhāye ughar gaiyān, men hanjon bhar roī  
 Ekey tey dil diyān dil hī jāney, yā sājan jāney soī  
 Lāl Dyāl Sasī khalī kōkendī, merā dard sharīk nā koī

Translation:

Whenever my eyes see the beloved I become unaware (of others)  
 Those who were with the Cleaner have been cleansed, but I weep with eyes full of tears  
 Either this heart knows or (my) beloved knows what has happened to (my) heart  
 Lāl Dyāl Sasī cries out aloud “no one can share my pain.”

Lāl Dās’s dialogue with Dārā also contains a few verses, most probably of his own composition. The following verse is in Hindi<sup>281</sup>:

Mārī ūpar pahōnch kar agan autarī āyī  
 Pāanchvedī to charhūn jo piyā pakrey bānh

Translation:

As I ascended higher, the fire started descending  
 I will be able to climb this five step ladder  
 Only if the true master holds my hand

Turning to secondary sources for biographical details of Lāl Dās, we find that H.H. Wilson provided some of the earliest reports about Lāl Dās, especially in relation to his dialogue with Dārā. Professor H H Wilson was a professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. From 1813 to 1832 he served in India as an assistant surgeon in the service of

<sup>278</sup> Mohan Singh, *A History of Panjabi Literature (1100-1932)* (Amritsar: Kasturi Lal and Sons, 1956) (hereinafter referred to as Singh, *A History of Panjabi*), 61.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>280</sup> Qazī, *Nakhere*, 211.

<sup>281</sup> Manuscript C: see below in Chapter V.

the East India Company, and then from 1832 until his death in 1860 he continued his research at East India House and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. His papers were published in periodicals issued by a variety of oriental societies. Later these writings were reprinted in the work *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus* (in two volumes).<sup>282</sup> Regarding Wilson's sources, Dr. Reinhold Rost, the editor of the work, informs us that the author gleaned his materials from a variety of manuscript sources in Persian, Sanskrit, Bengali and different dialects of Hindi.<sup>283</sup> In his *Essays and Lectures*, he introduces the dialogue in the biographical sketch that he devotes to Lāl Dās. Without referencing any published material or manuscript, he provides a few extracts from the work that match almost exactly certain questions found in manuscript B and in *Rumūz-i tasavvuf*. – a source for this study which is further discussed below. The subsequent biographical accounts by Sheo Narain, Qanungo, Hasrat and Rizvi all follow Wilson.

Wilson's work has been divided – perhaps by the editor -- according to the four categories of Hindus: Worshippers of Vishnu (Vaishnavas), Shiva (Saivas), Shakti (Saktas), and others under Miscellaneous Sects.<sup>284</sup> The Baba Lalis are included in the last category. In this section Wilson provides a biography of Lāl Dās and translations of a select few questions and answers from the *Su'āl va Javāb*. According to Wilson, Lāl Dās was from the Kshatriya caste. He was the son of Mehta Phulla Mal and was born in Malva<sup>285</sup> during the reign of Jahāngīr (1605 C.E. – 1627 C.E.). It was his encounter with Chetan Swāmī, a follower of Rāmānand, that apparently changed his life. One day Lāl Dās provided some raw grain and wood as alms to a beggar. Upon receiving the alms the beggar, who was in fact Chetan Swāmī, lit the fuel between his legs and cooked the rice supporting the vessel on the insteps of his feet. On perceiving this miracle, Lāl Dās accepted Chetan Swāmī as his *gurū*. He received from the latter a grain of cooked rice, after eating which the mysteries of the whole universe were revealed to him. He later travelled to Lahore in the footsteps of Chetan Swāmī, who then asked Lāl Dās to bring some soil from far distant Dwārakā. Lāl Dās brought the earth in less than an hour, travelling thousands of miles in the interval. This miraculous feat was appreciated by his master and

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<sup>282</sup> See "Preface" by Dr. Reinhold Rost to Wilson, *Religions*, vii – x.

<sup>283</sup> Wilson, *Religions*, ix.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>285</sup> Sheo Narain maintains that Ṣasūr was the birthplace of Lāl Dās rather than Mālva, Sheo Narain, "Dara," 28.



Chetan Swāmī permitted Lāl Dās to become a *gurū* and have his own followers. He later settled in Dhiyānpūr near Sirhind, where he erected a *math* (temple) and attracted many disciples.<sup>286</sup>

A more recent study by Craig Davis<sup>287</sup> however connects Lāl Dās with the Samakadis or Nimbarkis, who have a major centre at Braj, northwest of Mathura. Davis has based his conjecture on the information provided by Hasrat who claims - as do Wilson and others mentioned above – that Lāl Dās followed Ramanuja’s *Sri sampradaya* school of thought.<sup>288</sup> According to Davis, since the *Sri sampradaya* school followed Visistadvaita-veda philosophy and since the Nimbarkis and Samakadis also followed the *sampradaya* school, it is more likely that “he (Lāl Dās) and his movement were associated with the Nimbarkis.”<sup>289</sup> Nevertheless, most of the details (though contradictory at times!) available in the sources about Lāl Dās and his activities - including his meeting with Dārā in Lahore - show that Lāl Dās was active in Punjab; hence, it is less likely that he was connected to a movement whose major centre was located somewhere in Bengal.<sup>290</sup>

Why did Dārā choose Lāl Dās to have a meeting and conversation? Was it due to the fact that he was a monist and followed a particular school of Indian philosophy? Dārā knew that Lāl Dās was a gnostic and a Vedic seer however it is impossible to know whether Dārā knew about the schools of Indian philosophy and Lāl Dās had any connection with a particular school.

None of the accounts – not even Wilson’s -- provide any information about the precise date or location of Lāl Dās’s death. Indeed, apart from his exchange with Dārā, supposedly in 1653 C.E., we have no details on the latter part of his life. Sheo Narain mentions that a shrine to Lāl Dās was built by Dārā, suggesting that Lāl Dās predeceased the former. However, he himself admits ignorance as to the whereabouts of the tomb. He writes:

He [Diwān Māyā Dās] says, he obtained the Persian version [of *Bābā Lāl’s Dialogue*] from a Mahant of Bābā Lāl’s shrine which was built by Dārā’s command, but he does not say where.<sup>291</sup>

<sup>286</sup> Wilson, *Religions*, 347-48; Qanungo, *Dara*, 241; Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 28.

<sup>287</sup> Davis, “Dara,” 169.

<sup>288</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 240. According to Hasrat, “This petty offshoot [followers of Lāl Dās] of one of the major reformist school viz Ramanuja’s *Sri sampradaya*, did not possess any individual spiritual force.”

<sup>289</sup> Davis, “Dara,” 169.

<sup>290</sup> For the early history of the movement see S.K. De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal from Sanskrit and Bengali Sources* (Calcutta: Fima K.L. Mugha padhyay, 1961).

<sup>291</sup> See Sheo Narain, “Dārā,” 27.

Did Lāl Dās in fact pass away during Dārā's lifetime? If so, Dārā did not mention his death in any of his works. Yet if he survived Dārā, one would have expected to find his name among those killed or ill-treated by Aurangzēb.<sup>292</sup> If he did outlive Dārā, then his apparent impunity may well have been due to his having taken the veil of *taqiyya*, like the anonymous author of *Dabistān* who most probably elided his name from the work for fear of being killed by the ruling monarch.<sup>293</sup> Moreover, going into hiding was a common practice amongst groups in South Asia who either saw themselves as politically vulnerable or assigned more importance to their inner life. For example, many Indian Nizārī Ismā'īlīs -- then and later -- practiced *taqiyya* by outwardly remaining Hindu and practicing their true religion inwardly.<sup>294</sup> Kabīrpanthīs also lived their lives according to the customs of the people around them while assigning more importance to the inner part of the human being -- the soul.<sup>295</sup>

What then became of Lāl Dās's disciples? Like Lāl Dās, his followers were also known by various names, for instance Bābā Lālis or Lāldāsīs. George A. Grierson informs us that the Bābā Lālis were "a modern Indian monotheistic sect founded by one Bābā Lāl in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>296</sup> He also tells us that the sect was established in Dhiyānpur near Sirhind in

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<sup>292</sup> Aurangzēb was largely successful in eliminating those who had supported Dārā and who had raised their voices against the emperor's tyrannical behaviour towards his brothers and father. For example Aurangzēb executed Sarmad, a close friend of Dārā, and destroyed all those Hindu temples in Benaras which had been supported by Dārā. See Shād 'Aẓīmābādī, "Dārā Shukōh ke Aḥsānāt," *Makhzan*, 13, no.6 (1907), 18-19.

<sup>293</sup> Fath-Allah Muḡtabā'ī writes: "Aurangzēb was a staunch upholder of the Šarī'a (Muslim religious law) and its outward observance, and during his reign the propagation of any ideas deemed heretical was likely to carry the penalty of death. It is not surprising, therefore, that the author's name does not appear in the *Dabestān*. It seems probable that he himself, or perhaps a close friend or relative, deliberately expunged all references to his identity. Information on Keykosrow Esfandīār may have been included in the book but then deleted for the same reasons," See his article "Dabestān - e - Madāheb," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 6:533.

<sup>294</sup> For Guptis, see below.

<sup>295</sup> According to Wilson: "The *Kabīr Panthīs*... are always included amongst *Vaishnava* sects and maintain with most of them, the *Rāmāvats* especially, a friendly intercourse and political alliance: it is no part of their faith, however, to worship any Hindu deity, or to observe any of the rites or ceremonials of the Hindus, whether orthodox or schismatical; such of their members as are living in the world conform outwardly to all the usages of their tribe and caste, and some of them even pretend to worship the usual divinities; although this is considered as going rather farther than is justifiable." Wilson also quotes a *sakhī* of Kabīr in which he says:

Associate and mix with all,  
And take the names of all,  
Say to everyone yes Sir, yes Sir,  
Abide in your own abode (see Wilson, *Religions*, 74-75).

<sup>296</sup> George A. Grierson, "Baba Lalis," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 11:308-309.

the Punjab.<sup>297</sup> It seems that the sect existed independently for a long time and was also present in areas such as Jaipur and Baroda. Until the late nineteenth century, the followers of Lāl Dās possessed a religious house at Lāl Bābā kā Sāila near Baroda.<sup>298</sup> Dominique Sila Khan, who notes that the guise of the Lāldāsīs<sup>299</sup> was also used by Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs, writes in her *Crossing the Threshold* of how various Indian rulers asserted their power by constituting some kind of state religion.<sup>300</sup> For example Raja Jai Singh (1699 – 1740 C.E) sponsored a variety of Hindu practices and traditions. Whether it was the result of coercion or their independent decision, a group of Lāldāsīs did join the mainstream. Khan writes that “(Lāldāsīs) sent a letter to Maharaja in which they promised to give up their *panth* and follow the Vaishnava Dharma of the Chaitanya *sampradāy* (tradition).”<sup>301</sup>

The above facts suggest that the sect may have become reduced in size over time. D.A. Pai, writing in 1928, provides us with yet another possible reason for this:

These sects have now degenerated into merely an order of Sadhūs... Originally, being under the influence of Islam, these gave up Hindu worship, but subsequently having no better substitute for it, their recitation of verses and singing of hymns was not sufficient attraction for the majority of the followers, who have now degenerated under the influence of other existing and more flourishing sects into mere Gurū-worship or worship of books.<sup>302</sup>

This reduction in the number of members may also have occurred due to amalgamation with other sects, or in reaction to the activities of the Ārya Samāj<sup>303</sup> (Noble Society), a Hindu reform movement founded in India in 1875 C.E. by Swami Dayananda, who believed in *suddhī* or ‘purification’ – a tradition of ‘conversion’ or ‘re-conversion’ to Hinduism. The movement first targeted small Hindu groups (presumably followers of various *bhaktas*) and later went after Indian Christians and Muslims.

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> J.N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920) (hereinafter to be referred as Farquhar, *An Outline*), 344.

<sup>299</sup> Dominique-Sila Khan, *Crossing the Threshold: Understanding Religious Identities in South Asia* (London: I.B.Tauris and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2004) (hereinafter referred to Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*), 59.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>302</sup> D.A. Pai, *Religious Sects of Hindus* (Bombay: The Times Press, 1928), 49.

<sup>303</sup> Khan’s work is fascinating for the activities of the Ārya Samāj and sheds much light on this obscure area. See Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 78-91.

### 3. LĀL DĀS AND KABIR:

Dārā introduces Lāl Dās as “amongst the perfect Gnostics.”<sup>304</sup> However, Dārā also uses the attributes “*bayrāgī*” and “*mundiyya*” for Lāl Dās, the former in *Majma‘* and the latter in *Hasanāt*. What is interesting about this fact is that both titles were used for the followers of Kabir. In fact, the author of *Dabistān* introduces Lāl Dās in the context of *bayrāgīyan*, after mentioning Kabīr, perhaps implying that Lāl Dās was a follower of the latter.<sup>305</sup> Perhaps it was due to the above implications that Lāl Dās came to be regarded as a Kabīrpanthī by most secondary sources. This warrants a closer examination of the available sources to ascertain his identity.

According to Farquhar,<sup>306</sup> Massignon<sup>307</sup> and Wilson,<sup>308</sup> Lāl Dās was a follower of Kabīr (1440-1518). However, Qanungo disputes this idea, arguing:

It is difficult to accept even on the authority of Dara himself that Baba Lal was a Kabirpanthi out and out. There is no doubt that Baba Lal, who originally started his ascetic life as *Hot-yogin* (a sect given to the practices of stiff physical postures or *asanas* for working miracles) became afterwards a mystic, upholding like Kabir, the worship of one absolute God without form... But Baba Lal did not... share Kabir’s contempt for book-lore and yoga practices, nor did he, like Kabir, condemn fiercely idol worship and the externals of religions.<sup>309</sup>

Whether Dārā believed Lāl Dās to be a Kabīrpanthī is uncertain. As mentioned above, he uses the two titles *mundiyya* and *bayrāgī* for Lāl Dās and also quotes one of Kabir’s aphorisms on the authority of Lāl Dās – implying that the latter heard them from Kabir directly (evidently problematic for chronological reasons).<sup>310</sup> Hasrat confuses the issue by making a mistake or by referring to some other manuscript or edited version of *Hasanāt* when he translates: “Bābā Lāl, to whom I have made a reference elsewhere, was a Mundiyya and belonged to the order of

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<sup>304</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 49.

<sup>305</sup> *Dabistān*, I:181.

<sup>306</sup> Farquhar, *An Outline*, 334.

<sup>307</sup> See Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 287.

<sup>308</sup> See Wilson, *Religions*, 347.

<sup>309</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 244.

<sup>310</sup> Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 54. Traditionally it is maintained that Kabir passed away in 1398 A.D. - approximately two hundred and fifty years before Dārā’s meeting with Lāl Dās. See Isaac A. Ezekiel, *Kabir – The Great Mystic* (India: Radhasoami Satsang, 1966), 46.

Kabīr...”<sup>311</sup> The correct and literal translation is ‘Bābā Lāl mundiyya, to whom I have made reference above, told me that Kabir told him...’<sup>312</sup>

In the popular history of India, Kabir was perhaps the most famous personality of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, revered ever since by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. Dārā introduces Kabīr without casting any doubt on his authenticity, writing in *Hasanāt*:

Kabīr was one of the perfect Gnostics of India. He was a disciple of Rāmānand Mundiyya – a type of *faqīr* in India, but was a leader on a path he carved out for himself... Both Muslims and infidels considered him as belonging to their own respective faiths but Kabīr himself was far away from them.<sup>313</sup>

Traditionally it is maintained that Kabīr was a disciple of Rāmānand,<sup>314</sup> a path adopted by most of the followers of *bayrāgī* tradition.<sup>315</sup> The term *bayrāgī* or *vīrāgī* literally means “someone without passion.”<sup>316</sup> And while the term *bayrāgī* has wider implications, it has been mostly applied to the Vaishnava mendicants of the Rāmānandī class. According to Crooke, the *bayrāgī* sect arose in southern India in response to the teachings of Rāmānuja, and then became prominent in Northern India after the preaching of Rāmānand (14<sup>th</sup> /15<sup>th</sup> century). For *bayrāgīs*, the most important tenet was the assertion that Vishnu, the cause and creator of the worlds, was Brahma. They revered all ten incarnations, but maintained the superiority of Rāma in the Kālī Yug (*jug*).<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 242.

<sup>312</sup> See Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 54.

<sup>313</sup> See Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 53.

<sup>314</sup> Rāmānand (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> C.E.) was a follower of Rāmānuja Achārya (d. 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), a Vishnūvite reformer. He wrote many works and carved a place for his sect by establishing more than 700 *māths* (monasteries) for his followers (see Wilson, *Religions*, 35). Rāmānand was also a broad-minded person and had an inclusive approach towards other sects and religions. For his disciples he had a *shudra* (untouchable), a *jāt* (low caste), an outcaste, a Muslim and woman.<sup>314</sup> It was due to his efforts that the ascetic orders of Hinduism were opened to the lower castes and were no longer restricted to *brahmans* and *kshatriyas*. The *bayrāgīs* were not only open to other religions and castes but also saw other religions as worshipping the same reality they did.

<sup>315</sup> For details see W.Crooke’s “Bairagi” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, I: 337; also see *Glossary*, I: 35-38.

<sup>316</sup> See *Glossary*, I:35. Also see “Bairagi” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, I:337, where Crooke defines “*bairag*” as “one who has subdued all earthly desires.” However, the author of *Dabistān* defines it as “aspiring.” This seems to be a little forced. Perhaps such errors were responsible for undermining the importance of the *Dabistān* in the eyes of scholars. For example, Wilson criticizes the *Dabistān* in the following words: “The *Dabistān*, although it contains many curious and some correct notices of the Hindu religion, affords too loose and inaccurate a description to be consulted with advantage” (see Wilson, *Religions*, 187).

<sup>317</sup> Wilson explains in the simplest terms the origin of the Vaishnavas and their important sects, including the Rāmānandīs (see Wilson, *Religions*, 34-68).

According to traditional accounts of the meeting of Kabir with Rāmānand, the former recited Ram's name and was accepted by Rāmānand as his follower.<sup>318</sup> Kabir, following Rāmānand, believed in the 'one-ness of reality' (*muvaḥḥid*) and as a result did not accept the idea of idol worship at all. The following example illustrates this fact:

One day Kabīr saw a gardener's wife who was collecting flowers for the idol of a deity, he said to her: 'In the leaves of the flower lives vegetative soul, and the idol for whom you are taking these flowers is dead, without consciousness, is in the sleep of inertness, and has no soul; the level of the vegetable is superior to that of mineral. If the idol possessed a soul, he would have chastised the cutter, who, while giving the shape to sculpture, placed his foot upon the idol's breast: go, and venerate a wise, intelligent and perfect man, who is the manifestation of Vishnū.<sup>319</sup>

Kabir not only preached openly about the 'one-ness of reality,' but in fact went even further than his master. He criticized and attacked mullāhs and pandits equally, seeing them all as part of an idolatrous system. Wilson writes<sup>320</sup>:

Amongst the twelve disciples of RĀMĀNAND the most celebrated of all, and one who seems to have produced, directly or indirectly, a greater effect on the state of popular belief than any other, was KABĪR: with an unprecedented boldness he assailed the whole system of idolatrous worship, and ridiculed the learning of *Pandits*, and doctrines of the *Śāstras*, in a style peculiarly well suited to the genius of his countrymen to whom he addressed himself, whilst he also directed his compositions to the Musalman, as well as to the Hindu faith, and with equal severity attacked the *Mullā* and *Korān*.

Charlotte Vaudeville, in her article 'Kabīr' in *ER*, disagrees with the image of Kabīr as a Rāmānandī. For the author, Kabīr was "not only an iconoclast... [but] may even be called as irreligious." Vaudeville has drawn this conclusion from Kabīr's poetry in which he condemns both mullāh and pandit, denies scriptural authority and claims that his notion of God goes beyond the personal God. The author suggests that the invocation of Rām or Harī by Kabīr should be seen as applying names to the 'all-pervading Reality' – a reality beyond words, i.e., "beyond the beyond." Similarly, she also maintains that when Kabīr speaks about the *satgurū* (the perfect master) he is not alluding to Rāmānand but to the guru who speaks within the soul itself. Not only did he have contempt for holy books and human gurus, according to Vaudeville,

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> See *The Dabistan or School of Manners translated from the original Persian, with notes and illustrations by David Shea and Anthony Troyer; edited with a preliminary discourse, by the latter* (London: Allen and Co, 1843), 265. For the Persian text see *Dabistān*, 1:178.

<sup>320</sup> Wilson, *Religions*, 68-69.

Kabīr “held all yogic exercises to be absurd contortions and the yogis’ pretention to immortality as utter nonsense.”<sup>321</sup> Recent scholarship, in addition to offering a revised image of Kabīr, also advances our knowledge of the Kabīrpanth. Khan for instance thinks that the “Kabīrpanth seems to be modelled on the South Asian Nizārī Ismā‘īlī satpanth.”<sup>322</sup> According to her, the concept of *gurū*, belief in a divine avatār and the tradition of Dasondh in Kabīrpanth, are all similar to the teachings of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī tarīqah.<sup>323</sup> However, in the absence of any detailed study of the evolution of the Kabīrpanth and a comparison of it with the evolution of Nizārī Ismā‘īlī tradition, it is difficult to assess such a claim.

Even though Lāl Dās quotes Kabīr, his ideology seems to be very different from the latter’s, specifically when it comes to understanding the Creator and the method of establishing a relationship with Him. From the dialogues<sup>324</sup> it seems that Lāl Dās, like Kabīr, was also a *muvaḥḥid*. In the dialogues he very clearly conveys his own understanding about the Creator and creation. For him the Creator is like an ocean that is not affected by any type of impurity and is in fact the source for removing impurities similarly the Creator is the ‘reality’ and creation ‘unreal,’ though connected with the reality. To illustrate this he compares the Creator to a tree and creation to its shadow.

However, despite appearing to be a *muvaḥḥid*, Lāl Dās did not condemn idolaters; on the contrary, he defended them. In one of the dialogues, Lāl Dās answers Dārā’s question about idol worship thus:

It (idol worship) is for strengthening the heart. One who knows what is behind the form does not need (any particular form to worship). However, one who does not know the meaning behind form retains one’s attachment to the form. It is like those girls who play with forms (dolls). They do not play [with them] after getting married. This is what idol worship is. Those (people) who do not know the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of form (remain attached to the form), [but] after attaining the knowledge of the inner meaning, they go beyond the form.<sup>325</sup>

Moreover, for Lāl Dās, reaching the Creator without a perfect master was impossible. Lāl Dās identified such masters with the incarnations (*avatār*), believing that they, like the prophets and

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<sup>321</sup> See C. Vaudeville, ‘Kabīr,’ in *ER*, 8:227.

<sup>322</sup> Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 62.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>324</sup> For a translation and discussion of related dialogues see below Chapter V.

<sup>325</sup> See below, chapter IV; see also Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 290 - 91.

saints, take on human form to help humankind reach the Creator. For him, even the remembrance or continuous thought (*khayāl*) of Rām represented a source of salvation.<sup>326</sup>

In light of his open-mindedness towards idolatry and his belief in perfect masters and *avatārs*, it is clear that his thought was very different from Kabīr's. Perhaps Lāl Dās was more inclusive: for him, agency played an important role in reaching the goal of one-ness. Thus, *avatārs*, perfect masters and idols all play a certain role in the voyage to reach the Creator; nevertheless, they are only a means of reaching the goal and do not represent the goal itself.<sup>327</sup> Qanungo therefore seems to be correct in his observation that "it is difficult to accept that Lāl Dās was a Kabīrpanthī."

#### 4. LĀL DĀS, THE BHAKTĪ MOVEMENT, SIKHS AND SHAMSĪ GUPTĪS:

As we saw earlier, Dārā introduces Lāl Dās as a Hindu, unique in the extent of his knowledge and spirituality. We also know from the various sources referred to earlier that he had his own following and that he had his own *math*. He was a poet and his poetry was recited by his followers. Unfortunately, however, we have access to only a small quantity of his poetry and know very little about the activities of his followers. Indeed it seems that his followers hid their allegiance by living their lives in accordance with the customs of the people around them.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., on the basis of love for a personal God (Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna), the *bhaktī* movement started developing in southern India. Later, it became popular in northern India and reached the Punjab. The *bhaktī* movement was popular among Hindus and also among various other communities without a definite identity. The members and leaders of the *bhaktī* movement were at the same time close to various Sufī brotherhoods. For example Miyyān Mīr – a Qādirī Sufī master whom Dārā revered -- was frequently visited by Lāl Dās and Sikh Gurū Arjun (both of whom could be considered as *bhaktās* in that the former had his own following and a *māth* whereas the latter was known as the descendant of *bhaktā* Gurū Nānak). India, moreover, witnessed during the first half of the seventeenth century perhaps the zenith of the rapprochement between Muslim Sufis and Hindu *bhaktās*. This rapprochement was the result of

<sup>326</sup> See Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 299, tr. 321f. Also see below chapter V.

<sup>327</sup> As mentioned earlier, in one of his aphorisms (quoted earlier) Bābā Lāl told Dārā not to condemn any community because every community has a gnostic through whom the community will achieve salvation. See Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 49.



the works of Sufis, *bhaktās* and mystical poets who created popular literature to address the masses and who used vernacular language in a poetical form. This literature was shared by various communities. This was the result of the Hindu-Muslim interface described by Dominique Sila Khan in terms of an open ‘doorway.’ She further elaborates this rapprochement as:

Alliances, sharing and borrowing bring together different traditions on a threshold that can be described, in Matringe’s words, as ‘that sublime point where all religions meet.’ This is the domain where universality, recognised as the supreme value, prevails over sectarianism, although devotees preserve their distinct religious affiliations.<sup>328</sup>

However, with time, communities evolved and claimed their identities by drawing lines of demarcation. In this context, it would be appropriate to mention at least two communities in the Punjab among whom Lāl Dās was active: the Sikhs and the Shamsī Guptīs. Both shared the same language, culture and most importantly the same principle – inclusiveness towards other religions. Moreover, both communities could be seen as products of the Hindu-Muslim interface and, superficially, a phenomenon demonstrating syncretism or symbiosis. However, if studied carefully, both reveal distinctions in their nature and a more complex process of evolution than may simply be attributed to syncretism.

Sikhism is considered one of the many offshoots of the *bhaktī* movement.<sup>329</sup> According to the traditional and popular account, Gurū Nānak (d.1539), who is regarded as the founder of the religion, was one of the known promoters of the *bhaktī* movement in Punjab. The opening pronouncement of his mission was: “there is no Hindu, there is no Muslim.” Nānak preached that God is *Rab*, *Rahīm*, *Rām*, *Govinda*, *Murārī* and *Harī* and that He is the one who exists everywhere.<sup>330</sup> Almost seventy-five years after Nānak, the fifth Gurū Arjun started compiling the *Ādi Granth* -- the sacred book of the Sikhs -- and built temples. The belief system of Sikhism can be summarized in two tenets: the oneness of God and the need for a perfect master (*gurū*) for spiritual development. Thus, all ten gurus (masters from Nānak to Gobind Singh) are considered as living embodiments of the spiritual guidance of the deity. However, in his work *The Construction of Religious Boundaries – Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*,

<sup>328</sup> Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 44.

<sup>329</sup> See Khushwant Singh, ‘Sikhism,’ (hereinafter referred to as Sing, “Sikhism”) *ER* 13:315-20.

<sup>330</sup> In this context, a famous anecdote is recorded in Sikh works. While Nānak was on a journey to Mecca and Medina, he fell asleep with his feet pointing towards the Ka‘aba. He was awakened by a furious mullā who accused him of disrespect which he had committed by pointing his feet towards the Ka‘aba. To this, Nānak asked him to point out where God doesn’t exist so that he could turn his feet in that direction (see Sing, ‘Sikhism,’ 316).

Harjot Oberoi challenges this monolithic world view of Sikhism.<sup>331</sup> Based on the earlier Sikh historical materials he shows that most Sikhs recognized multiple identities grounded in local, religious and secular loyalties and religious identity did not have any clear demarcation. It was as late as 19<sup>th</sup> century when Sikhism took the modern form.

As pointed out earlier, Lāl Dās had also laid emphasis on two tenets: the oneness of God and the need for a perfect master (*gurū*) for spiritual development. Nevertheless, like Kabir, the Sikh gurus and the *Ādi Granth* totally reject any form of idol worship. In fact Kabir's utterances are recorded in *Ādi Granth* as "the words of the foremost among the *bhaktās*." However, keeping in view the Sikh recognition of multiple identities during the time of Lāl Dās there may have been Sikhs accepted idol worship. Was Lāl Dās a Sikh wrapped in a different religio-cultural identity? If he was, then probably he was different from his Sikh contemporary Gurū Arjun.

In the Punjab, especially in the northern regions, there used to exist another kind of Hindu community known as the Guptīs (lit., those who were hidden). It seems that Dārā knew about such people because in one of his dialogues he asks Lāl Dās -- although he may have been speaking hypothetically -- what type of last rites should be accorded to a person after death who is outwardly wearing the veil (*burqa*) of Hinduism, i.e., whether that person should be cremated or buried.<sup>332</sup> We do not know how large this group was or where it was concentrated. Among these Guptīs there was a group that later came to be known as the Shamsī Guptīs (lit. the veiled followers of Shams) -- a group of Nizārī Ismā'īlīs from the Punjab who claimed that they had lived as Guptīs until the beginning of the last century, despite having been converted to the Ismā'īlī tarīqah by one of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī *dā'īs*, Pir Shams, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This claim has been disputed by Dominique Sila Khan in her work *Crossing the Threshold*, where she writes:

In Ismā'īlī studies, a certain amount of confusion arises from the fact that the term 'Guptī' is supposed to refer only to a section of the Shamsī community, that is to say, to those followers of Pir Shams who had chosen to conceal their affiliation under a local guise. Actually our personal research into the Imamshahi tradition of Pirana has shown

<sup>331</sup> Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries – Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (The University of Chicago Press, 1994)

<sup>332</sup> Dārā, See manuscript A folio 150; and manuscript E folio 8. Also see Huart & Massignon, "Les entretiens," 304, and also below, chapter V.

that the local Sayyids referred to the Patidar disciples as murids... and when asked if they were Hindus or Muslims unhesitatingly replied that they were Guptīs.<sup>333</sup>

She further says:

The belief that before British rule, there could have existed Khoja or Shamsi non- Gupti communities, that is to say, openly following Nizari Ismaili, along with Gupti groups following it secretly, is erroneous. History clearly tells us that from the beginning of Muslim rule in North India and in some other parts of the Subcontinent, Ismaili communities could not survive if they disclosed their religious affiliation. They could occasionally be protected by Hindu local kings, but it is highly improbable that they chose to practice their religion in broad daylight. Sunni persecution of the Ismailis was a perpetual menace, as proved by numerous allusions in Indo-Muslim sources to “heretics” being discovered and exterminated if they did not embrace Sunni Islam. We must surmise, therefore, that for quite a long period all the Nizari Ismailis were ‘Guptis’ in the broad sense of the word, whether they chose some Hindu sectarian guise or concealed themselves as Sunni Sufis or Twelver Shi’a.<sup>334</sup>

On the basis of history, therefore, Khan reaches two important conclusions: first, that due to Sunni persecution, for a long time all (emphasis is mine) Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs living in the Indian subcontinent were ‘Guptīs’ in the broad sense of the word, and second, that the belief that before British rule there were a few Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs who were practicing their religion openly along with Guptī groups, is erroneous (emphasis is mine).

Indian Ismā‘īlī history is complex and ambiguous for the period of at least three or four hundred years stretching from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries; however, to examine the reason for this ambiguity is beyond the scope of this study. As such, we will confine ourselves to examining this history in the context of the evolution of Khoja Nizārī Ismā‘īlī and Shamsī Guptīs. Traditionally, it is maintained that, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Ismā‘īlī preachers arrived in India from Persia to propagate the message of Islam. According to the methodology of Ismā‘īlī preachers, which has been described as an ‘innovative synthesis,’<sup>335</sup> they did not preach to their followers that they would have to leave Hinduism to become Muslims; rather, followers were asked to accept the message as a continuation of the true religion. Like any other Vishnuvite preacher, they taught that Vishnu had already manifested himself in nine avatars and that the tenth expected *avatar* in *Kālīyug* had already come in the form of Ali, the son-in-law and cousin

<sup>333</sup> Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 47.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>335</sup> Deryl N. Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind* (E.J.Brill, 1989) (hereinafter referred to as Maclean, *Religion and Society*), 152.

of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>336</sup> Thus, the essence of the message emphasized that Islam was indeed the completion of Hinduism. Indian Nizārī Ismā‘īlī preachers continued to preach for at least 300 years according to this methodology in various parts of India where there existed a wide variety of cultures and traditions. One might expect that various small communities or groups would have been formed in various times and places.

The traditional accounts do not relate the history of the evolution of the different groups of Indian Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs -- Khojas and non-Khojas -- before the arrival of Aga Khan I in India (middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). However, Azim Nanji’s study shows that, as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Khoja Nizārī Ismā‘īlī *da‘wa* was going through a period of consolidation and that Pir Sadardin had established Jamātkhānas in the open – a change in policy from the previous preacher Pir Shams, who had established 84 hidden Jamātkhānas.<sup>337</sup> This means that from about the 14<sup>th</sup> century Khojas were practicing their religion openly – whether syncretistic or “innovative”<sup>338</sup> in form. This is also evident from the court proceedings of the Aga Khan Case in 1866, where the Khojas never claimed that they lived in *gupt* (secrecy). In fact they unambiguously declared to the court that Pir Sadardin had converted them to Shī‘a Islam. In his judgment on this case, Justice Arnold observed that “wherever a Khoja community is to be found, however small, its organization is the same: it has a Jumat (sic), a Jumatkhana (sic), a Mukhi and a Kamaria.”<sup>339</sup>

Unlike the Khojas, the Shamsīs or other groups (perhaps including the Imām Shāhīs, etc.) practiced the same religion in secret – they had Jamā‘atkhānas but secret ones, inside their houses, which is why they were known as Guptīs and not Khojas. Later, in the Hājī Bībī Case of 1905, the evidence presented by the Shamsis reiterated the same fact: they had been converted by Pir Shams and practiced their religion in secret.<sup>340</sup> The period starting from Pir Sadardin to the arrival of Aga Khan I is more than 300 years in length; nevertheless, there is every indication that the Khojas or non-Guptī communities

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<sup>336</sup> See Nanji, *Nizārī*, 110- 113. Also see Gulshan Khakee’s extensive work on the long Ginan Das Avatara, Gulshan Khakee, *Dasa Avatara of the Satpanthi Ismailis and Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972). Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, a well-known Pakistani scholar, strongly disapproved of this idea, saying: “Sadardin wrote a work in which he gave the status of Brahma to the Prophet Muhammad, Shiv to Prophet Adam and Vishnu to Hazrat Ali. An orthodox Muslim can only mourn on this idea!” Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, *Barr-i Azim Pak-o-Hind ki Millat-i Islamiyah* (hereafter referred to as Qureshi, *Barr-i Azim*), (Karachi: Karachi University, 1967), 52. However, Ishtiaq Hussain forgets that Mahmud of Ghazna to celebrate his entrance in Lahore minted a coin with the Sanskrit text as: ‘*Avyaktum mekam, Muhammada avatara, Nirpiti Mahmuda*’ translated as: “One the invisible, Muhammad the incarnation and Mahmud the ruler.”!! See Sharif Husain Qasemi, *A descriptive catalogue of Persian Translations of Indian works* (New Delhi: National Mission for Manuscripts, 2014) (hereafter referred to as Qasemi, *Catalogue*), iv.

<sup>337</sup> Nanji, *Nizārī*, 74-75.

<sup>338</sup> Maclean, *Religion and Society*, 152.

<sup>339</sup> A.S. Picklay, *History of the Ismailis* (Bombay: Popular Printing Press, n.d.), 142.

<sup>340</sup> Nanji, *Nizārī*, 67.

practiced their tradition openly, in accordance with Nizārī Ismā‘īlī da‘wa, while Guptī groups practiced the same faith, but secretly.

Another interesting issue that Justice Arnold raised in his 1866 judgment concerned the objection raised by opponents of the Aga Khan to his community’s practice of following Sunni rituals during their funeral and marriage ceremonies. According to Arnold, the Sunni practice might have been due either to *taqiyya* or to convenience – i.e., the fact that it was difficult to find a Shī‘ī Mulla in an anti-Shī‘ī and majority Sunnī society. One may infer that by practicing *taqiyya* Khoja Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs were, in a way, Guptīs. However, the most likely explanation favours the second option, i.e., convenience. It is interesting to note that the same trend was followed by the Shamsī Guptīs, who after coming out of *gupt*, like the Khojas, developed relations with Sunnī ‘*ulamā*’ and used to invite them to perform their marriage and burial rituals. The tradition of relying on Sunnī ‘*ulamā*’ continued in various parts of the Punjab until 1979. It was only after the promulgation of the Zakāt Bill -- according to which the Sunnīs of Pakistan were obligated to pay *zakāt* annually – that the Shamsīs decided to declare themselves to be Shī‘as.<sup>341</sup> Thus, in both cases – Khojas and Shamsīs - the relationship with Sunnis was seen as practicing *taqiyya* but not as remaining in “*gupt*” – a term that was specifically used for practicing Hinduism outwardly and remaining loyal to the Imam of the time inwardly.

One may assume that a variety of groups went through a process of evolution and acculturation in various geographical regions, sometimes sharing their sacred space with other religions and at other times even overlapping with other traditions. Khan’s own work provides various examples that confirm this phenomenon. In the course of time and circumstances a few groups may have had the opportunity to practice their faith openly, whereas others may have found it impossible to do so due to social pressures and fear of animosity. Hence it is incorrect to say that there did not exist a period during which there were a few groups that observed secrecy while others practiced their religion more openly. At the time when the syncretic blend of Hinduism and Islam was crystallizing into the Sikh religion, Shamsī Guptīs were secretly following an ‘innovative synthesis’<sup>342</sup> of Hindu Muslim elements designed intelligently by their preachers. Not much is available on the Shamsī Guptīs: even the *Glossary* does not recognize them as a sect or caste.<sup>343</sup> However, Nanji reports that the “census reports taken in the Punjab in the last century

<sup>341</sup> Interesting details of this event were narrated by the President of the local Council for Sargodha to me during my visit and stay in Sargodha in 1980.

<sup>342</sup> Maclean, *Religion and Society*, 152.

<sup>343</sup> See H.A. Rose; ed. *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province* (Lahore: Aziz Publishers, 1978) (hereinafter referred to as Rose. *A Glossary*). Whereas Rose’s *Glossary* is silent on their existence, one can find a few useful articles on this topic such as those of Dominique Sila Khan and Zawahir Moir’s “Co-Existence and Communalism: the Shrine of Pirana in Gujarat,” *South Asia*, 22, Special Issue (1999),

show remnants of a group called Shamsis, followers of Pir Shams Tabrizi, the great Saint of Multan.”<sup>344</sup> Like *bhaktas* of the *bhakti* movement, their outward attire resembled that of the Hindus even while they followed a Muslim saint. This was a common, acceptable norm of the time. They never claimed to be Muslims themselves until they came out from behind their veil of *gupt*. The reason is understandable: had they done so, they would have defied the purpose and meaning of their ‘Guptiness.’ They remained a part of the larger Hindu community outwardly; however, they practiced the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī ṭarīqa (innovative synthesis) inwardly.

Azim Nanji likewise informs us that, during his fieldwork, he met a group of Shamsis who were for the most part goldsmiths by trade. The majority lived in the vicinity of Sialkot; however, they were spread all over the Punjab including Multan, Lahore, Amritsar, Sahiwal, Gujranwala and Hafizabad, while a few even used to live in Mardan.<sup>345</sup> As for sources on their history and traditions, coming from the family tradition of goldsmithing, they did not produce any literature, and it was only as late as the beginning of the twentieth century that, in riposte to Arya Samaji attacks, they began to produce a few works. The following account is based on two works – *Sankh Chakar*<sup>346</sup> and *Neklank Darpan*,<sup>347</sup> along with an oral tradition that was transmitted to me by my own ancestors.

According to the oral tradition of the Shamsī Guptīs,<sup>348</sup> they were converted to Islam by Pir Shams al-Din Subzwari of Multan<sup>349</sup> - a Nizārī Ismā‘īlī dā‘ī of the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century. Some sources also claim that Shamsī Guptīs were originally converted by a later sixteenth-century

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133-154 and also Moir’s “Historical and Religious Debates amongst Indian Ismailis 1840-1920” in *The Banyan Tree*, ed. Mariola Offredi (Delhi, 1991), 132-153.

<sup>344</sup> Nanji, *Nizari*, 67.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> The *Sankh Chakar* was written by Nazar Ali (formerly Gur Dita Ram) in 1924. It was a response to the secretary of Achchut Sudhar Samti Poona who had written an open letter to the Aga Khan. Responding to the secretary –who was also a pandit – the author tried to prove that the Aga Khan was the tenth *avatār* of Vishnū. It also contains a genealogical chart which contains the Hindu names of the *avatārs* for various *jugs* (*yugs*) and then connects them with the prophets of Islam - including Prophet Muḥammad – and Shī‘ī Ismā‘īlī Imams: from ‘Alī to Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, Aga Khan III. See Nazarali, *Sankh Chakar* (Multan: 1924).

<sup>347</sup> *Neklank Darpan* was written by Karam Hussain (formerly Junda Ram) in 1927. At that time he was President of the Ismā‘īlī Council and was active in Mission Club Multan. The work contains: two responses to two Shamsi guptis who had joined Arya Samāj (Karam Chand and Dr. Naqal Sen); the meaning and translation of Sī Harfī, a long Ginan by Ahmad Shah; and a discussion about the Ismā‘īlī religion by a Hindu, author Karam Hussain, an Ismā‘īlī missionary Pir Subz Ali and an Ithnā ‘asharī person. See Karam Hussain, *Neklank Darpan* (Multan: 1927)

<sup>348</sup> I personally heard this account from my parents and grand-parents.

<sup>349</sup> For a complete account of Shams al-Din Subzwari, see Nanji, *Nizārī*, 61-69.

preacher of the same name and not by Subzwari.<sup>350</sup> However, Shamsī Guptīs remained attached to Subzwari's tomb until the beginning of the last century. They would visit the tomb regularly and attend the annual fair (*mela*). It was only sometime around the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that, on the guidance of Aga Khan III, they stopped visiting the shrine.<sup>351</sup>

The majority of Shamsī Guptīs belonged to the Vaisya caste and, as stated earlier, the majority of them were goldsmiths. The Shamsī Guptīs practiced *gupt* by following Hindu customs in their everyday life: keeping long, braided hair-locks and wearing outfits like those the Hindus wore. They used to bear Hindu names and practiced their religion inwardly. They had no open space in which to congregate and unlike those in the Khoja community, their Jamā'atkhānas (Ismā'īlī centres) used to be inside their houses, hidden from the general public.

Based on their writings and oral traditions, it seems that the poetry and rituals of the Shamsī Guptīs were very much like those of their fellow Punjabi Sikhs. For example, the following are a few beliefs and practices that were, and still are, observed in both communities<sup>352</sup>: (a) the terms *satgurū* (true guide), *satpanth* (true path), *satnām* (true name) and *satshabad* (true word) – originally derived from Sanskrit – are all important concepts in the belief systems of both communities; (b) the belief in a 'true master' – bearer of knowledge and light – is also common to both; (c) apart from the living masters both grant the status of guide to their respective scriptures: *Ādi Granth* became a *gurū* for the Sikhs and *Pir Pandiyāt-i Javānmardī* became a *pīr* (or *gur*) for Shamsī Guptīs; (d) the practice of *dasvandh* (lit., the tenth part) to be collected from followers to support the *gurū*'s establishment was established by the third Gurū Amardās (d.1574) – a practice that already existed in the tradition of the Shamsī Guptīs; and (e) the practice of distributing a sweet dish (*halwa*) as *parsād* or *sukrīt* to members of the congregation is still observed by Sikhs and Shamsī Guptīs respectively. Did they belong to the same group, only later to develop their own identities? Or were they different groups co-existing at the same time in the same geographical area? Who was influenced by whom? Gurū

<sup>350</sup> Zawahir, "Historical and Religious Debates amongst Indian Ismailis 1840-1920" 132.

<sup>351</sup> This is an oral report from my father, Shamsuddin (d.1990), who used to quote the Imam's wording which Shamsī Guptīs had memorized. According to him Aga Khan III used to visit and take care of the maintenance of the tomb. Sometime around the beginning of the twentieth century he gave the authority to administer the Mausoleum of Shams to an Ithnā 'asharī caretaker independently and resigned from his role of maintaining the tomb. Afterwards he told his followers that '*is me(n) ab tumharey liye kuchch nahi(n) rakha hey*' (lit. now there is nothing left for you in here).

<sup>352</sup> A few of these have been mentioned by Khan as being practiced by Kabīrpanthīs also.

Nānak's religious identity has always been an unresolved issue; indeed, it is interesting to note that an Indian scholar of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Khwaja Nizāmī, believed that Nanak's movement may have had its origin in the missionary activities of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī da'wa.<sup>353</sup> However, in the absence of any study comparing Shamsī Guptīs and Sikhs, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions.

In 1910, Muhammad Ismā'īl – who at that time bore the Hindu name Wazir Chand -- requested that Aga Khan III – Imam of the time for Nizārī Ismā'īlīs and Shamsī Guptīs – change his name. The Imam granted his request with pleasure.<sup>354</sup> After this event, a great number of Shamsī Guptīs followed Muhammad Ismā'īl and accepted the Imam's guidance. They came out of *gupt*, assuming Muslim names and shedding many customary Hindu practices, for example, shaving off their long, braided hair-locks of heads and abandoning Hindu-style attire. To this conversion the Ārya Samāj<sup>355</sup> reacted swiftly and started a movement of *shuddhi* against Guptīs: as a result, a small section of the community of Shamsī Guptīs chose not to accept the guidance of the Imam and went back to Hinduism. However, it seems that the vast majority of Shamsī Guptīs who came out from behind the veil of Hinduism persisted in their course, thus preventing a mass re-conversion of Shamsī Guptīs to Hinduism in the Punjab.

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<sup>353</sup> Khawaja Nizami, *Fāṭimī da'wa-yi-Islām* (Delhi, 1338/1919), 29; cf. Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 63.

<sup>354</sup> I myself heard this account from Muhammad Ismail (d.1969) born as Wazir Chand. He was the person who kicked off the campaign of changing names in Punjab and assuming Muslim identity in the open. Wazir Chand was the brother of my paternal grandfather Heera - later Karim Bukhsh. He used to relate the story with much pride that in his youth (probably in his early twenties) when he heard that the Imam (Aga Khan III) had shown interest in the matter of Guptīs and would like to see them as a part of Muslim ummah. He responded to that wish of the Imam by visiting all alone to Bombay from Multan without asking his father or anyone else. Upon reaching Bombay, he approached the Imam and requested that his name be changed. The Imam received this young man with much pleasure and granted his wish and named him Muhammad Ismail. On his return from Bombay he was a changed man, his attire was different, his name was different and his ideas were different. However, his act was not appreciated by his elders and his move was seen as 'hasty' and 'not well-thought.' His family and relatives showed concern over as how they would face the Hindu community with whom they had their business and social ties. However, many young people saw Muhammad Ismail as a model and followed him to get out of the Guptī practice. Thus, a revolution was set in Multan which soon took over other parts of Punjab also. Wherever Guptīs were living, they, with the help of local Ismā'īlī preachers, got their names changed and came out of the garb of Gupt.

<sup>355</sup> The two letters in *Neklank Darpan* show that a split occurred in the community (see Karam Hussain, *Neklank Darpan*, 129).



A close examination shows that the belief system of the Shamsī Guptīs was akin to that of the Sikhs: belief in the oneness of God and the importance of the *gurū*, but with one difference: Shamsī Guptīs refused to reject Hinduism. In fact, for them, Hinduism was the true religion (*satpanth*) after being completed by the tenth awaited avatar of Muslim origin. This type of understanding, seemingly unique, resembles the thought of Lāl Dās. Nonetheless, it would be difficult to prove that Lāl Dās was a Shamsī Guptī. The compositions and conversations of Lāl Dās with Dārā show that, even though he did not reject the Hindu worship of idols, he never made it clear whether he was a believer in the tenth awaited avatar.<sup>356</sup>

The history of the Shamsī Guptīs moreover is itself deeply shrouded in mystery. Very little is known about this group of people who claim to have lived under a veil of *gupt* for more than five hundred years. The only available sources are the traditional accounts of the Ismā‘īlī Pirs – a handful of composers who were active in *da‘wa* activities but who were not Shamsī Guptīs themselves. A few verses of the poetry of Lāl Dās closely resemble the style of *Buj Nirinjan*, a traditional long Ginan of Shamsī Guptī (or Khoja Ismā‘īlī) literature. Unfortunately, this is not enough to help us ascertain the identity of Lāl Dās, as the situation in 17<sup>th</sup> century India seems to have been, at least to our present-day eyes, extremely fluid. Popular literature in the vernaculars was readily accepted by the masses, erasing the lines of demarcation. In light of this complex time, it becomes more difficult to reconstruct the identity of a person like Lāl Dās, who may very well have borne more than one.

## 5. WHO WAS LĀL DĀS?

According to Dārā, Lāl Dās was a perfect gnostic and a *walī* who had reached a level that no other Hindu had attained. For the author of *Dabistān*, Lāl Dās followed a way of life very

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<sup>356</sup> Dominique Sila Khan in her work refers to Lāl Dās as a Meo Saint who lived during the period 1540-1648 C.E. (this makes him of 108 years age!) and “worshipped with a dual Hindu-Muslim identity; his followers are referred to as Lal Dasis” (see Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 159). She also once describes “Laldasis” as one of the many groups under whom “Ismā‘īlīs concealed themselves.” As for Lāl Dās, it seems that “Meo Saint” was a different personality than Lāl Dās as the latter held the dialogue sometime between 1649 and 1653 and most probably survived until after Dara’s execution. An account of Meo Saint is found in *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes* but did not mention his passing away in 1648 A.D. The *Glossary* has based its account on Powlett’s *Gazetteer of Alwar*. It informs us that Lāl Dās was born in 1540 A.D. and that he was active as a miracle-worker during the Mughal period. Moreover, he was equally popular amongst Hindus and Muslims. Lāl Dās was himself a Muslim and was considered as Pir. The sect was made up of Muslims who were open to Hinduism. The devotees of the sect were called *Sadhs* (see Rose, *A Glossary*, 2:24).

close to Hinduism. For Sherali Afsos, the author of *Ārā'ish*, Lāl Dās was a talented *muvahhid* dervish. The consensus therefore seems to be that Lāl Dās was more than an ordinary Hindu. His teachings show that he was a Hindu bhakta – love for the spiritual master was the centrepiece of his philosophy -- while the establishment of his own *math* shows that he was different from the mainstream Vaishnava Hindus, though far more open-minded and inclusive than other bhaktas such as the Kabirpanthis. His thinking also diverged from that of the followers of the then Sikh *gurū* -- though close to the teachings, he did not commit himself to following the Sikh *gurū* of his day, but instead carved his own path.

As for his having any connection with the Guptī Ismā'īlīs, this is particularly hard to determine. Outwardly he resembled them, but living in accordance with Hindu culture proves little about his identity. As was pointed out earlier, the philosophy and rituals of the Sikhs, Hindu bhaktās and Guptī Ismā'īlīs were similar to some extent. In fact, if Nizami's conjecture is right that "Nanak's movement may have had its origin in the missionary activities of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī da'wa" and if Khan's assumption is correct that the beliefs and practices of the Kabirpanthis are similar to those of the Sikhs and Guptī Ismā'īlīs, then there is a possibility that Lāl Dās may well have been a Guptī Ismā'īlī. Khan also claims, though without citing any source, that the Lāldāsīs were one of the many groups among whom "Ismā'īlīs concealed themselves." Finally, the thought of Lāl Dās in *Su'āl va Jawāb* and his poetry resonates with the philosophy of the Ginans of the Guptī Ismā'īlīs.

On the basis of the above conjectures and his thought as expressed in *Su'āl va Jawāb*, it is difficult to confirm or deny whether Lāl Dās was a Guptī Ismā'īlī. At best, it is safe to say that he was perhaps the classic example of a person who represents "liminal traditions and communities."<sup>357</sup> Since the term "liminal" means "threshold" and implies the idea of "transition."<sup>358</sup> Khan suggests that "the threshold need not therefore be viewed only as a temporary space." Rather, she suggests that "it may be regarded as a permanent opening into a world of multiple values."<sup>359</sup> In fact, Lāl Dās was one of those doorways between various communities, even while retaining his own identity.

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<sup>357</sup> Khan, *Crossing the Threshold*, 5.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 5, 6.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 6.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *SU'ĀL VA JAVĀB: THE WORK*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The work referred as *Su'āl va Javāb* is an account of a series of dialogues purported to have taken place between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās. Dārā himself seems to refer to these meetings with Lāl Dās without describing their content or venues, when he writes in his *Samudra Sangama*:

I attained peace along with other altogether perfect Vedic seers, especially in nearness to the true guru, an image of the form itself of spirituality and of knowledge, Baba Lal, who by the Lord, has attained the utmost of askesis, of knowledge, of the fruit of right understanding, and with him I met and conversed frequently..<sup>360</sup>

His comparative works *Samudra Sangama* and *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* may be seen as the fruits of a quest for enlightenment which started with his meetings with Lāl Dās. He says in his introduction to *Samudra Sangama*, adding to the above comment:

(with him I met and convened frequently) I perceived no difference, except in the terminology, regarding the realization of one's own form (*svarūpa*). And so I expressed in the same way. And then I collected numerous fruitful expositions to be known by those who are engaged in the realization of the Real. And here under the name of a 'reunion' of the two oceans of the doctrines of the two upholders of knowledge, I established the *Samudrasangama* (the Meeting of the Oceans).<sup>361</sup>

There are no contemporary or later references to the *Su'āl va Javāb* as in connection with Dārā, apart from manuscripts of the work themselves. In fact, it was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that scholars began to pay attention to the *Su'āl va Javāb*. We noted earlier that this may have been due to the fact that it was assumed not to have been one of Dara's original works. Indeed the diversity of the manuscripts and texts of the work tends to confirm this assumption; i.e., that it was written by others who transcribed or adopted the dialogue between the two interlocuters.

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<sup>360</sup> See Filliozat, Echoes, 203. A slightly different version of translation was found in Dārā, *Samudra* : "I had repeated meetings and discourses with some great Vedic scholars, specially with my great preceptor. *Babalal*, who is intelligence in essence and knowledge incarnate, who has attained the highest perfection in meditation, knowledge, good sense, comprehension of God and peace." See Dārā, *Samudra*, 124.

<sup>361</sup> Here I have used the English translation of the Sanskrit text from Filliozat's work. See Filliozat, Echoes, 203.

## 2. TITLE OF THE WORK:

The format of the work is a dialogue, an exchange of questions and answers between two familiar friends: Lāl Dās and Dārā Shukōh. As such the title *Su'āl va Javāb* seems to be most appropriate. However, there are various other titles ascribed to this work. The first lines of manuscript A seem to include *javāb-i su'āl* as atleast part of the title.<sup>362</sup> Manuscript B has “*Intikhāb-i javāb va su'āl-i Bābā La'l Dās*,”<sup>363</sup> while manuscript C inverts this as “*Su'āl va jawāb-i bādshāhzādah Dārā Shukōh va Bābā Lāl*.”<sup>364</sup> Manuscript D begins with an invocation of Sri Ganesh, followed by the title “*Kūsht Sri Bābā La'l va Shāhzādah Dārā Shukōh dar miyān-i har dū 'azīz maṣkūr shudah*,”<sup>365</sup> while manuscript E has *Sri Krishan Jiv Sihaye* followed by *Kosht Bābā Lāl Jīu* but without mentioning Dārā,<sup>366</sup> and manuscript F *Guftār-i Bābā Lāl Dayāl va Muhammad Dārā Shukōh*.<sup>367</sup> Finally the edited version with the Urdu translation has the title *Rumūz-i taṣavvuf ya 'nī Risālah-i Su'āl va javāb-i Shāhzādah Dārā Shukōh va Bābā Lāl Dās Bayrāgī*.<sup>368</sup>

In the above titles the word *kūsht* demands our special attention. It is used in manuscripts A, D and E. Clément Huart prefers the reading of *kūsht* as *gosha*, i.e., as an abbreviated form of the Persian *gosha gīr* or *gosha nishīn*, representing a title used for Lāl Dās.<sup>369</sup> Another explanation is that it could also be taken as an abbreviated form of the Sanskrit word *gosā'in* (ascetic) -- which is in fact found in the title of the ‘Ivanow manuscript’ cited by Massignon<sup>370</sup> -- used with reference to Lāl Dās. However, as mentioned earlier in the Chapter 1 of this work that *kūsht* to mean ‘question and answer.’ In Panjabi and Sanskrit dictionaries the word *go-shthi* means assembly, company, conversation.<sup>371</sup> This is confirmed by Mohan Singh, the author of *A History of Panjabi Literature*. He provides us a list of the “*goshts*” of Guru Nanak with various personalities including Lāl Dās.<sup>372</sup> Without giving us the literal meaning he explains that one of

<sup>362</sup> See Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 289.

<sup>363</sup> Manuscript B, folio 248 (b)

<sup>364</sup> Manuscript C, folio 169 (a)

<sup>365</sup> Manuscript D, folio 177(a)

<sup>366</sup> Manuscript E, folio 1

<sup>367</sup> Manuscript F, folio 30 (a)

<sup>368</sup> Dara, *Rumūz-i taṣavvuf*, title page.

<sup>369</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 314.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., 333. See his note.

<sup>371</sup> Arthur A Macdonell, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary* (London: Longmans Green and Co; 1893) 87; and Syed Tanvir Bukhari, *Tanvirul-Lughāt* (Lahore: Urdu Bazar, 1998), 752.

<sup>372</sup> The list includes: Makke di Gosht (Conversation at Mecca); Gosht with Ajitta Randhava; Gosht with Janak; Gosht with Nirankar, Gosht with Buddhan, Gosht with Kaljug; Gosht with Baba Lal; Gosht with Qarun; Gosht with

the goals of these writings was to “make him [Guru Nanak] hold imaginary converse with famous preceding, contemporary or succeeding Hindu and Muslim leaders and to bring him out as the victor from those dialectic contests.”<sup>373</sup> Thus the word *kūsht* which is probably *gosht* could be the equivalent of ‘dialogue’ or *makālama* or *Su’āl va javāb*. In the light of above and the title of manuscript E could be translated as: May the Lord Krishan be (our) companion, (here follows) the conversation of Bābā Lāl Jīv.

Apart from the phrase *Su’āl va javāb*, another title, i.e. *Nādir al-Nikāt*, has been used by authors such as Wilson, Qanungo and Rizvi. Wilson was the first to describe this dialogue as *Nādir al-Nikāt*, transcribing as *Nādiru’n-nikāt*; Qanungo, who used Wilson as a source, maintained the same title for the work.<sup>374</sup> Massignon also claimed – though not based on any manuscript source – that the title of the work is *Nādiru’n-nikāt*.<sup>375</sup> Later, Rizvi, also on the authority of Qanungo, referred to the work under the title *Nādiru’n-nikāt*.<sup>376</sup> However, he also used the title *Mukālama* for *Su’āl va Javāb* somehow assuming that the dialogue has been recorded under both titles. He says:

Dara-Shukoh’s questions on Hindu mythology and philosophy and Baba Lal’s replies are now available in only a few copies of the *Mukālama* and *Nādir’un-nikat*.<sup>377</sup>

This has also been confirmed by Sharif Husain Qasemi in his edited work *A Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Translations of Indian Works*. He cites details of the four manuscripts of *Su’āl va Javāb* and six manuscripts of *Nādir’un-nikat*. In his introductory note to the latter work he writes that “Gulab Rai son of Bhavani Das translated the dialogue as *Nādir’un-nikat* and the content is same as the above work [*Su’āl va Javāb*]”.<sup>378</sup> By contrast, Hasrat categorically rejects the assumption that *Nādiru’n-nikāt* and *Su’āl va javāb* were two titles for the same work; he writes:

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Gorakh; Gosht with Wahguru Nam Mathan and two commentaries on Siddh Gosht. See Singh, *A History of Panjabi*, 50. The reference of Baba Lal (Lāl Dās) is very interesting, Guru Nanak passed away in 1539 C.E. – more than a hundred years before the event of *Su’āl va javāb*. There is a need to compare this dialogue with the imaginary dialogue of Lāl Dās with Nanak.

<sup>373</sup> Singh, *A History of Panjabi*, 51.

<sup>374</sup> According to Qanungo: “Afterwards the whole thing [dialogue] was rendered into Persian by Rai Chandarbhan (*munshi*), [it was] published under the title *Nādir-ul-Nukat*.” (See Qanungo, *Dara*, 242-43).

<sup>375</sup> The dialogue is listed in manuscript no.1241 as *Javāb va su’āl-i Dārā Shukōh ba faqīr-i shāhib-i dil dar bayān-i taḥqīq-i ba’dī maṭālib-i ḥaqīqat-i hindī*, (see index of *Majmū’ah-i-rasā’il*, prepared in handwritten form by Sir George Ouseley. It lists thirty-six prominent sections of the manuscript).

<sup>376</sup> Rizvi, *Sufism*, 415.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>378</sup> Qasemi, *Catalogue*, 124.

The two versions of the discourses are altogether different, the *Nādir-un-Nikāt* and the *Mukālama* do not show any relation with each other except in the partial theme of the ascetic life (to which the later makes a passing reference) which both discuss in somewhat different manner. Dr. Ethe says that *Nādir-un-Nikāt* is the work of Dārā Shikūh but he does not quote any authority in favour of his assertion. To me it is neither the dialogue nor a continuation of it. It is the name of *Risāla'i Haq Numā*, as a MS copy of the same bears this title.<sup>379</sup>

Sheo Narain, who wrote much earlier than Hasrat, listed the two titles as separate works in his list of Dārā's writings: *Nādiru'n-nikāt* and *Su'āl va Javāb*. As to the former, he wrote that he was unable to trace it,<sup>380</sup> whereas from the latter he quotes a few extracts.<sup>381</sup>

### 3. A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS:

As mentioned in the introduction to this work, at least eight different texts of the dialogues<sup>382</sup> were consulted for the purposes of the present study -- six manuscripts and two published editions. A table compiled on the basis of the contents of the various manuscripts shows that all the manuscripts share a few common questions, despite differing in length, selection and style of presentation.<sup>383</sup> The number of sets of questions and answers in the manuscripts ranges from 26 to 222, manuscript A having 70, manuscript B 222, manuscript C 26, manuscript D 40, manuscript E 52, and manuscript F 49 sets of questions. Massignon's article "Les entretiens de Lahore" contains his French translation with an edition of manuscript A. The other published version, *Rumūz-i taṣavvuf*, contains 208 questions.<sup>384</sup> *Rumūz* moreover is unique in containing a long paragraph at the end representing in effect an appendix to the text.<sup>385</sup> Two of the manuscripts, A and F, both focus on issues of cosmology, metaphysics, mysticism and Hindu mythology. Two other manuscripts, B and C, with manuscript B the longer, contain

<sup>379</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 246. He also quotes *Hand list of Persian MSS, no. 1449*.

<sup>380</sup> Sheo Narain, "Dara," 25.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 25, 27-28.

<sup>382</sup> There is an additional manuscript in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta (see Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 333). Hasrat also provides us with details on two lithographed versions other than *Rumūz*: one edited by Charanjīlāl and published in Delhi in 1885 and the second published by Munshī Bulāqī Dās in Delhi in 1896 (see Hasrat, *Dārā*, pp. 244-45). This latter version contains both the text and an Urdu translation. Hasrat points to a third version published in Lahore by Malik Chanandīn, but he provides no details, such as the title of the work. Hasrat was probably referring to *Rumūz*, because that is the work which Chanan al-Dīn published in Lahore. Rizvi and Sheo Narain mention that they have further manuscripts in their own personal collections (see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 416; Sheo Narain, "Dara," 28).

<sup>383</sup> See Appendix I for the table.

<sup>384</sup> *Rumūz*, 31.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., 29-31.

respectively a prolonged discussion on *faqīr* and *faqīrī*, and an important discussion on the importance of a spiritual guide. The fifth manuscript, D discusses mainly the issues mentioned in manuscript C. The sixth manuscript, E, contains a set of questions and answers -- with a difference in writing style -- similar to those in manuscript A.

As for the two published texts, as mentioned above, Huart and Massignon's article "Les entretiens de Lahore"<sup>386</sup> is essentially an edition of manuscript A. The other text, entitled *Rumūz-i taṣawwuf ya'nî Risâlah-i Su'âl va jawâb-i Shahzâdah Dârâ* is in many ways similar to manuscript B, supplemented with Urdu translation. However, in at least two chapters *Rumūz* demonstrates significant differences in content and style.

The above analysis shows that the manuscripts not only vary in length, but also range widely in content. Most were written without focusing on a particular topic or placing the dialogues in a historical context. With the exception of B, the manuscripts do not mention where the dialogues took place, nor do they divide the content into *majālis* (sessions). These textual differences in the manuscripts raise the possibility that there were several versions of the dialogue in circulation. Massignon, in his introduction to "Les entretiens de Lahore," also points out the differences in content between the manuscripts. He speculates that there were two recensions: one represented by A and D and the other represented by B and C.<sup>387</sup> However, when a table is drawn up taking B as the reference point and aligning it with the sets of questions and answers of all the other manuscripts and the lithographed text (*Rumūz*), a very different picture emerges. A close examination of the table shows that Massignon was not correct in his observations, because C is unique and certainly very different from B. Out of twenty-six, there are only ten sets of questions and answers in manuscript C that resemble manuscript B. In fact, manuscripts A, E and F are closer to manuscript B than manuscript C. Moreover, in terms of content, manuscript D resembles C more than it does manuscript A. Based on the table, therefore, manuscript B seems to be the most comprehensive of the manuscripts, having the maximum number of sets of questions and answers. Admittedly, it lacks the depth and detail on subjects such as mysticism, Hindu philosophy and theology offered in the other manuscripts, such as manuscript C. Nonetheless, the content of manuscript B covers a wider range of subjects; and includes a bigger selection of the exchanges found in *Rumūz* and manuscript A.

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<sup>386</sup> Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 285-334.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 288.

The textual differences between the available manuscripts can be explained by one or more of the following possibilities: a) there was a single comprehensive text that was tampered with by subsequent copyists; b) there were several secretaries in the entourage of Dārā, who were with him during the discussion and reported differently; and/or c) there were several reports written by secretaries and then copyists later tampered with the reports in circulation. This raises the question: On what basis did later copyists choose to include particular sets of questions and answers? Perhaps this was dictated by their personal interests or by the interest of their patrons. Thus there is a strong possibility that sets of questions were picked according to interest in the subjects addressed, ranging from mysticism<sup>388</sup> to ethics and morals.<sup>389</sup> This may also be the reason why the manuscripts show such little respect for the sequence of the questions or the external aspects of the dialogue, such as where they took place or in which of the *majālis* they were situated. It seems that the message of the content was more important to the copyists than the form. The striking differences between their respective interests and agendas – motivated or dictated by their personalities or by their benefactors – can be seen from the fact that whatever manuscripts A, E and F include, *Rumūz* leaves out to a great extent, and that what *Rumūz* retains, A, E and F leave out completely.

Another difference that is worth mentioning can be seen in *Rumūz*. At the end of the work, and in the course of reporting on the seventh meeting (purportedly the longest in that it continued for three days in an unnamed place), the author or compiler quotes a long paragraph which seems to be a summary of Dārā's dialogue with Lāl Dās, along with the reaction of Lāl Dās. It covers many of the salient points of the first session (*majlis*) of manuscript B, but not in the form of questions and answers. If *Rumūz* is to be believed correct in terms of its reporting on the discussion as it happened in each and every session (*majlis*), then it seems that the dialogues progressed from simple topics such as *faqīr* and *faqīrī* to the more difficult subjects of metaphysics, mysticism and Hindu mythology.

It is noteworthy that none of the manuscripts mentions any of the three aphorisms of Lāl Dās that Dārā himself considered worth mentioning in *Hasanāt*.<sup>390</sup> This absence may be interpreted in two ways: either the dialogue predated his other meetings where he heard these aphorisms or, if these aphorisms featured in the dialogues, then our texts are incomplete.

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<sup>388</sup> For example see manuscript.C; see also below Chapter V.

<sup>389</sup> See manuscript.B and *Rumūz*; see also below Chapter V

<sup>390</sup> See Chapter 3, above.



#### 4. TIMEFRAME OF THE MEETINGS:

Most scholars believe that the series of dialogues between Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās took place in the year 1064 A.H./1653 C.E., in the city of Lahore. This assumption is based on the fact that he spent more time there during the year 1653 C.E. However, the timeline of Dārā's presence in Lahore shows that after becoming governor of Lahore he used to come often to the city. The province of Punjab was added to Dārā's viceroyalty in 1057 A.H./1647 C.E. According to Qanungo he resided at Lahore for a year after his appointment and later appointed his deputies to take care of the affairs of Punjab.<sup>391</sup> However, Lahore received his greatest attention and he used to visit very often. According to the entries in *Shāhjahān Nāma*, Dārā visited Lahore in 1057 A.H./1647 C.E., 1061 A.H./1651 C.E., 1062 A.H./1652 C.E.<sup>392</sup> In 1061 A.H./1651 C.E., Dārā stayed for some time because during this year Shāhjahān visited the city and also because it was the site of the marriage of Dārā's elder son Sulaymān Shukōh. During 1062 A.H./1652 C.E., moreover, Dārā spent at least three months in Lahore to build huge cannons for his first expedition to Kandahar and in 1063 A.H./1653 C.E. Dārā stayed there again after his return from the unsuccessful siege of Qandahar.<sup>393</sup> Wilson assumes that Lāl Dās met Dārā in 1059 A.H./1649 C.E.<sup>394</sup> whereas Qanungo<sup>395</sup> and Hasrat<sup>396</sup> believe that it was only after his Kandahar expedition that Dārā met with Lāl Dās during his stay in Lahore in 1063 A.H./1653 C.E. Qanungo and Hasrat's assumption seems to be more convincing because after his return from Kandahar Dārā had more time and perhaps leisure to meet with Lāl Dās. However, in the absence of any historical evidence it is also difficult to rule out Wilson's assumption. Whatever the case, we know that by 1064 A.H./1654 C.E., Dārā knew Lāl Dās very well as he mentions him in *Hasanāt ul-ʿĀrifīn*, describing him as a "perfect Gnostic."<sup>397</sup> Later, in 1067 A.H./1657 C.E., he wrote *Majma al-Bahrayn*. Its Sanskrit version *Samudrasangama* has also been attributed to him. In both versions – Persian and Sanskrit – Lal Das is explicitly mentioned. It may be confidently concluded that the meeting must have taken place before 1064 A.H./1654 C.E. Nonetheless, it may also be concluded that the time frame of the meetings remains ambiguous and the frequency

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<sup>391</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, p.17.

<sup>392</sup> Mulla Muhammad Saleh Kanbhu, *Shāhjahān Nāmah*, tr. into Urdu by Mumtaz Liaquat (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2007), 418.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 491, 496.

<sup>394</sup> Wilson, *Religions*, 348.

<sup>395</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 242.

<sup>396</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 241.

<sup>397</sup> See Dārā, *Hasanāt*, 53.

of the meetings unknown. The sources and manuscripts do not mention precise dates, nor do they confirm whether the meetings were held continuously during a specific period, or were spread out over Dārā's stay in the city.

## 5. LOCATIONS OF THE MEETINGS:

The sources available to us maintain that, in all, seven dialogues<sup>398</sup> took place in Lahore.<sup>399</sup> However, there is a possibility that there were more than seven *majālis*; Qanungo reports that “this discourse continued for nine days with two majlis (sic) or sittings a day.” This information agrees with Massignon's additional note, which is based on the manuscript found by Ivanow in Calcutta.<sup>400</sup> Dārā and Lāl Dās are said to have met in gardens, on hunting grounds and even in the precincts of a tomb – the latter seemingly the perfect setting for a Sufi to discuss issues of the spiritual world with a Hindu Yogi. According to various sources,<sup>401</sup> the first discourse took place in the garden of Jafar Khan -- probably the one attached to his tomb, known as the *hujra* (courtyard) of Jafar Khan, which Sheo Narain locates as being just east of Garhi Shahi. The second supposedly took place at the Sarāy Anvar Mahal in the Bādshāhī garden,<sup>402</sup> the third and sixth in the vicinity of the tomb of Dhanbā'ī, the fourth at the palace of Āṣif Khān, the fifth on the “hunting ground of Kahnuwan,”<sup>403</sup> and the last and perhaps longest session in an unnamed palace in Lahore.<sup>404</sup>

The account in *Rumūz* itself confirms all these locations, with the exception of the garden of Ja'far Khān, but remains silent as to the site of the first discourse.<sup>405</sup> In all other respects it confirms the research of Hasrat and Sheo Narain. However, Qanungo, for his part, believes that the complete discourse took place in the house of Chandarbhān, situated in Niyula.<sup>406</sup> Massignon

<sup>398</sup> See Qanungo, *Dara*, 242.

<sup>399</sup> See Hasrat, *Dārā*, 242; Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 27; Manuscript B; and *Rumūz*.

<sup>400</sup> Massignon quotes the manuscript as saying: “(The questions and answers continued) for nine days in two *majālis* (sittings).” See Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 334.

<sup>401</sup> Hasrat, *Dārā*, 242; Sheo Narain, “Dara Shikoh,” 27.

<sup>402</sup> Sheo Narain has “Sarai Nau Mahal in the Badshahi Bagh,” (see Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 27).

<sup>403</sup> Sheo Narain is very specific in naming the place as “Kalanaur near Kahnuwan” (see Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 27); however, Hasrat mentions “hunting ground of Gawan” (see Hasrat, *Dārā*, 242). This has also maintained by *Rumūz* which mentions “Shikārgāh-i Gānwān.” In the Punjabi language, *gānwān* means cows. The concept of composite Persian and Punjabi terms is not unthinkable, but since the place Kahnuwan has been identified by Sheo Narain, preference will be given to Kahnuwan. Moreover, Kahunawan could be misread as ganwan, as both are written in the same way.

<sup>404</sup> According to Sheo Narain, it lasted for three days, see Sheo Narain, “Dara,” 27.

<sup>405</sup> See *Rumūz*, 1.

<sup>406</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 242.

also found a reference to the name Niyula in the manuscript sent to him by Ivanow.<sup>407</sup> On the basis of the information found in the Lahore District Gazetteer, Qanungo opines that “Niyula seems to be that quarter of the city of Lahore which is now known as Naulakha.”<sup>408</sup> Furthermore, Naulakha can be identified thanks to Latif’s *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*<sup>409</sup> as the garden of Ali Mardan Khan, which lay to the south of the Shalimar gardens. As such, the location identified by Qanungo may be assumed to be the name of the site for the last discourse missing in other sources.

## 6. COMPILER OR TRANSLATOR – ONE OR MANY?

The dialogues between Dārā and Lāl Dās appear neither to have been recorded by Dārā nor dictated by him to any of his companions. In *Samudra Sangama*, Dārā mentions his meetings with the Hindu Yogi, but refrains from alluding to any of the content of the dialogue.<sup>410</sup> We have also seen that the aphorisms he quotes in *Hasanāt* cannot be found in the dialogues. Nor is it clear why he himself never ascribed any importance to the dialogues. Perhaps he saw them as informal or preliminary exercise. Nonetheless, it seems likely that there were a few companions (probably secretaries) of Dārā present at the meeting who were instructed either to copy down the proceedings in full or take notes to expand on later on.

It appears that the language originally spoken during the dialogues may have been Hindi. The copyist of manuscript D writes at the beginning of the text that “this (text) was translated by an intelligent Brahmin, Chandarbhān, from the Hindi language to Persian.”<sup>411</sup> Sherali Afsos is perhaps the first one to report that Chandarbhān was the reporter of the dialogue. He writes:

It is said that Dara Shikoh had much intercourse with him, and they used to converse greatly on holy matters; moreover, Chandar Bhan, Munshi, of the family of Shah Jahan, has collected the arguments of both parties, and written them in a book in the Persian language, and has arranged them exceedingly well.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 334.

<sup>408</sup> Qanungo, *Dara*, 242.

<sup>409</sup> Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities* (Lahore: New Imperial Press, 1892), 250.

<sup>410</sup> See Dārā, *Samudra*, 124.

<sup>411</sup> See manuscript D, folio 176b, line 2.

<sup>412</sup> Afsos, *Ornament*, 126. First edition of *Ārāish-i Mahfil* was published in 1808 C.E. a year before Afsos passed away. See Imtiaz Ali Taj’s ‘Harf-i Āghāz’ in Mir Sherali Afsos, *Ārāish-i Mahfil* (Lahore: Majlis-i taraqiye adab, 1963), 1.

The majority of scholars, including Hasrat, Massignon, Qanungo and Wilson, also believe that the entire discourse was originally held in Hindi (or Urdu).<sup>413</sup> Qanungo states that Rāī Jadhavdas recorded the actual conversation, while Rāī Chandarbhān, who was a *munshī* (secretary) of Dārā, later translated it from Urdu into Persian.<sup>414</sup> Rizvi, though, suggests that Chandarbhān also acted as an interpreter for Dārā and Lāl Dās.<sup>415</sup> It is certainly possible that the discussions may have taken place in Hindi, or Urdu, as the latter was one of the most widespread vernaculars at the time in India and was used by the elite and the common people alike. However, there is nothing else – except the statement of the copyist of manuscript D – to confirm this assumption. Since the discussion took place in the Punjab and Lāl Dās was himself a Punjabi who knew Arabic and Persian well,<sup>416</sup> it is also possible that the dialogues were held in the local vernacular or in multiple languages and then, either simultaneously or later, translated into Persian. Furthermore, given the unpolished style of the Persian in *Su’āl-o-Jawāb*, it is equally possible that an extempore dialogue in Persian was reported verbatim and the secretaries of Dārā recorded the dialogues much as they unfolded.

Chandarbhān is introduced by Wilson following Sherali Afsos, without mentioning any source, as one of the two *pandits* who were responsible for writing down *Su’āl va Jawāb*, calling him Rai Chand<sup>417</sup> (the other person he mentions is Yadū Dās, perhaps the same referred to earlier as Jadhavdas). The name Chandarbhān literally means “light of the moon” or “part of the moon.” As such, the moon or ‘chand’ is the most important part of the name and it does not come as a surprise that this might have been abbreviated to Chand only. A native of Patiala or Lahore, Chandarbhān was a Hindu Brahmin who acquired his knowledge of Islam from ‘Abd al-Hakīm Sialkotī. In 1066 A.H. (1655/1656 C.E.), the emperor Shāhjahān appointed Chandarbhān secretary in the *Dār al-Inshā’*, bestowing on him the title of Rāī. Chandarbhān later became Mīr Munshī (Head Secretary) to Dārā. He was a prolific writer: some of his works included *Chahār Chaman*, *Munshī’āt-i Brahmin*, *Kārnāma*, *Guldasta*, *Majma’ al-wuzarā’* and a *Dīvān*. Judging by the quality of his language and the content and style of the above works, it is difficult to ascribe

<sup>413</sup> See Hasrat, *Dārā*, 243; Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 288; Qanungo, *Dara*, 242.

<sup>414</sup> See Qanungo, *Dara*, 243.

<sup>415</sup> Rizvi writes: The communication may also have been assisted by Rai Chandarbhān; see Rizvi, *Sufism*, 415.

<sup>416</sup> For example, see the response *kullu hum fanā Allāhu baqā’* in *Dārā*, *Rumūz*, question no. 13.

<sup>417</sup> See Wilson, *Religions*, 348.

the awkward prose of the *Su'āl va Javāb* manuscripts entirely to a prolific writer of Persian like Chandarbhān.<sup>418</sup>

Various titles assigned to the work, as noted above, make it still more unlikely that *Su'āl va Javāb* was reported by one author only. But apart from the multiplicity of the titles, we also encounter the problem of variance in the content of the manuscripts of the work. Rizvi offers this very simple explanation for why a few questions were first omitted and then later included in Chandarbhan's unabridged version of the text:

They [i.e. the dialogues] consisted mainly of very simple questions and answers which were later published in a number of different versions. Some questions on Hindu mythology and mysticism were omitted in early versions and later included in Chandarbhan's unabridged version of the *Nadiru'n-nikat*.<sup>419</sup>

The impression one gets from Rizvi's statement is that a single comprehensive version of the text existed under the title *Nādiral-Nikāt*, which was later altered by the copyists. However, there are various reasons to doubt this assumption. Firstly, there is the confusion over *Nādir al-Nikāt* as the alternative title of *Su'āl va Javāb*. Secondly, in the absence of any manuscript of *Nādir al-Nikāt* or *Su'āl va Javāb* signed by Chandarbhān (though other works written by him as mentioned above are available), it is impossible to ascribe this work to him in any definite sense. Thirdly, given the variance in the titles, content, style and language among the manuscripts of *Su'āl va Javāb*, it is difficult to believe that they all stem from one archetype. Thus there is just too little evidence that Chandarbhān was the sole compiler of the dialogues, which leads us to believe that more than one person may have reported the conversation.

## 7. FORMAT OF THE DIALOGUES:

Discussion in the form of a dialogue is not a new concept. In the context of Indian sacred literature, *Bhagvad Gita* and many parts of *Upanishads* exhibit dialogue format, the former being a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna<sup>420</sup> and the latter a discussion between gurus and seekers of knowledge. For example *Brhadāranyaka Upanishad* contains a beautiful dialogue between

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<sup>418</sup> See Mahfuz, "Introduction" to Dārā's *Majma'*, 24; also see Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980) (hereinafter referred to as Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*), 100.

<sup>419</sup> Rizvi, *Sufism*, 415.

<sup>420</sup> See *The Bhagvad Gita*, translated with introduction and critical essays by Eliot Deutsch (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

Yājñavalkya, philosopher sage, with his wife Maitreyī concerning “the epantheistic Self.”<sup>421</sup> A similar tradition of dialogue between philosophers and thinkers may be found in Greek and Roman tradition, the obvious example being the *Dialogues of Plato*. Plato used the format to relate the philosophical exchanges that took place between Socrates and his followers.<sup>422</sup> Similarly, Cicero adopted the format of debate for his philosophical work *De Natura Deorum* (*On the Nature of the Gods*), which was well known throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>423</sup> Plato’s model was based on the teacher-pupil relationship, whereas Cicero’s model involved learned exchanges among equals.<sup>424</sup>

Muslim tradition likewise provides various examples of dialogues, including debates and discussions. These include recorded philosophical and literary conversations from different periods in Islamic history. The best example of a recorded conversation is perhaps the famous conversations that took place between Abū Bishr Matta and Abū Sa’īd al-Sirafī on the merits of logic and grammar in 320/933.<sup>425</sup> Similarly, we have record of a debate on the topic of prophethood involving Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (d.322/933-34) and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d.313/925),<sup>426</sup> held sometime between 304/916 and 311/924. There are many other well known examples of literary dialogues and debates, such as the epistle of the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity) on ethics which involves a debate between human beings and animals – an allegory in which man’s qualities are compared to those of animals and birds.<sup>427</sup> Another popular example is

<sup>421</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (ed.) *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) (hereinafter referred to as Moore, *Indian Philosophy*), 80-82.

<sup>422</sup> See Plato, *Dialogues of Plato*, tr. by Benjamin Jowett, with a biographical and critical introduction by Josiah Royce (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1898).

<sup>423</sup> See Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, translated with an introduction and notes by P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>424</sup> Michel Despland, “The Impact of the Dialogue as a Literary Form on Western Inquiries into Religion,” a paper presented at the October 27, 2000 Colloquium of the Department of Religion, Concordia University.

<sup>425</sup> D.S. Margoliouth, “The Discussion between Abu Bishr Matta and Abu Said al-Sirafī on the Merits of Logic and Grammar,” in *Islamic Philosophy* v. 83. Collected and reprinted by Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institute of the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 2000), 79-129.

<sup>426</sup> See Abdulaziz Shamsuddin Talbani, “The Debate about Prophecy in *Kitāb a’lām al-nubuwwah*- an analytic study” (M.A. thesis submitted to the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1987).

<sup>427</sup> *Ikhwān-uṣ-Ṣafā*’ translated from Hindustani of Ikram Ali by John Platts (London: W.H. Allen & co., 1875). Also see Lenn Goodman and Richard McGregor, *The Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 22* (Oxford University Press in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2010). The Institute of Ismaili Studies have published in association with the Oxford University a series of eight epistles of *Ikhwān-uṣ-Ṣafā*.’ This bilingual series is a multi-authored Arabic critical

Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār’s Sufi work *Manṭiq aṭ-Ṭayr*<sup>428</sup> – a conference among birds which metaphorically describes the journey of the human soul in quest of the Truth.

The corpus of Islamic wisdom literature for royalty, known as “mirrors for princes,”<sup>429</sup> likewise contains dialogues offering systematic instruction in the art of statecraft. A few examples are: *Qābūs Nāmah*,<sup>430</sup> *Siyāsat Nāmah*,<sup>431</sup> and *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*.<sup>432</sup> As Linda Darling rightly points out, these dialogues were not only an intellectual exercise; they were treated seriously by royalty. She writes:

[The] Islamic literary genre of advice to kings, or “mirror of princes,” as scholars increasingly realize, was not just a self-referential pastime, but reflected values widely held by ruling groups and the general population in the Islamic world – and beyond.<sup>433</sup>

There was yet another form of the “literary genre of advice to kings” which was linked to Sufism. The finest example of this is *Marmūzāt-i Asadī*.<sup>434</sup> The work, written by Najm-i Rāzī (d.654/1256) for ‘Alā’uddīn Shāh Dāwūd b. Bahrāmshāh, was meant to be a compendium of advice to the king; however, it may likewise be seen as “essentially a *ṣūfī* treatise on the idea of Man’s spiritual kingship, as embodied in the royal function of the prophet David.”<sup>435</sup> Since for Rāzī the king is the “representative” or the “shadow” of God (*ẓill Allāh*), he is the *ṣūfī*’s Perfect Man. It is due to this reason that the king should also receive instructions. According to Hermann Landolt, “the king should not only receive moral advice, but a real *ṣūfī* education.”<sup>436</sup> In fact, *Marmūzāt-i Asadī* was composed in a form similar to that of *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, which was written by the same author for Sulṭān ‘Alā’uddīn Kayqubād. For Landolt, Rāzī was “one of the first *ṣūfīs*

edition and annotated English translation of the work. The eight epistles include the titles such as Natural Sciences, Arithmetic and Geometry, Magic, Music, Logic, etc.

<sup>428</sup> Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *The Conference of the Birds*, translated with an introduction by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (New York: Penguin Books, 1984). See also the more recent prose translation by Peter Avery, *The Speech of the Birds* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>429</sup> Sajida Alvi’s introduction to Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani’s *Advice on the Art of Governance - Mau’izah-i Jahangiri of Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani-An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, tr. Sajida Sultana Alvi (New York: SUNY, 1989), 1. For a comprehensive survey also see L. Marlow, “Advice and Advice literature” in *E I*(3).

<sup>430</sup> Written by the Ziyarid Prince Kaykā’ūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs in 1082 CE.

<sup>431</sup> Written by the Saljūq wazīr Nizām al-Mulk in 1092 CE.

<sup>432</sup> Written by al-Ghazālī’s sometime between 1105 and 1111 CE.

<sup>433</sup> Linda T. Darling, “Do justice – do justice, for that is paradise – Middle Eastern Advice for Indian Muslim Rulers,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East* 22, no.1-2 (2002): 3.

<sup>434</sup> See Hermann Landolt’s introduction to Najm-i Rāzī’s *Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Mazmūrat-i Dawūdī*, edited by M.R. Shafī’ī Kadkanī (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, 1973; republished Tehran: Sukhan, 2002), 1-10.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 5.

to treat kings as real disciples,” and in this context he cites other subsequent examples of *ṣūfī*-advice to kings, among them the Kubrawī Sufi Nūr al-Dīn-i Isfarāyānī’s letters written to the Ilkhān Öljāytū.

Apart from manuals and works of systematic advice to kings, the dialogue could also take a literary allegorical form, such as in the case of Nizāmī’s *Iskandar-nāma*. In this work – part of his *Khamṣa*, or *Panḡ ganj* (Five Treasures), five epic poems representing a total of close to 30,000 couplets -- Nizāmī (d.1217 C.E.) writes of the life and thought of Alexander the Great. The poem is divided into two parts: *Sharaf Nāma* and *Ikbāl Nāma*. The first part concerns Alexander’s life, while in the second part, Nizāmī portrays Alexander as:

a sage who transported scholarly tomes from all parts of the known world to be translated for his library and surrounded himself with the greatest minds in the ancient world.<sup>437</sup>

Later, Amīr Khusraw Dihlawī (d.1325 C.E.), a popular Chishti Sufi and the Persian-language poet of the Delhi sultanate, wrote his own *Khamṣa* - similar to Nizāmī’s work. The third part of the latter, the *Ā’ina-i Sikandarī* (Mirror of Alexander),<sup>438</sup> gives a selective account of the life of Alexander, highlighting the fact that although he was a global conqueror, he sought advice from spiritual authorities, including the great sage Plato.<sup>439</sup>

Another example comes from the well-known Naqshbandī Sufi poet and writer, Mulla Nūr-al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d.1492 C.E.), who is known for his various works including *Khīrad Nāma-yi Sikandarī* – the seventh *daftar* of his *Haft Awrang*. This didactic poem contains a discussion between Alexander and certain philosophers on philosophical and moral issues.<sup>440</sup> The model of Alexander is interesting here for two reasons: he represents a popular conqueror and a great king who is also seen in the Persian and Indian traditions as a man of wisdom who sat with Greek and Indian sages to learn from them.<sup>441</sup> To a certain extent, the dialogues between

<sup>437</sup> P. Chelkowski, “Nizami Gandjawi,” *EI* (2) 8:80.

<sup>438</sup> P. Hardy, “Amir Khusraw,” *EI* (2) 1:444.

<sup>439</sup> In one of the paintings found in the collection of the Mughal emperor Akbar, Alexander is depicted as a pupil visiting Plato in his mountain cave, where he is advised on kingship and warned of his own death.

<sup>440</sup> Cl. Huart-[H. Massé], “Djāmī,” *EI* (2), 2 :421-22.

<sup>441</sup> Similar types of dialogues were also written during the Mughal era. These examples represent various geographical regions of the world and are written in the form of dialogues. Examples can



Dārā and Lāl Dās have a similar format, however they may have been recorded, and they are also mystical in nature.

## 8. HINDU-MUSLIM DIALOGUE:

A comprehensive history of Hindu-Muslim dialogue has yet to be written; in the following sections, however, the discussion will focus on the interest of Muslim rulers and scholars in the Hindu faith, their meetings and discussions with Hindu yogis and the encounters of Muslim awliya and Pirs with Hindu scholars and yogis.

### 8.1 Hindu faith and Muslim rulers and scholars

In the Indian context, one can assume that discussions took place between Hindus and Muslims as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Muslims first entered Sind. However, it seems that no conscious effort was made to organize such events. An individual effort was made by a few well-known Muslim scholars who displayed an interest in learning, Abū Rīhān al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050 C.E.) was perhaps the first Muslim scholar to hold regular discussions with Hindu sages and Yogis.<sup>442</sup> Though he did not write down or record any of the discussions himself, his scientific analysis of Indian beliefs bears witness that his personal experience must have been based – at least partially – on encounters with Hindu sages. A native of Khwarizm, al-Bīrūnī accompanied Maḥmūd of Ghazna on some of his military expeditions to India. While in India, al-Bīrūnī acquired knowledge of Hindu religion and culture. He taught the Greek sciences to Indians, and in return, through studying Sanskrit, learned about India. We know moreover from his works, such as *Kitāb taḥqīq mā li'l-Hind min maqūla maqbūla fi'l-'aql aw marḍūla* (The book

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be found in manuscript Oxford, Bodleian 1241=Coll. Ouseley, pers. Add. 69, entitled *Majmū'a-i Rasā'il*, which contains manuscript A of this study and also the following three epistles:

- a. *Risāla qiṣṣa-i Javāb va su'āl Bādshāhzādī Mulk-i-Chīn*: This is a tale in dialogue form about a Chinese princess, written by Mawlānā Ghafūr Ahmad. The questions raised by the princess concern ethics, moral conduct, the temporal nature of this world and life in the hereafter.
- b. *Qiṣṣa-i Shāhzādī-i Rūm-o Shāh 'Abd al-'Alī Dānishmand*: This dialogue features a princess of Rome posing questions to a Muslim thinker, much as in the first epistle mentioned above.
- c. *Nuskha-i Zafarnāma*: According to the scribe, Khwāja Buzurjamihr wrote this epistle at the order of King Nūshīrwān with the help of his friend Aristotle – the well known philosopher. Ironically, the epistle contains a few questions similar to those which Dārā posed to Lāl Dās. For English translation of the *Zafarnamah* see *JASB*, 20: 426.

<sup>442</sup> D.J Boilot, "Al-Bīrūnī," *EI* (2), 1:1217-18.

confirming what pertains to India, whether rational or despicable),<sup>443</sup> popularly known as *Kitāb al-Hind*, and *Tarjamāt kitāb Bātanjalī fi 'l-ḳalāṣ min al-irtibāk* also known as *Kitāb Bātandjal*,<sup>444</sup> that he studied Hinduism with Indian sages and scholars and made efforts to translate Indian works.<sup>445</sup> The understanding he showed towards Hinduism also suggests that he must have worked among the elite as well as among the masses. This led him to conclude, as Friedmann explains:

that the elites of all communities, including the Hindus, worship Allah alone. On the other hand, all uneducated people, without regard to their religious affiliation, need concrete objects of worship and their religious leadership frequently takes their susceptibilities into account.<sup>446</sup>

Either contemporary to or living after al-Bīrūnī, the well-known Fatimid scholar Nāṣir Khusraw (d.1072 or 1073 C.E) was among the earliest to show interest in Hindu customs, stating in his work *Wajh-i Dīn* that he had discussed matters of cremation and *tanāsukh* (transmigration/incarnation) with the Hindu sages.<sup>447</sup> Another well-known Indian scholar, Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, who was mentioned earlier in the context of the dialogue format, advocates views similar to those of al-Bīrūnī. Friedmann describes Amīr Khusraw's understanding of Indian religious beliefs in the following manner:

It is true that Brahmins worship the sun, stones, and some animals; yet they do not consider these similar to God, but only a part of His creation. They worship them only because this is a part of the tradition transmitted to them by their ancestors and they can not dissociate themselves from it.<sup>448</sup>

However, like al-Bīrūnī, Amīr Khusraw makes no mention of discussions with Hindu sages, nor is there any record of any such dialogues. Nonetheless, on the basis of his understanding, it is clear that Amīr Khusraw was interested in Hinduism and must have learned about Hinduism from Hindu sages and the masses to have been so well-informed.

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<sup>443</sup> See Bruce B. Lawrence, 'Bīrūnī, Abū Rayḥān' in *Encyclopedia Iranica*. The work *Kitāb taḥqīq mā li 'l- Hind min maqūla maqbūla fi 'l- 'aql aw mardūla* has been translated by Sachua as *Al-Beruni's India*, 2 vols (London 1888-1910).

<sup>444</sup> Al-Bīrūnī, *Tarjamāt ketāb Bātanjalī fi 'l-ḳalāṣ men al-ertebāk*, ed. H. Ritter, "Al-Bīrūnī's Übersetzung des *Yoga-sūtra* des Patañjali," *Oriens* 9, 1956, pp. 165-200.

<sup>445</sup> D.J. Boliot, "Al-Bīrūnī," *EI* (2); 1 :1217-18.

<sup>446</sup> Friedmann, "Islamic thought," 82.

<sup>447</sup> Nāṣir Khusraw, *Wajh-i Dīn* (Tehran: 1977), 68-69.

<sup>448</sup> Friedmann, "Islamic thought," 82.

Organized inter-religious dialogues did take place, perhaps for the first time in the history of India, during the reign of the great Muslim Mughal emperor Akbar, who ascended the throne in 1556 C.E. and ruled until 1605 C.E. He stands out as an emperor who extended his hand to other religions, seeming to be more inclusive and tolerant of other religions while practicing and providing a new shape to his own. Akbar held religious dialogues with the religious personalities of other religions in the presence of other groups and also behind closed doors. Akbar was brought up in accordance with the liberal outlook of his grandfather Bābur and his father Humāyūn. From early youth, Akbar was in contact with Sufis like Shaykh Mubārak and his sons. He also visited Ajmer to offer his respects to Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, and asked his pregnant wife to stay with the family of the Chishti Sufi Shaykh Salīm al-Dīn as well as requesting the latter's intercession so that he might be blessed with a son. After the birth of a male child he named the new-born prince after Shaykh Salīm and built Fatehpūr Sīkrī to honour the latter. Fatehpūr Sīkrī later became a centre of inter-religious dialogue during his reign.<sup>449</sup> Here, in 1575 C.E., Akbar constructed a special new building known as the *Ibādatkhāna* (place of worship), where he invited scholars and religious leaders to hold religious discussions. Frederick Augustus describes the details of the building mentioned by Keene in the *Calcutta Review*:

On the opposite side of the great enclosure (within the palace of Fethpūr Sīkrī) visitors are shown a strange structure, commonly called the Diwān-i Khās. From the centre of the ground-floor rises a thick column, some ten feet high, on the top of whose capital a broad entablature is joined by four causeways to the four corners of the room: on the sides are four galleries, each communicating with the centre entablature by one of the four causeways. It can scarcely be doubted that this is the Ibādat Khāna of contemporary writers with its four aiwāns (galleries) for the different classes of disputants; in one the Ulamā – the orthodox heads of the established hierarchy, - in another the Shīā teachers, in a third the heterodox thinker, in the fourth the courtiers and soldiers who represented the world. On Thursday nights the Imperial inquirer would take his seat, cross-legged, on a carpet spread in the centre of the massive cobweb, and act as moderator of the discussions.<sup>450</sup>

In the beginning, they were intended to resolve or shed light on issues dividing the different sects of Islam - more specifically, the differences between its Sunnī and Shī'a branches. However,

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<sup>449</sup> See Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 80.

<sup>450</sup> Frederick Augustus, *The Emperor Akbar*, translated by Annette S. Beveridge, vol.1 (Patna: Academia Asiatica, 1973) (hereinafter referred to as Augustus, *The Emperor*), 305-06.

discussions of this sort were more in the nature of debates. The following quote from one such discussion reveals their nature:

The Shiah said: "The godly Ali was a very learned and most excellent man, and never polluted his lips with wine, nor pork, nor anything dressed by the infidels." To which the Sunni replied: "As with you the hand of an infidel is impure, and the Quraish all drank wine and ate pork, the Prophet, who associated with them, ate the same food in the house of his paternal uncles, and so did the lord, the godly Ali." The Shiah had no suitable reply to make to this observation... The Shiah remarked: "When the Prophet had left the garment of mortality, Umar drew his sword, and threatened to kill who so ever would say that the Prophet died..." The Sunni avowed: "Mankind is subject to error." The Shiah pressed further: After the contention when Osman was appointed Khalif, his relations of the family of Umiyah practiced oppression under his authority... Among the Umrās (sic) of his army were Muawiah, the son of Abi Sufian... Said, the son of al-As... Afterwards Abdullah, the son of Aamer and Walid, the son of Akba (sic)...all these trod the road of perverseness and unrighteousness." The Sunni had no convenient reply to make.<sup>451</sup>

Instead of the anticipated fruitful outcome of these discussions, Akbar was faced with the unpleasant reality of discord and the narrow-mindedness of scholars. Badā' ūnī, who is considered one of Akbar's harshest critics, provides us with a graphic picture of the rude behavior of the Muslim scholars in his *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*:

The learned men used to draw the sword of the tongue on the battlefield of mutual contradiction and opposition, and the antagonism of the sects reached such a pitch that they would call one another fools and heretics. The controversies used to pass beyond the differences of Sunni and Shī'a, of Hanafī and Shāfi'ī, of lawyer and divine, and they would attack the very bases of belief.<sup>452</sup>

As a result, Akbar became frustrated with the attitude of the 'ulamā' and lost interest in their discussions. As Badā' ūnī says:

All at once one night the vein of the neck of the ulama of the age swelled up, and a horrible noise and confusion ensued. His Majesty became very angry at their rude behaviour.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> See "On the Dispute of the people of different religions" in *Dabistan-i Mazahib* as translated by Shea and Troyer. (Paris Edition, 50 – 64); See also Makhan Lal Roy Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar* (New Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Publishers, 1985) (hereinafter referred to as Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi*), 129-137.

<sup>452</sup> WM. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, (New York: Columbia University, 1958) (hereinafter referred to as Theodore, *Sources of Indian Tradition*), 1:432.

<sup>453</sup> See Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 81.

However, this led Akbar to broaden the scope of the discussions to include leaders of various other faiths, such as Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and the Zoroastrian tradition. He invited them to the *'Ibādatkhāna*, where discussions were held on interfaith issues. A general and short description of the people involved in the discussion in the *'Ibādatkhāna* is found in Badā'ūnī's work<sup>454</sup>:

Crowds of the learned men from all nations came to court, and were honoured with private conversation. After enquiries and investigations which were their only business and occupation day and night, they would talk about profound points of science and subtleness of revelation, the curiosities of history and wonders of nature, no subjects of which large volumes could give only an abstract summary.

A complete report of these discussions is not available. Nonetheless, according to M.L.Roy Choudhury, "stray references" to the debates are found in *Dabistan-al-Mazahib*.<sup>455</sup> He provides us with some reports of various groups either introducing their faiths or being criticized by the emperor or historians present. Christians formed one of the groups who attended the *'Ibādatkhāna* in 1580 C.E. Akbar sent a letter of invitation to the church at Goa to send "two learned men" to his court. Father Rudolf Aquaviva and Father Monserrate were sent to Fatehpur Sikri, which they reached in February 1580. In the first year of their 3 years' stay (1580-83 C.E), a debate between Christian missionaries and Mullas took place lasting from 18<sup>th</sup> March to 6<sup>th</sup> April. The points of dispute were: the character of the Mi'raj (the Prophet's ascension to heaven); the divinity and dual nature of Christ (human and God at the same time); and the inconsistency of the Qur'ān regarding the death of Christ. There were also a few additional subjects discussed during these meetings, for example: the absurdity of the understanding that Christian had tampered with the text of the Bible; the doctrine of Trinity and Incarnation; and the personal life and views of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>456</sup> Regarding the tone of debate, the priests used very strong language regarding the Prophet Muhammad and for that Akbar had to warn them more than once.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Badā'ūnī, II, 213 cf. Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi*, 145-46.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 114-115. According to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Akbar was deeply impressed by the unity and the simple living of the Jesuit Fathers. He also showed great respect to the paintings of Mary. He appointed priest Monserrate as a tutor to his youngest prince Murad. He asked Abul Fazl to translate the Gospels into Persian. He permitted to construct churches and participated in the inauguration ceremony of the newly built church in Agra. See Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion* (Delhi: Idārah-i Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1989) (hereafter referred to as Nizami, *Akbar*), 201-02.

Another important group was the Hindus. It seems that the emperor himself raised several important issues with Hindu scholars during debates held at the Ibādatkhāna. Sadly, no record of the Hindu response has come down to us. Referring to the *Dabistan*, Roy Choudhuri gives us the emperor's monologue addressed to them:

You first acknowledge one God and then you say that, having descended from his solitude, he assumed a great body; but God is not clothed with a body which belongs to contingency and tangible matter. In like manner, you attribute wives to your Gods. *Vishnu*, who, according to some, represent (sic) the Second person of the Divine Triad and according to others, is acknowledged as the supreme God, is said to have descended from His Station, and become incarnate at different times, in the form of fish, a boar, a tortoise and of men. When he was ignorant he acquired some knowledge by becoming the disciple of one among the sages of India until he was freed from body; in the form of *Krishna*, he was addicted to lust and deceit of which you yourselves tell many stories. You state that in this incarnation, there was little of the wisdom of a supreme God and much of the corporal matter of *Krishna*; thus you compel mankind, who, capable of justice, are superior to all sort of animals, to worship a boar, a tortoise, and you adore the form of a male organ as *Mahadev*, whom many acknowledge to be God, and the female organ as his wife. You seem not to know that irrational cannot be the creator of the rational; that the one uncompounded is incompatible with division, and that plurality of the self-existent one is absurd. Finally by the worship of a mean object, no perfection can accrue to the noble.<sup>458</sup>

As mentioned above, apart from Christians and Hindus, there were two other groups - Zoroastrians and Jains – that were also invited to the 'Ibādatkhāna. Dastur Mahayarji, a renowned Zoroastrian theologian, arrived at the court in 1578-79 C.E. Dastur explained – presumably at the 'Ibādatkhāna - the peculiar terms used in the religious books, ordinances and rites and ceremonies of the Zoroastrian religion. He also elaborated on the worship of the sun and fire.<sup>459</sup> The emperor invited the Jain guru Hiravijaya during the last period of activity at the 'Ibādatkhāna. The Guru arrived at 'Ibādatkhāna in 1582 C.E. after covering the distance on foot from Ahmadabad. The emperor had a long conversation with him on Jain philosophy, specifically about the concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence).<sup>460</sup> Hiravijaya was honoured with the title *Jagat Guru* or world-teacher. Along with Hinduism and Jainism, two other eastern religions had become widespread in India by this time: Sikhism and Buddhism. However, neither of them were featured in the discussions at the 'Ibādatkhāna. It is not clear why Akbar did not invite their

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<sup>458</sup> Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi*, 89.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 97.

representatives; perhaps his relationship with the former group was inconsistent, while the latter group may have been less active in India during his reign. At any rate, it seems that sometime during 1582-83 C.E. the discussions of the 'Ibādatkhāna were brought to a close.<sup>461</sup>

Apart from organised inter-religious dialogue, Akbar also held discussions with scholars and priests of various religions on a one-on-one basis in other locations. For example, during his first visit to the emperor's court, the Christian priest Monserrate accompanied Akbar to Lahore, and on the way held a discussion with the emperor regarding Jesus, celibacy in Christianity, the concept of the Last Day of Judgment and the relationship between the Qur'ān and the Gospels.<sup>462</sup> In 1596 C.E, Akbar had the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with Father Xavier. The details of that discussion - which took place in Agra - were reported by Edward Terry, who was chaplain to Thomas Row - the ambassador of England to the Mughal court. The topics under discussion were similar to those of the first debate at the 'Ibādatkhāna, for example: the duality of Jesus Christ; whether the Gospels were corrupted; whether Christ was sent to save sinful people; that the miracles of Prophet Muhammad were nothing in comparison to the miracles of Jesus Christ; and a few different topics absent from earlier debates such as the issue of original sin and the proposition that "Christ has purchased Heaven for all that believe in him and Hell is prepared for all others that do not rely on him."<sup>463</sup> Akbar also spent time with Hindu theologians and learned men to learn about Hinduism. Badā'ūnī complains:

And Samanas [Hindus or Buddhist ascetics] and Brahmins (who gained the advantage over everyone in attaining private interviews with His Majesty...) brought forward proofs, based on reason and traditional testimony, of the truth of their own, and the fallacy of our religion... Some time before this a Brahman named Purukhotam, who had written a commentary on the book entitled Growth of Wisdom (Khirad-afza), had had private interviews with him, and he had asked him to invent specific Sanskrit names for all things in existence. And at one time a Brahman named Debi, who was one of the interpreters of Mahabhartā,... instructed His Majesty in the secrets and legends of Hinduism.<sup>464</sup>

Frederick Augustus provides some interesting details of the emperor's discussion with Debi:

Debi used to be pulled up the wall on a *chārpai* to the balcony in which the emperor slept; possibly because he did not wish to pollute himself by the immediate presence of an unbeliever or because there might chance to be ladies in the balcony. Hanging thus

<sup>461</sup> Choudhury produces a picture which depicts Rudolf Aquaviva and Jain Guru taking part in religious discussions. Smith believes that discussion came to close in 1582 however, according to Choudhury, discussion was carried on till sometime between 1582-83 C.E. as Rudolf left Agra in 1583 C.E and Jain guru arrived in 1582 C.E. in Agra.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>463</sup> Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, (London: J. Wilkie, 1777), 421.

<sup>464</sup> Theodore, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 1:433.

between heaven and earth the brahman responded to the inquiries of the philosophising Padshah and imbued his theory of existence with the imposing doctrines of the Upanishads.<sup>465</sup>

As with Christians and Hindus, the emperor also appreciated one-on-one discussions with the Jains. In 1590, after Jagat Guru Hiravijaya left for Gujarat, the emperor met with Siddhichandra at Lahore and honoured him with a title giving him charge of the holy places of the Jains in the empire. The emperor also had some individual contact with Sikh gurus. Laurence Binyon mentions that Hindu Brahmans used to complain about the Sikhs, and so Akbar was eager to hold a debate between these two religions, which did not however materialize. Nonetheless, he had much respect for the guru Arjun. According to Binyon<sup>466</sup>:

The Sikh Guru Arjun was accused of treating with contempt both Muslim prophets and Hindu gods. Akbar however found in his writings nothing but love and devotion to God: they were, he said, 'worthy of reverence.'

Unfortunately, we do not have complete records of any of the meetings of the emperor with representatives of other faiths. All that is known for certain is that discussion in Ibadatkhana gradually slowed down and finally stopped. Based on the above accounts, there appear to have been a number of reasons for this. First, during the Shī'a - Sunnī debate, Akbar was appalled at the negative attitudes shown by the '*ulamā*', and as a result lost faith in them. Secondly, when he invited various religious leaders and opened his curious mind to learn of their teaching, he observed that the majority of these religious leaders tried to convert even him to their respective religions but failed. Yet while inter-faith discussions did lose momentum, it was one of the many factors that helped Akbar to formulate his thought. In 1579 CE Akbar declared himself a *mujtahid* by promulgating a royal decree. The decree, which later came to be known as the "infallibility decree", was drafted by Shaikh Mubarak and signed by the '*ulamā*', granting the emperor the authority to issue a binding legal decision:

We [*'ulamā*] declare that the king of the Islam, Amir of the faithful, shadow of God in the world, Abul Fath Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Padshah-i ghazi, whose kingdom God perpetuate, is a most just, a most wise and a most God-fearing king. Should therefore, in future, a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance, and His Majesty, in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom, be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and as a political expedient, any of the

<sup>465</sup> See Augustus, *The Emperor*, 313.

<sup>466</sup> Laurence Binyon, *Akbar* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1932), 110.



conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation.<sup>467</sup>

A close study of the decree shows that the emperor took this power from the hands of the *'ulamā* and became politically more powerful and effective. He learnt about other religions and started to respect them. Was this decision a product of the inter-faith dialogue? Probably not. The furious debates of Shī'as and Sunnīs provided him an opportunity to become a religious authority and resolve issues with his own wisdom. It was not a new development for a Muslim emperor to lead his people in both religious and worldly affairs.<sup>468</sup> He had before his eyes the model of Prophet Muhammad and the *rāshidūn* caliphs who guided people in both these domains.<sup>469</sup> After attaining the status of *mujtahid*, Akbar promulgated in 1581 CE the *Dīn-i Ilāhī* by dīroyal decree. According to Bartoli, a formal council was in place before the promulgation of *Dīn-i Ilāhī*.<sup>470</sup> Though Bartoli's claim has been challenged by Roy Choudhury<sup>471</sup> sources do tell us that the discussions at the 'Ibādatkhāna had evolved into an institution of 40 intellectuals.<sup>472</sup> This assembly of 40 wise men was also known as the *chihil tanan* or the forty *abdāl* – the latter term perhaps borrowed from Sufī texts such as Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-Uns*.<sup>473</sup> In Sufi terminology, the term *abdāl* represents *awliyā'* of a particular rank. It is believed that there are 355 or 356 apparent *awliyā'*; they are considered as a special category, second in creation only to the

<sup>467</sup> Augustus, *The Emperor*, 318.

<sup>468</sup> Aziz Ahmad defends decree with the following words:

(It) was issued on the authority of the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet. It was based on the historical principle of Islamic *ijtihād* (individual reasoning) and on *hadīth* defining the position of the 'just ruler.' It described Akbar as the 'Sultān of Islam.' Moreover it laid down that an order of the emperor would be binding on his subjects 'provided it did not go against any verse of the Qur'ān.' In fact the 'infallibility decree' could have been issued with a clear conscience by the most pious of the Muslim caliphs.

See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966) (hereinafter Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*), 170-71.

<sup>469</sup> Emmy Wellesz reports on the authority of Badā'ūnī an event -- which happened before the promulgation of the infallibility decree -- when Akbar decided to read *khutba* (Friday sermon) personally but failed to deliver:

"According to Badaoni, who is revolted at the turn things were taking, the Emperor was so moved that he trembled and stammered and could hardly recite the verses which the Poet Laureate, Abul Fazl's brother Faizi, had written for the occasion. He had to come down from the pulpit and to hand over the duties of leading the prayer to the court preacher." See Emmy Wellesz, *Akbar's Religious Thought Reflected in Mogul Painting* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1952) (hereinafter referred to as Wellesz, *Akbar's Religious Thought*), 14.

<sup>470</sup> Choudhury, *The Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, 177.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> For example see Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhibat II*, 318 cf. Choudhary, *The Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, 82.

<sup>473</sup> Jāmī, 'Abd al-Rahmān, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥadrāt al-Quds*. Ed. With introduction by Mahdī Tawhīdīpūr. (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī Sa'dī, 1336 H. Solar), 577.

Prophets.<sup>474</sup> However, the body of *chihil tanan* was created to decide on questions, as Badā'ūnī mentions, based on reason and not tradition. According to Makhan Lal Roy Chaudhury, this body “was the fitting culmination of the ‘Ibādatkhāna.”<sup>475</sup> Was this the formal council? The Sufi terminology used to name the council suggests strongly that this may have been it. The account of Abul Fazal is couched in Sufi language. He mentions the details of *Din-i Ilahi* in his work’s chapter 77 and entitles it “His Majesty as the Spiritual Guide of the People.”<sup>476</sup> Here Akbar is introduced as a *walī* (spiritual guide); hence the members of the council could be seen as *abdāl*. It is generally, though controversially, held that the discussions in the ‘*Ibādatkhāna* motivated Akbar to create a progressive form of Islam.<sup>477</sup> According to Islamic law, he had the authority as a *mujtahid* to make such changes and there were people around him who were ready to accept him as their religious leader. His *Tawḥīd-i Ilahi* (Divine Monotheism), which later became popular as *Din-i Ilahi*, was, moreover, based on reason.<sup>478</sup> It prohibited sensuality, lust, misappropriation, deceit, slander, oppression, intimidation, pride, killing animals and encouraged the virtue of celibacy. The first eight of the ten commandments are common to world religions in general; however, the last two are specific to Jainism and Catholicism respectively.<sup>479</sup> Emphasis was given to the ten specific virtues – liberality; forbearance from bad actions and repulsion from anger; abstinence; freedom from violent material pursuits; piety; devotion; prudence; gentleness; kindness; attachment to God and purification of the soul by yearning for God. The above ten virtues can moreover be found in the manual of any Sufi *ṭarīqa*.

Akbar’s new movement also lacked a priestly class. The emperor was seen as a perfect man (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*).<sup>480</sup> His disciples greeted each other with *Allāh-ū-Akbar* (Allah is the greatest). The symbols of light, fire and sun were important to the new sect. The ceremony of initiation would take place before the emperor, who would accept a *chela* (disciple in Hindi) by putting a turban on his head. The majority of initiated *chelas* were Muslims. Birbal, or Birbar – a

<sup>474</sup> For detail regarding *abdāl* see Hayat, “Concept,” 96-99.

<sup>475</sup> Choudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi*, 165.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>478</sup> See Badā'ūnī in H. Blochmann’s translation of *Ain-i Akbari* by Abu’l Fazl (Delhi: Neelkamal Printers, 1965) (hereafter referred to as Abu’l Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*), 211; also see Wellesz, *Akbar’s Religious Thought*, 19.

<sup>479</sup> Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*, 171.

<sup>480</sup> For Aziz Ahmad, Akbar learnt from Shaykh Tāj al-dīn about the idea and concept of al-Insān al-Kāmil. Shaykh met with Akbar in 1578 C.E. He was a follower of the teachings of Ibn al-‘Arabī and ‘Abd al-Karīm Jīlī. See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*, 167, 170.

renowned courtier - was the only recorded *chela* who was a Hindu.<sup>481</sup> It is interesting to note that neither Muhammad nor any other prophet or religious personality occupied a special status in the rituals or beliefs of the newly formed sect. Perhaps Badā'ūnī labelled this new movement or sect a new religion due to the reason that it did not have anything to do with Muhammad.<sup>482</sup> There were of course other innovations that were seen as being against Islam, such as the replacement of the Hijra calendar by one dating from Akbar's enthronement; the exchanging of the Islamic names of the months with those of the ancient Parsees; the abolition of Muslim holidays; and the introduction of the burial of people with their heads towards the East instead of towards the Ka'ba.<sup>483</sup> However, it has been pointed out by scholars such as Emmy that labelling *Tawḥīd-i Ilahi* with the term "religion" could be misleading, as it was neither inspired by revelation nor was it based on any systematic theological thought.

Indeed, it remains a subject of debate whether *Dīn-i Ilāhī* should be seen as a religion or a sect or a mystical movement. A few scholars, such as Annemarie Schimmel and M.L. Roy Choudhury have seen *Tawḥīd-i Ilahi* or *Dīn-i Ilāhī* as a spiritual or a mystical movement. For Schimmel, *Dīn-i Ilāhī* was a "mystical movement aiming at the unification of Hindu and Muslim thought." A close examination of the rituals and commandments of *Dīn-i Ilāhī* reveals its mystical nature. For example Akbar was accepted by his disciples as the 'Perfect Man' or Sufi Master; Akbar also himself used to visit the tombs of Sufi masters,<sup>484</sup> while his very close courtiers Abul Fazl, Faizi and Shaykh Mubarak were Sufi-minded. However, due to the exclusion of Muhammad from its teachings or rituals, the *Dīn-i Ilāhī* clearly marked itself out as different from Islamic mysticism, where Muhammad plays a very important role. It is also not clear whether Akbar wanted to create a system of thought particularly in order to unite Hindus

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> Aziz Ahmad in "Akbar: Heretic or Apostate?" writes: "Badā'ūnī reports that in 1578 the name of the Prophet came to be excluded from the Friday sermons." See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*, 170. Similarly, on the authority of Badā'ūnī, Makhan Lal Choudhary informs us that in 1582-1583 Akbar ordered that names of Ahmad, Muhammad, Mustafa should not be used at his court. Choudhary defends Akbar by saying that it was not compulsory because Akbar's full name was Jalaluddin Muhammad and he did not drop Muhammad from his name. However, "he discouraged the association of those sacred names with frail mortal beings." See Choudhury, *The Dīn-i-Ilāhī*, 164.

<sup>483</sup> Wellesz, *Akbar's Religious Thought*, 20-21.

<sup>484</sup> Badā'ūnī gives an interesting account of the visitation:

On the 16<sup>th</sup> Rajab of this year, His Majesty made a pilgrimage to Ajmir. It is now fourteen years that His Majesty has not returned to that place. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān at the distance of five kos from the town, the emperor alighted, and went on foot to the tomb of the saint (Mu'īn ud-Dīn). But sensible people smiled, and said, it was strange that His Majesty should have such a faith in the Khwaja of Ajmir, whilst he rejected the foundation of everything, our prophet, from whose 'skirt' hundreds of thousands of saints of the highest degree had sprung. See Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab ut-tawārīkh* II, 272 cf. Abu'l Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, translated by Blochmann, 197.

and Muslims. Aziz Ahmad demonstrates with various examples that Akbar was not influenced by the Hindu reformers and that “only certain isolated features of Hindu ritual attracted him”<sup>485</sup>

Aziz Ahmad furthermore describes the *Dīn-i Ilāhī* movement as ‘a small heretical sect within Islam,’<sup>486</sup> and in the same chapter shows that Akbar was a visionary who wanted to implement the same reforms in forming his sect that Muslim modernists such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Kamal Atatürk carried out during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively. Like Sir Syed, Akbar took on the position of a rationalist towards the understanding of jinns, Satan and angels, and like Atatürk he discouraged the use of the Arabic language. Another scholar, Emmy Wellesz, describes *Dīn-i Ilāhī* as:

an agglomeration of ordinances and of rites, most of which were rooted in the adoration of the sun as the most adequate symbol of Supreme Being. This strange synthesis of rationalistic and mystical elements was an expression of Akbar’s personal religious thought.<sup>487</sup>

Yet another scholar, Muhammad Aslam, compares *Dīn-i Ilāhī* with the Shia Ithna Ashri and Ismaili sects. For Aslam, the emperor’s role was akin to any Shia Imam’s role in that he became the unquestionable authority and the sole *mujtahid*. Like Shia Imams, his birth was also seen as miraculous, and it was claimed that from his childhood he was a guide to others – a role which remained with him until his death.<sup>488</sup> Whether *Dīn-i Ilāhī* was a direct or indirect outcome of inter-faith dialogue may forever remain a mystery. However, both were connected to each other at least in being remarkable experiments, and both expired with their inventor, leaving their marks on the history.

Abū al-Faḍl<sup>489</sup> (d. 1605 C.E.), a courtier and the most trusted counsellor of Emperor Akbar, was perhaps Akbar’s truest intellectual heir. He joined Akbar’s court along with his brother Fayḍī - later a renowned poet -- and his father Shaykh Mubārak, a practicing Sufī. Abū al-Faḍl, was one of the most accomplished historians of Akbar’s reign, of which he set down an account in his *Akbar Nāma* (the Book of Akbar). According to Hodgson, “Abū’l Fadl was the historian for those who inclined to Sufi metaphysics.” He compares Abū al-Faḍl with well-known historians like Ṭabarī and Ibn Khaldūn. Abū al-Faḍl was a broad-minded scholar who

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<sup>485</sup> See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies*, 176.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>487</sup> Wellesz, Akbar’s Religious Thought, 22.

<sup>488</sup> Muhammad Aslam, *Dīn-i Ilāhī aur oos kā pasmanzar* (Delhi: Jami’ Masjid, 1969), 116-117.

<sup>489</sup> Nurul Hasan, “Abul Fadl,” *EI* (2), 1:117-18.

was little appreciated by the ‘*ulamā*’ of his time.<sup>490</sup> His interest in other religions is also evident from his Persian translation of the Bible and his preface to a translation of *Mahabharata*.<sup>491</sup>

Abū al-Faḍl’s interest in Hinduism shows that he too must have had discussions with Hindu sages. Interestingly, his positive attitude towards Hinduism echoes those of al-Bīrūnī and Amīr Khusraw. Friedmann explains:

Like al-Bīrūnī before him, Abū’l Faḍl asserted that the Hindus “one and all believe in the unity of God” and that the reverence which they pay to images of stone are only “aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering.”<sup>492</sup>

## 8.2. Encounters with Yogis:

Akbar held dialogues with various other Hindu scholars and yogis as well. Abul Fazal mentions the names of Madhu Sarsuti, Madhusudan, Damudar Bhat, Jadrup, Ram Bhadr and Gopinath.<sup>493</sup> There is a popular tradition that Akbar had a long interview with the blind poet Sūrdās and a forty-day long discussion with Dādū.<sup>494</sup> Badā’ūnī adds that the emperor called some of the *jogis* to visit him at night and carried on discussions with them.<sup>495</sup>

Among these names, that of Jādrūp stands out not only because of his one-on-one meetings with Akbar,<sup>496</sup> Alvi and Kinra both refer to the meeting of Jahāngīr, son of Akbar, with a certain Yogi Jādrūp, referencing sources such as Shri Ram Sharma’s *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* and Jahāngīr’s *The Jahāngīrnāma*. The report maintains that Jahāngīr, following his meetings with Jādrūp in Ujjan, expressed the opinion that the Vedānta of the Hindus and the Sufī thought of the Muslims were almost identical.<sup>497</sup> However, Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi adopts a different tone in reporting on the same event. He says:

His (Jahāngīr’s) commitment to Islam can be imagined through the fact that he debated with the learned people of Hinduism and tried to convince them of the falsity of their worship.

<sup>490</sup> Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 3:74.

<sup>491</sup> Nurul Hasan, “Abul Faḍl,” *EI* (2), 1:118.

<sup>492</sup> Friedmann, “Islamic thought,” 83.

<sup>493</sup> Nizami, *Akbar*, 195.

<sup>494</sup> Choudhury, *The Dīn i-Ilāhī*, 85; Aziz Ahmad has erroneous reference. See *Studies*, 179.

<sup>495</sup> Badā’ūnī, *Muntakhib II*, 324 cf. *Ain-i Akbari*, translated by Blochmann, 210.

<sup>496</sup> Nizami, *Akbar*, 195.

<sup>497</sup> Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal emperors*, (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1988) (hereafter referred to as Sharma, *The Religious Policy*) 60-78.

Nonetheless, in his notes, the same author states that the “meeting did not end in animosity. In fact, the emperor went to see a Hindu elder on foot and did not use a mount.”<sup>498</sup> The recent study of Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam – India (1200-1800)*, shows that the Muslim nobility seemingly followed in the footsteps of Jahāngīr and visited him, sought advice from him and gave him respect by performing prostration in front of him.<sup>499</sup> Muni Lal, in his *Shahjahan*, says that the young prince Khurram –later known as Shāhjahān – accompanied his father on a visit to Jādrūp. Later, after becoming king he again visited him and asked him to move to Agra, an offer that Jādrūp declined and on which Shāhjahān did not insist.<sup>500</sup> Unfortunately, we have no details of any of the discussions which may have taken place between these emperors and yogis. But to a certain extent, by meeting Lāl Dās, Dārā was following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Schimmel sees this legacy as a “mystical movement aiming at the unification of Hindu and Muslim thought,” whose culmination was reached in the person of Dārā.<sup>501</sup>

However, whether Dārā was following Akbar in any true sense is questionable. Each belonged to a different time and perhaps had different motives. Akbar was more of a political figure than a scholar. Akbar neither studied nor penned any translations of Hindu works. He did of course encourage translations of Hindu works into Persian and patronized scholars like Abū al-Faḍl and Badā’ūnī to write on Hinduism – the former out of genuine interest, and the latter, apparently, under compulsion.<sup>502</sup> Dārā, in contrast to Akbar, was an author and translator himself and met with Yogis and scholars of Hinduism in the quest for knowledge of the Truth.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Qureshi, Ishtiaq Hussain. *Barr-i Azim Pak-o-Hind ki Millat-i Islamiyah*. (Karachi: Karachi University, 1967), 191.

<sup>499</sup> Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam India-1200-1800* (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2004) (hereinafter referred to as Alam, *The Languages*), 95.

<sup>500</sup> Muni Lal, *Shāhjahān* (New Delhi: Vikas Publication House, 1986), 19-20.

<sup>501</sup> See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 360.

<sup>502</sup> Apparently he hated this job, as he writes in his chronicles of having been forced to translate “the books of infidels.” See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 359.

<sup>503</sup> He writes in his *Samudra Sangama*: Having, first, known thus the Truth of all truths, having determined the true meaning of the doctrine Idealistic Momins, having enjoyed the great favour of God, then only have I at last undertaken this investigation, so that at the end, I may fully ascertain the real views of the Vedic scholars, specially with (my) great preceptor Babalal. See Dārā, *Samudra*, 124.

How can one explain this tradition of dialogues or encounters between nobility and Yogis? Modern scholarship provides some insight into it. Jeffrey John Kripal, in his “Comparative Mystics: Scholars as Gnostic Diplomats,” understands such meetings and conversations as a form of diplomacy. For him this could be called a form of “‘Gnostic track-two diplomacy’ that explores the hermeneutic and counter-cultural resources of opposed traditions.”<sup>504</sup> Kripal explains that he borrowed the term “track-two diplomacy” from Joseph Montville who coined the term to encompass all those “cultural, scientific and personal exchanges between nations that seldom make the news but nevertheless have real effects.” It is “unofficial, non-structured interaction, open-minded, often altruistic, and strategically optimistic.” By adding “Gnostic” to the term, Kripal alludes to “a form of consciousness that participates in both ‘faith’ and ‘reason’ but moves beyond both into a kind of gnosis, even to the point of internalizing imaginatively, uniting other religious traditions with one’s own.”<sup>505</sup>

Maybe the Mughals were involved in “Gnostic track-two diplomacy” along with their more familiar “track-one diplomacy” consisting in conquering new lands, creating ties with other powers, and building new cities, gardens and castles. However, the dialogue between Dārā and Lāl Dās was of a different kind. Even though Dārā was of noble status, his interaction was truly a dialogue between a sufi and a yogi. The intention of the dialogue was very clear in Dārā’s mind: to ascertain the real views of the Vedic scholars.

The dialogue between Dārā and Lāl Dās defies the popular understanding of the sufi-yogi encounter, which has been characterized by various scholars such as Simon Digby, Nile Green, Raziuddin Aquil, and Muzaffar Alam as a set piece in which the Yogi was destined to fail and ultimately convert. Carl Ernst, in his “The Indian Environment and the Question of Conversion,” refers to Simon Digby’s unpublished paper in which the latter mentions how “contests between Sufis and yogis, which were often followed by the conversion of the yogi, often had local

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<sup>504</sup> Jeffrey John Kripal, “Comparative Mystics: Scholars as Gnostic Diplomats,” in Jeffrey M. Perl, ed., *Talking Peace with Gods, Symposium on the Reconciliation of Worldviews, Part 1, Common Knowledge*, 10:3 (Fall 2004).

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

territorial significance as well.”<sup>506</sup> Similarly, Raziuddin Aquil, in speaking of a contest between a sufi and yogi in “Miracles, Authority and Benevolence,” states:

Some of them came to test the paranormal powers of the Sufis and were often simply overawed by their exploits. The shaikh’s superior miraculous ability having been established, the visiting non-Muslim spiritual power-holder would embrace Islam and become disciple to rise to the high status of a *walī* in his own right.<sup>507</sup>

Muzaffar Alam, in his work *The Languages of Political Islam India – 1200-1800*, provides a term for such encounters. He calls them “competitive spirituality.” He explains:

Thus the Sufis too, at times and in their own way, asserted the finality and supremacy of their faith. Their discourses with Hindu ascetics and mendicants seem to have signified a kind of religious disputation in a spirit of competition. Through these discourses they tried to establish how their faith was superior, giving them the power to cleanse souls of all impurity, and thus subjugate both the microcosm and macrocosm.<sup>508</sup>

Nile Green in “Oral Competition Narratives of Muslim and Hindu Saints in the Deccan” relates a similar type of encounter:

...it was that the *sādhū* was living in a temple at Sitara. He was living there. And he had a pupil whose name was Bhūshan, who would go to bring food for him every day. Once he was flying to bring the food. Hazrat Shāh Nūr Hamawī glanced at him, and he fell down. Bump. What happened after the fall? He said, "Why did you bring me down, *yār* (friend)? I have to go to bring my master's food." He [Shāh Nūr] told him, "*Bhāī* (brother), every day you (*tū*) are coming and going. Where are you going?" So he said, "I bring food from Kashi [that is, Varanasi] for my master. Flying in the air, I go to the temple in Kashi and fetch the food (*bhōjan*)." So [Shāh Nūr] said to him, "Bhai, every day you are in service, flying here and there. What's it all about? What does he [the master] do anyway?" So, the pupil became nervous at this conversation. "*Bhāī* my time is running out. My master will get angry. How can I go and get back from there? I have to bring *shīra-pūrī* [a popular dessert]!" So he [Shāh Nūr] said, "Don't worry. You eat the *shīra-pūrī* too!" He said, "Tell me what you want." So he [the pupil] said, "Just get me the *shīra-pūrī* from somewhere." A stream was flowing there, and he [Shāh Nūr] was sitting in the stream. There was a platform in the stream and he was sitting on it. So he

<sup>506</sup> Carl Ernst refers to Simon Digby’s unpublished paper in which Simon mentions about the “contests between Sufis and yogis, which were often followed by the conversion of the yogi, often had local territorial significance as well.” See Carl Ernst, “The Indian Environment and the Question of Conversion,” in *Sufism and Society in India*. Edited by Raziuddin Aquil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 85.

<sup>507</sup> See Anup Taneja ed. *Sufi Cults and the Evolution of Medieval Indian Culture* (New Delhi: Paragon Enterprises, 2003), 128.

<sup>508</sup> Alam, *The Languages*, 158.



[Shāh Nūr] said to the stream, "By God's command, flow with *shīra-pūrī*!" So metal plates of *shīra-pūrī* flowed by, and to this day the name of the stream is *shīra-pūrī*. He himself [the pupil] ate the *shīra-pūrī* and gave some to his master and told him everything. His master was sitting in the temple at Sitara and he told him, "I will not serve you and now I am going there." And he came to Hazrat [Shāh Nūr] and entered his service, and died in his [Shāh Nūr] lifetime and he buried him. He gave him the name 'Abdullah and 'Abdullah means "the slave of God." And so it was.<sup>509</sup>

Azim Nanji and Dominique Sila Khan likewise report similar type of contests in the Ismā'īlī Khoja tradition. Two encounters are identified in the poetic compositions – *ginans* – of Ismā'īlī *dā'īs* and Pirs. The first of these consists in a debate that took place between Janipa Yogi and Pir Satgur Nūr, in which Janipa Yogi was defeated and as a result became a follower of Satgur Nūr. Nanji writes about the competition between Yogis and Ismā'īlī *dā'īs*:

Yogi Janipa then challenged Satgur Nūr by throwing his staff into the sky and defied him to bring it down. The saint commanded his shoe to go skyward and literally beat the staff down. A yoginī then came forward to challenge the saint. She had the power to swallow a snake and then cause it to be ejected. Satgur Nūr commanded the snake to remain in her stomach causing the yoginī to go into convulsions. The miracles so astonished all the yogis that they threw themselves at his feet and presented their earrings to him. In all, the weight of the rings amounted to five maunds. Janipa too, prostrated himself before Satgur Nūr and asked to be forgiven and guided towards the right path.<sup>510</sup>

The other dialogue, between Kāniphā Yogi and Pir Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, is noted in Sila Khan's article "Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabīruddīn and Yogi Kāniphā: Tantara Revisited by the Isma'īlī Preachers." In this dialogue the Yogi Kāniphā is provided guidance by the Pir after initial supernatural acts by both: Kāniphā flying over the city of Uch and Pir Hasan Kabīr al-Dīn bringing him down. The end is however different from typical stories of conversion which involve leaving the previous faith and becoming an ardent disciple of the new one. Here the Yogi continues to remain a Yogi but transforms into a better Yogi who will have knowledge and a true guide to help him to move forward on the true path. Khan translates the *Ginan* composition and provides some understanding of the competition in the following words:

Although he is impressed at first by his new guru's knowledge, Kāniphā still considers himself to be the wiser of the two, and seeks to please the pir by asserting that he will be rewarded for his wisdom and will obtain miraculous powers (*riddhī-siddhī*), liberation (*muktī*) and immortality (*acal pad*). To his surprise child guru [Hasan Kabīruddīn] retorts

<sup>509</sup> Nile Green, "Oral Competition Narratives of Muslim and Hindu Saints in the Deccan" in the *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2004), 221-242.

<sup>510</sup> Nanji, *Nizārī*, 50-51.

that all these achievements are devoid of value... simultaneously emphasizes the necessity of true knowledge and of following a guru who alone can show the true path...in accordance with the imaginary vision of the poets who composed this text, one could say that Kāniphā does not by becoming a member of the Isma‘ili community, cease to be yogin, because the Satpanth is a kind of “super-yoga” that encompasses and complements the traditional values of Tantra.<sup>511</sup>

The plots of the stories are similar: a meeting or confrontation between a Hindu Yogi and a Sufi or Muslim preacher; defeat of the Hindu Yogi; conversion to the faith of Islam. However the details of each encounter are different. The last encounter described, for instance, leads to a different type of conversion, reflecting perhaps the philosophy behind the preaching of Ismā‘īlī Pirs – converts were not asked to leave their previous faith: they were told that Satpanth (true religion, note that Islam is not even explicitly identified as the religion) would complete their faith. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why many Ismā‘īlīs remained faithful to Hinduism outwardly and practiced unknowingly or knowingly Islam inwardly. Indeed, it was not until 1910 that many of them finally became Muslims both outwardly and inwardly.

Finally, and in slight contrast to the discussions held by emperors and scholars with Hindu sages and yogis, there was yet another form of dialogue, imaginary dialogue, which was developed at the popular level. This form can be found in an allegorical work written during Emperor Jahāngīr’s time, the *Hujjat al-Hind* of Ibn ‘Umar Mihrābī, who cast it in the form of a dialogue between an imaginary bird, perhaps a non-Muslim enquirer, and a parrot – a Muslim respondent. The dialogue was written to demonstrate Islam’s superiority over Hinduism.

### **8.3. *The Su’āl va Javāb in the Indian dialogue tradition:***

The work *Su’āl va Javāb* makes it clear that Dārā Shukōh’s goal in his dialogues with Lāl Dās was not to profess the superiority of Islam over Hinduism, but to learn about Hinduism. As such, he adopted a very different approach from those who wished to defeat Hinduism or establish their vision of a true religion. Massignon has rightly pointed out that the spirit of the dialogues is one of learning from an authority and a friend, which differentiates it from a mode of debate or confrontation.<sup>512</sup> As for the Mughal tradition of meetings with Hindu sages and

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<sup>511</sup> Dominique Sila Khan, “Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabiruddīn and jogi Kāniphā: Tantara revisited by the Ismaili Preachers” in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. Gordon White (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001), 289-90.

<sup>512</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 286.

yogis, it could be assumed that Dārā, as crown prince, was aware of his Mughal heritage and a wise enough statesman to perceive that to form a stable dynasty in India, it would be essential to have the support of the Hindu majority.<sup>513</sup> However, in contrast to Akbar -- his great-grandfather -- Dārā was more a scholar than a political figure. By showing his interest in learning Hinduism from an open-minded Hindu yogi, Dārā was perhaps following the scholarly tradition of Nāṣir Khusraw, al-Bīrūnī, Amīr Khusraw and Abū al Faḍl rather than the path of his Mughal forefathers.

Dārā's efforts were driven by a genuine thirst for knowledge. In this pursuit, he set an example that cannot be found in Mughal history before or after him. Thus Dārā, as a Sufi, demonstrated a preference for the Platonic model of dialogue, treating Lāl Dās as his teacher and showing remarkable respect for him. In turn, Lāl Dās also displayed a cordial attitude towards his royal interlocutor. The tone of the dialogues also demonstrates broad-mindedness towards and an appreciation of each other's religion. As much as Dārā saw a gnostic ('*ārīf*') in Lāl Dās, Lāl Dās saw a *faqīr* in Dārā.<sup>514</sup>

In the context of Hindu-Muslim dialogue, the questions that Dārā poses show that his major area of enquiry was mysticism. However, he also raises issues stemming from Hindu philosophy and mythology. In a few instances, Dārā brings in an Islamic perspective to compare a particular aspect of Hinduism with his own faith.<sup>515</sup> At times, Dārā is very persistent in seeking a clear answer from Lāl Dās. The most intriguing exchange is perhaps the one in which Dārā poses questions to the Hindu yogi about the tenets of his own faith – Islam. For example, Dārā asks Lāl Dās about the importance of *kalima* and the truth behind the popular belief that the Prophet Muhammad never had a shadow. It is difficult to perceive any motive other than sincere

<sup>513</sup> See Schimmel's "The Golden Era of Mughals" in Samina Quraeshi's *Lahore* (Singapore: 1988), 73.

<sup>514</sup> Lāl Dās showed no hesitation in meeting with Dārā, which demonstrates that Dārā commanded a certain respect in the circle of mystics. There are examples in which mystics and *awliyā'* were reluctant to associate with kings and nobles. One example can be found in the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals): "Sultan Mahmud Shah set out for the house of Maulana Yusuf (a learned man and fakir of his time): he was mounted on an elephant and escorted by his retainers said to the gatekeeper, 'Tell Maulana Yusuf that Sultan Mahmud Shah, the Ruler, is here.' But when the message was brought to Maulana Yusuf, he said, 'Shut the gate! What business has Sultan Mahmud Shah to come to a fakir's house?' When Sultan Mahmud Shah was told what Maulana Yusuf had said, he returned to the palace. But when night fell, he dismissed his retainers and when he was alone, he set out again for Maulana's house, this time with no one but a boy for escort and carrying his book himself. On arriving at the gate the king said to the gatekeeper, 'Tell Maulana Yusuf that Mahmud the fakir is come (sic).' And the gatekeeper opened the gate, thinking it was only right that one fakir should come to another fakir's house." See John A. Corrigan, Carlos M.N. Eire, Fredrick M. Denny and Martin S. Jaffee, *Readings in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New Jersey: Princeton Hall, 1998), 155.

<sup>515</sup> See Chapter 5 of this work. Also see Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 304, 306-308.

intellectual curiosity behind such questions. According to Massignon, “the questions were asked with sympathy and trust by the prince, who venerated him (the Yogi).”<sup>516</sup> If Massignon was right, then the nature of the above questions show that Lāl Dās was more than a Hindu Yogi to Dārā. However, if Dārā was merely trying to compare the attitude of a Hindu Yogi towards issues which had become very popular in the Sufi milieu, then Lāl Dās can be said to have given the same type of responses that any contemporary Sufi would have.

As for Lāl Dās, we have the remarkable image of him encouraging Dārā in his enquiry and helping him to understand his position as a “prince cum *fakīr*.” Lāl Dās demonstrates patience, wisdom and knowledge. In his responses to Dārā, he goes to the core of each issue and explains it with the help of examples and similes. He also quotes from various works and writings, including the *Rāmāyāna*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, a few verses from Hindi and Persian poetry, various sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and other anecdotes. Even if some of the quotes attributed to him in our manuscripts may be of doubtful authenticity, the picture of Lāl Dās that emerges from these dialogues is one of a Hindu learned in his own faith and reasonably familiar with Islam. The respective attitudes and knowledge of both the participants, Lāl Dās and Dārā, provided the best possible ingredients for a very successful interfaith dialogue.

## 9. POSTERITY AND THE DIALOGUES:

The work *Su’āl va Javāb* is not considered Dārā’s own work and as such it has not been assigned the same importance as his original works have received. Nonetheless, it was copied along with his other writings in manuscripts,<sup>517</sup> and it appears that the *Su’āl va Javāb* was popular among the general milieu. For example, the story of the dialogues was included, though with unnecessary exaggeration, along with other sufi stories in Anand Ghana’s two-volume poetic work, *Maṣnavī-i-Kujkulāh* – a mystical *maṣnavī* written during 1794 C.E. in imitation of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s famous *maṣnavī*.<sup>518</sup> Much later, as we have seen, it was also published by

<sup>516</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 286.

<sup>517</sup> See above in the Chapters 1 and 3 for the details on the various manuscript sources for this study.

<sup>518</sup> Anand’s *Maṣnavī* contains various stories of theosophical and sufic tendency. The first volume consists of seventeen small stories, including stories about Hārūn and ‘Aynul Quzāt, description of Benaras and Ganges, an autobiographical note, and stories about Dārā Shukōh and Lāl Dās – the possessor of Jamāl and Kamāl, Bāyazīd, Ibrāhīm Adham, Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh, Farrukh Shāh, etc. The second volume consists of eight stories, including tales about Ḥaḍrat Zīā’ al-Ḥaq and Farrukh Shāh, Alexander, the darvish Nānak Shāh and the Pādishāh, the old Egyptian and Moses, again Dārā and Lāl Dās (Shāh Lāl darvish-i Ḥaq) and the story of Solomon the wood merchant and the Prophet Solomon (see Ethé, *Catalogue*, 935-36; 1575-79).

Malik Chanan al-Dīn in 1924 in a series of *taṣavvuf* texts under the title *Rumūz-i taṣavvuf*, which shows that it continued to be considered an important continuation to the Sufi tradition almost three centuries after his death.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**THE DIALOGUE:**  
**EDITED TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY**  
**OF MANUSCRIPT “C” OF *SU’ĀL VA JAVĀB***

**5.1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS:**

For the present study, six manuscripts have been consulted. However manuscript C has been chosen for the sake of producing an edited edition, translation and commentary. Examination of the available manuscripts indicates that none of them can be assumed to represent a complete text of *Su’āl va javāb*. Each of the manuscripts contains numerous differences in the text and the tradition of copying manuscripts is not reliable. As a result, either these various manuscripts could be seen as different versions of an original text or represents families of texts, although it is not possible at the present time to say exactly which manuscript represents which family, or to establish a stemma. There perhaps was never a single *ur-text* at all, but only notes or reports that were used by Dārā later for his *Majma’al-bahrayn*.

Massignon-Huart edited manuscript A with the help of a few other manuscripts such as B, C and D. The Massignon-Huart edition with French translation is a very useful starting point for research but represents only a portion of the *Su’āl va javāb*. Manuscript B, although including an erroneous version of *Rumūz-i Taṣavvūf*, contains more sayings than any other manuscript even though B presents itself only as a ‘selection of dialogues.’ Moreover, the arrangement of sayings demonstrates that it is a record of the dialogue from more than one meeting (*majlis*). However, major parts of manuscript B are not supported by the other versions (A, C and D). With their extensive section on ‘*faqr*’ they amplify a very popular theme that could have been taken from (or put in the mouth of) any ‘sage’ and thus it is impossible to assume that every word of manuscript B is authentic, that is (faithfully representing or recording what had been said and heard by both Dārā and Lāl Dās).

Manuscript C is comprised of twenty-five sets of questions and answers. When compared with the other manuscripts, it has a limited selection of sayings, however, at times these sayings are unique in contents but makes sense in context. The style of the discussion is also unique,

represented by two characteristics: it is relatively consistent, and it records answers by Lāl Dās that are often long and packed with similes, anecdotes and at times draws upon verses from poetical compositions – perhaps even from Lāl Dās’s own hand.

The conversation was not a debate or a contest between a Muslim prince and a Hindu Yogi. It was a learning exercise comprised of a few sessions between two personalities who were following different religions. The conversation in manuscript C neither gives reader an impression of agreement nor of a disagreement. In fact, it reveals a student – teacher relationship between Dārā and Lāl Dās. Was there an overlap of theological identities between Dārā and Lāl Dās? It is not clear from the content of manuscript C. One can assume that their backgrounds must have created enough space to have such a conversation – enquirer a Sufi and respondent a Yogi.

From the outset, manuscript C starts with the famous theme of *atmān* and introduces a selection of important issues that likely would arise in such conversation. Most of these issues or questions appear in the other versions, but manuscript C presents them in a fairly logical sequence rather than in scattered bits and pieces. This arrangement may have been created by a copyist but nonetheless allows for a clearer understanding of the significance of this Dialogue, as a meeting of two different minds. Moreover, manuscript C pictures both protagonists in a more colorful way respecting their different milieus. The Muslim prince, perhaps concerned about his own position as a Sufi prince and obviously inclined to learn more about Hindu wisdom of which he already has some knowledge, frequently appears to challenge the sage by pointing to logical contradictions, whereas the latter, far from being irritated by such questioning, shows himself confident though he does not hesitate to interpret his tradition in his own way, sometimes even using a kind of allegorical interpretation (*ta’wīl*). For example, his explanation on the sexual positions in the context of higher status of Human beings and his reflection on the story from the Ramayana both are remarkably unique and peculiar. These peculiarities precisely give the manuscript C an authentic ring.

A majority of the questions and answers deal with the concept of the soul, including questions about the nature of the soul; its departure from and return to the origin (*paramatmān*); and, its role as an independent entity and yet dependent on the body. A few questions touch on the need for a perfect master to help one achieve salvation (return of the soul to its origin). It also deals with important concepts such as the *nūr-i ilāhī* (lit. light of God) and *wasīla* (lit.

mediation). A couple of the questions and answers are about Hinduism – one of them regarding the Hindu mode of worship and the other, which appears at the end of the manuscript, about the Indian epic Ramayana. Moreover, manuscript C contains verses from Hindi and Persian poetry which Lāl Dās quotes in his explanation. Lāl Dās’ apparent knowledge of Islam and Qur’anic Sufi terms (e.g. *naḥs*, *ammāra*) seems to be doubtful and his ‘quotes’ of Persian poems were presumably added later by someone for the sake of beauty. Nonetheless, Lāl Dās seems less ‘Islamized’ or ‘Persianized’ in manuscript C, which often leaves his Hindi/Sanskrit terms such as *wālā*, *chitan* and *jar* un-translated. To a certain extent manuscript C may be considered more authentic from this point of view as well.

As for the Persian of manuscript C, it can hardly be said to be ‘better’ linguistically than that of the other manuscripts. Therefore, a minimum of corrections were required to make the text intelligible and for this purpose, the readings of parallel passages in the other manuscripts (including the Massignon-Huart edited manuscript) proved to be helpful at times, as indicated in the notes. The following edition of the *Su’āl va javāb* from manuscript C, therefore, is not offered as definitive or complete, but; represents a basis for the discussion of the content of this Dialogue.



## 5.2. THE EDITED TEXT OF MANUSCRIPT C

سوال و جواب بادشاهزاده دارا شکوه و بابا لال<sup>519</sup>

## C. 1

سوالِ عزیز آنکه پرم آتما جیو آتما چگونه شده و باز پرم آتما چگونه شود؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چنانچه از آبِ شراب شده هر گاه در زمین ریزند آلائش و خبث و مستی را بر زمین میگذارد آبِ خالص در زیر زمین میروند باز آب است، همان قسم آدم جیو آتما گشته هرگاه آلائش<sup>520</sup> مستی حواسِ خمس<sup>521</sup> را در وجود گذارد بحق پیوندد.

## C. 2

سوالِ عزیز آنکه در آتما و پرم آتما چه تفاوت است؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه هیچ تفاوت نیست.

## C. 3

باز عزیز میگوید: اگر تفاوت نیست پس در ثواب و عذاب چون در آید؟  
کامل گفت که تاثیر قالب است چنانچه گنگ و آبِ گنگ.

## C. 4

باز عزیز میگوید: درین چه تفاوت توان کرد؟

کامل فرمود که تفاوت بسیار است چرا که آبِ گنگ اگر در کوزه بدارند و یک قطره شراب درو افتد حکم شراب دارد و درگنگ اگر صد هزار کوزه شراب اندازند همان گنگ است در این صورت. پرم آتما خالص است و مخلص، و آتما در قید وجود است. اگر خاصیت وجود در وجود گذارد پرم آتما میشود، تا در وجود است آتما است.

<sup>519</sup>Ms Folio 169 (b)

<sup>520</sup>Corrected for آتش following Ms.A.#2, Ms.F#25.

<sup>521</sup>Corrected for خمس

## C. 5

سوالِ عزیز آنکه همه کس میگوید که آزار و ذوقِ وجود می یابد وقتی که آزار میرسد فریاد میکند و آتما از آزار سلامت و آزاد است چطور دانسته شود؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه آتما در<sup>522</sup> وجود آمیخته است بنا بران آزار و ذوق می یابد، و وجود و نقشهای<sup>523</sup> وجود جرّ یعنی بت است<sup>524</sup>. تمام خبرداری و هوشیاری آتما میداند وقتی که صحبتِ فقرایِ کامل خواهد یافت، طفیلِ آن خاصیت وجود در وجود خواهد گذاشت آزار و آسایشِ آنرا مساوی خواهد گشت، پرم خواهد شد. تا در وجود است آتما است. آزار و خوشوقتی همین آتما را میرسد و کردار نیک و بد بسببِ صحبت وجود نصیب میگردد. اگر کسی گوید که آتما اگر<sup>525</sup> خبردار بود چرا در قید وجود آمده است؟ جواب اینست که مردم بخواهشِ خود در خانه بیگانه می آید و مهمان میشود، اختیارِ اونی ماند، هر جا که خاوند خانه بنشانند می نشینند و هر جا که ایستاده می کند می ایستد. اگر بپرسند خاوندِ خانه کدام است؟ خاوند خانه نقشهای وجود، اما خبرداری و هوشیاری بهمین آتما است.

## C. 6

باز عزیز میگوید: خانه هم جرّ و خاوندِ خانه هم جرّ و خبرداری بهمین آتما، پس چرا خبردار نمیشود و خود را در وجود مغلوب گردانیده؟

باز کامل گفت: خانه این در لامکان بود. آنرا گذاشته بخانه دیگران آمده متفرق شده و پریشان گشته، چنانچه شخصی در شهر عظیم رسیده کوچه غلطی نموده حیران میشود<sup>526</sup> و خانه خود نتواند شناخت. هر گاه از کسی پرسد و او نشان دهد، آن زمانِ خانه خود شناخته در آید، اینهم هوشیار است و خبردار است و صاحبِ اختیار. تازمانی که خانه خود شناخته است بخانه دیگران آمده مغلوب گشته و نفسهای وجودِ خود قسمت کرده گرفته عاجز مینماید، چنانچه پادشاه تختِ خود را گذاشته جائِ تنها نشیند، او را هیچکس نمیتواند شناخت که این کدام شخص است، وقتی که بر تختِ خود خواهد نشست همه کس تابع امر خواهد شد. همین طور آتما<sup>527</sup> در قید وجود آمده متفرق شده خود را فراموش<sup>528</sup> ساخته جیو آتما گشته، هرگاه

<sup>522</sup>Ms Folio 170 (a)

<sup>523</sup> Corrected for نفسهای

<sup>524</sup>Added است

<sup>525</sup>Added اگر

<sup>526</sup> Corrected for میشوند

<sup>527</sup> Corrected for آتما

<sup>528</sup>Ms Folio 170 (b)

دستگیری مرشدِ کامل دست خواهد داد، در خود تحقیق کرده خانه خود خواهد رفت، باز پرَم  
آتما است.

دوها: ماری اوپر پهونچ<sup>529</sup> کر اگن اوتری آی

پانچو هیڑی توچڑهون جو ستگر پکڑی<sup>530</sup> بانهه

## C. 7

سوالِ عزیز آنکه الله تعالی از همه پاک است ذره از نور الهی بقید وجود آمده در باز پرس  
محاسبه اعمال نیک و بد گرفتار شده موجب چه بود؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه بادشاهِ بلوایم سلطنت بر مسندِ کامرانی می نشیند، بر عالم و عالمیان حکم  
او جاری می باشد، احدی را قدرت نیست که انحرافِ حکم جها نمطاع تواند نمود، و اگر همان  
بادشاه در شب بسیر شهر جریده برآید عسسِ مصر آنرا دزد کرده میگیرد: با آنکه بگوید من  
بادشاهم اصلاً نمیگذارم و تنبیه می کند. همان قسم ایزد بی همتا پاک است و مبرا است و  
جزوی از نور الهی بخواهش در قید وجود عاجز و گرفتار است. باوجود این تقید اگر به  
سخنِ مرشدِ کامل خود را بشناسد که من جزوی از آن کل ام و مایل خواهشها نشود، باز پرس  
نیست، محض پاک است، والا از طفیلِ صحبتِ وجود ازین همه ناشناسی خود در رحم  
چوراسی شیء به شیء دیگر گرفتار خواهد شد.

## C. 8

سوال آنکه چون قطره نورِ الهی در هر وجود موجود میگویند، آن قطره را چطور تحقیق باید  
کرد؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چنانچه روغن در شیر می باشد. هرگاه دوغ در شیر انداخته شود،<sup>531</sup> همون  
شیر جغیرات [ ؟ ] شد و آنرا کلاننده [ ؟ ] مسکه برآورده باز مسکه را تابِ آتش داده روغن  
از دوغینه<sup>532</sup> برگرفته شود، باز روغن در شیر آمیخته نمیگردد. تمثیلِ دیگر آنکه چنانچه  
آتش در چوب، آتش را کس نمیداند، همه کس چوب میگوید. هرگاه از چوب چوب را تابش

<sup>529</sup>Corrected for پهونچ As the verse is in Hindi, it is written and pronounced as

<sup>530</sup>Corrected for پکڑی

<sup>531</sup>Corrected for انداخت

<sup>532</sup>Corrected for دوغچه

داده برآورده شود، نام چوب هیچکس نمیگوید.<sup>533</sup> همه کس آتش میداند در این صورت. وقتی که سخن مُرشدِ کامل در دل گرفته خود را بشناسد تمام خواهشهایی را در وجود خواهد سوخت، آن جزوی نور الهی از وجود ظاهر خواهد گشت.

بیت: چون وجودِ نفس از تو دور شد

مو بمو در ذکر حق پُر نور شد

## C. 9

سوالِ عزیز آنکه چون ظاهر است که قطره نور الهی در هر وجود موجود است، هر کس که یافته، در وجود خود یافته است. وقتی که آدمی در جهان آمده در دنیا قرار میگیرد و آفریدگار را یاد نمیکند، آن قطره را چطور شناسایی شود که در ذات پاک واصل گردد؟

جوابِ کامل: بجز وسیله در آنجا رسیدن مشکل است اگر کسی خواهد به بادشاه ملاقی شود، غیر از وسیله محال است، چنانچه آینه آهن روشن اندرون خانه افتاده است آنرا زنگار می افتد روشنایی درو نمی تابد. اگر همون آینه را به صیقل ساز<sup>534</sup> سپرد و او صیقل ساخته روشن سازد آینه که<sup>535</sup> دید نمی برد از آن خود بخود نمائش رو میشود. بهمین نمط اگر خود را گذاشته بمرشد کامل سپارد، مرشد بمراقبه صور در لامکان میرساند و واصل میسازد، و اگر قرار بخواید، در صحبت<sup>536</sup> فقراء یابد<sup>537</sup> که قرار دیگر هیچ جا نیست. در آنجا هم وسیله مُرشد است. غیر از مرشد آشنا شدن خیلی مشکل است.

بیت<sup>538</sup>: صاحب نظران کآینه یکدگرند<sup>539</sup>

چون آینه از هستی خود بیخبرند<sup>540</sup>

گر روشنی می طلبی آینه وار<sup>541</sup>

<sup>533</sup> This is followed by a statement of the copyist that the dialogue ends here. However he must have changed his mind as he continues copying the manuscript by indicating the first three words of the next folio after his closing statement. **Ms Folio 171 (a).**

<sup>534</sup> Added ساز

<sup>535</sup> Added که

<sup>536</sup> Corrected

<sup>537</sup> Added یابد

<sup>538</sup> This quatrain is from *Muṣannaḡāt-i Bābā Afḡal al-Dīn Kāshānī* (Kāshī) ed. Mīnavī/Mahdavi, Tehran 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 1366sh./1987, p.766, Rubāʿī # 155. I am indebted to Dr. Hermann Landolt and Mr. Mohammad Reza Jozi for their help in identifying this quatrain.

<sup>539</sup> Corrected for اند یکدگر

<sup>540</sup> Corrected for بیخبرانند

در خود<sup>542</sup> منگر تا همه در تو نگرند<sup>543</sup>

تمثیل دیگر آنکه چنانچه صدف در دریای شور پایان می باشد، وقتی که ابر نیسان می غرد و می بارد، آنزمان صدف بالائی آب آمده دهان وا میکند چون طلبگار آن قطره آب است،<sup>544</sup> در دهان گرفته باز پایان می نشیند و آن قطره آب در خالص می شود. اگر سخن مُرشد کامل در دل گرفته نگاه دارد و همون سخن سخن را میداند،<sup>545</sup> آن سخن در لامکان لاهوت میرساند.

## C. 10

سوال عزیز آنکه قطره نور الهی در پرده وجود چون در آمده است و چه مطلب است؟  
جواب کامل: خواهش رب.

## C. 11

باز عزیز میگوید: حق تعالی بیخواهش است. خواهش چرا کرد؟

کامل میفرماید: بطوریکه ذره آفتاب از راه آب آتش شده بیواسطه در هر چوب در آمده، همانطور روح در پرده وجود داخل شده. وقتی که چوب چوب را مالید از و آتش بر آمده چوبهای دیگر سوخته، روشنائی آتش با زور آفتاب واصل است، چنانچه دریا و موج دریا،... گفتند.<sup>546</sup> دو هستند اما یکی است. و نیز طلا و زیور طلا و والا<sup>547</sup> و گوشواره و کنگن و غیره زیور می نامند، آخر همون طلا است هر گاه از کرم و لطف مُرشد کامل دل و دم و عقل و دانش قرار گرفت، و زیور<sup>548</sup> از میان برخاست، روشنائی روح ظاهر گشت. همان موجود است و از پرده وجود فارغ. اگر به پرسید چه مطلب بود غیر از پیدا کردن موجود است؟ باری تعالی را کسی راه<sup>549</sup> نمیدانست، دانست اگر خود را دانست،<sup>550</sup> در خود هیچ بتحقیق<sup>551</sup> تفاوت نیست و نخواهد بود.

<sup>541</sup>Corrected for میدار

<sup>542</sup>Corrected for کس

<sup>543</sup>Corrected for نگراند

<sup>544</sup>Ms Folio 171 (b)

<sup>545</sup>Omitted و

<sup>546</sup>Corrected for گفتن

<sup>547</sup>Corrected for والا. However, in colloquial Punjabi Wālā is more popularly used than the Bālā. If Lāl Dās was a Gujarati Punjabi then it is more likely that he may have used the later name than the former for the earrings.

<sup>548</sup>Corrected for زر

<sup>549</sup>Corrected for را

<sup>550</sup>Added دانست

<sup>551</sup>Corrected for تحقیق

## C. 12

باز عزیز میگوید که در طلا و زیور تفاوت بسیار است، اول طلا اعلی بود، وقتی که زرگر آنرا زیور ساخت از سیم پیوند کرد. طلا چون زیور<sup>552</sup> گشت، بها کم ارزد، چنانچه الله تعالی ذات پاک است، در وجود آمده از خبث حواس خمسۀ آلوده شد، در رحم چوراسی شیء بشیء دیگر داخل میشود. چه موجب؟

جواب کامل داد که از دولت صحبت وجود<sup>553</sup>، چنانچه آب گنگ در کوزه نیل در آمده آلوده میشود، اگر همون کوزه باز در گنگ بیندازند همون گنگ است. و نیز زیور طلا اگر در بوته انداخته تاب آتش داده گداز نمایند و بضرب پتک طلا را برگ ساخته و نمک مالیده تاب آتش دهند، از سیم سوخته گردد، باز طلا اعلی است، بهای کم نمی ارزد. و اگر خواهش وجود را در وجود خود سوخت و بسخن مُرشد کامل خود را بشناخت، محض پاک است، در رحم چوراسی داخل نمیشود، و اگر خواهش وجود نگذاشت و مایل خواهشها گردید، باز در رحم چوراسی شیء بشیء دیگر مبدل و گرفتار خواهد شد. درین هیچ شک نیست.

## C. 13

سوال عزیز آنکه گفته اند که بموجب نصیب خود میگردد، و نیز میگویند که بدست این کس هیچ نیست، آنچه نصیب است از طرف باری تعالی میشود. اگر<sup>554</sup> نیک و بد از طرف ایزدی است، پس کرده خود چرا دامنگیر میشود؟

جواب کامل آنکه کردن آفریدگار همین بود که وجود آدم که مجموعه دانش است پیدا ساخته، بیشتر تاثیر صحبت دست میدهد و اختیار خود دارد. چنانچه عنکبوت تار خود کشیده در دام خود دست و پا می پیچند،<sup>555</sup> او را باز جدا شدن مشکل میشود. و نیز میمون را در کوزه دهان تنگ نخود انداخته به نزدیک میگذارند، او در آن کوزه دست انداخته نخود در مشت گرفته، از آن کوزه تنگ دهن دست بیرون نمیتواند آورد و مشت را نمیگذارد و تصور مینماید که شخصی دست او را گرفته است، او از نادانستگی خود در خود است. اگر شخصی دست و مشت او را<sup>556</sup> و تار عنکبوت را شکست، خلاص میشود درین صورت. آفریدگار از نیک و بد جدا است، و این کس نتیجه کار خود می یابد. تا زمانی که صحبت مُرشد کامل دست نمیدهد خلاص نخواهد یافت و الا بموجب کردار نیک و بد خود بخود گرفتار خواهد شد.

<sup>552</sup>Added زیور

<sup>553</sup>Ms Folio 172 (a)

<sup>554</sup>Corrected for اکثر

<sup>555</sup>Corrected for پچد

<sup>556</sup>Ms Folio 172 (b)

## C. 14

سوالِ عزیز آنکه طریقه<sup>557</sup> اهل<sup>558</sup> عالم بر خوردن و دیدن و بوئیدن و شنیدن و خواب کردن و جمیع اعضا بکار بردن است. صافی نهادان نیز اگرچه موافق اینجماعت نیستند، اما کم و زیاد بکار می برند. پس در طریقه اهل<sup>559</sup> عالم و صافی نهادان چه فرق توان کرد؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چون کار با دل است، صافی نهادان نگاهبانیِ دل دارند، و اهل<sup>560</sup> عالم دل را از دست داده اند. چنانچه طفل را زن بیگانه اگر در بغل گیرد عیبی نیست، و جوان بیگانه اگر نگاه کند صد عیب دامنگیر او شود. همچنان صافی نهادان مانند طفل میگذارند و اهل عالم طریقه عالم دارند. تمثیل دیگر آنکه چنانچه گل نیلوفر همیشه در آب می باشد هر چند آب بالاتر میشود او نیز بالاتر است، و در آب بوده جدا مینماید و آب او را غرق نمیکند. و نیز زبان چندان روغن میخورد و چرب نمیشود خشک میماند. بدین نمط صافی دِلان در جهان اقامت دارند<sup>561</sup> و اهل<sup>562</sup> عالم غفلت میورزند.<sup>563</sup>

## C. 15

سوالِ عزیز آنکه صافی نهادان در جهان میمانند چیزی خواهش ملاقات کردن صاحبِ دنیا در دِل دارند یا نه؟ اگر<sup>564</sup> دنیا دار رجوع میشوند چه طور دانسته شود؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چنانچه سر راه هندوستان و خراسان مردم صغیر و کبیر و بعضی برسر بار<sup>565</sup> آمد و رفت دارند، و از ماندگی و تشنگی خواهش آب و سایه درخت می کنند، و زیر درخت بی تاب شده از سر بار انداخته آرام میگیرند. درخت را که خواهش بود که مردم آمده در سایه بنشینند. همین طور صافی نهادان در جهان اقامت میورزند و بیخواهش میگذرانند، چون خواهش را در وجود سوخته اند و اصل حق گشته اند، همورا صافی نهادان<sup>566</sup> گویند.

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<sup>557</sup>Omitted و

<sup>558</sup> Added اهل

<sup>559</sup> Added اهل

<sup>560</sup> Added اهل

<sup>561</sup> Corrected for دارد

<sup>562</sup> Added اهل

<sup>563</sup> Corrected for میورزد

<sup>564</sup> Corrected for اکثر

<sup>565</sup>Ms Folio 173 (a)

<sup>566</sup> Corrected for نهاد

## C. 16

سوالِ عزیز آنکه وقتی که اهل<sup>567</sup> عالم را خواب می برد که عالم ملکوت است و در هندی سوئین گویند، صافی نهادان در کدام مقام میمانند و اهل<sup>568</sup> عالم گُجا؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه صافی نهادان در مقامِ جبروت که هندوی آن را سکھوبت گویند اقامت می ورزند، و اهل<sup>569</sup> عالم در مقامِ بیهوشی اند.<sup>570</sup> شخصی که در بیداری هوشیار است در خواب هم همون روزگار است، و آنکه در بیداری غفلت دارند در خواب هم همان می بیند.

## C. 17

باز عزیز میگوید: هرگاه عالم بیهوشی برفت، بعضی خواب که بعد از بیداری یقین می شود. چه توان گفت؟

کامل میفرماید که در خواب سه گُن یعنی ساتک و راجس و تامس باشد، حالی دارند.<sup>571</sup> بزبان فارسی آن را نفس مطمئنه و نفسِ لوامه و نفسِ اماره میگویند.<sup>572</sup> پس هر چه در راجس و تامس<sup>573</sup> بظهور رسد باطل است، و آنچه در ساتک یعنی نفسِ مطمئنه بدید می آید در بیداری ظاهر میشود، هر گاه دل در مقامِ ساتک رفته هر چه در ساتک می بیند یقین می شود.

## C. 18

سوالِ عزیز آنکه چون صافی نهادان در جهان سکونت دارند، و دنیا خانهٔ مکحولی است و البته سفید پارچه را سیاهی می اندازد. آنها در جهان چطور می مانند؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چنانچه ماهی در دریای شور میماند<sup>574</sup> آب آنرا نمی خورد، اگر بخورد وجود او پاره گردد. چون آب شیرین دریاها را دیگر در دریای شور میرسد ماهی آن آب را میخورد، دریای شور دخل در آن آب شیرین نمی تواند کرد. همین طور صافی نهادان در جهان میگذارند.

<sup>567</sup> Added اهل

<sup>568</sup> Added اهل

<sup>569</sup> Added اهل

<sup>570</sup> Corrected for است

<sup>571</sup> Added Ms E #13 حالی دارند

<sup>572</sup> Added میگویند

<sup>573</sup> Added Ms E # 13 پسرچهر راجس و تامس

<sup>574</sup> Ms Folio 173 (b)



## C. 19

سوالِ عزیز آنکه چون صافی نهادان محض برای منافع عالمیان در عالم وارد گشته، و بر همه کس مهربانی دارند. تمام خلق الله خاص و عام عاجز شده و گرفتار را از مهر خود چرا از قید دنیا فارغ نمیسازند که در ذاتِ پاک واصل شوند؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه مهر و محبت صافی نهادان همان قسم است، بر هر طرف که نظر مهربانی برگمارند وجود انسان پاک شود. اما مردم اندرون خود را بخدمت اهل الله سپردن نمیتوانند، و در خواهشهای نفس خود را غرق کرده اند، از این جهت عاجزانند. اگر غرور خود را گذاشته، باطن خود بخدمتِ مرشدِ کامل سپارند و سخن مرشد در دل شان پیوند گیرد، مُرشد آنها را مثلِ خود سازد. چنانچه چراغ و روغن و فتیله هر سه چیز نزدیک<sup>575</sup> بمقدار نه<sup>576</sup> دارد چراغ<sup>577</sup> روشن نمیشود. هر گاه با چراغ چسپند همان<sup>578</sup> زمان<sup>579</sup> روشنائی در و اثر کند و مثلِ چراغ گردند.

## C. 20

سوالِ عزیز آنکه تمام آفرینش از باری تعالی پیدا شده، و صافی نهادان را مرتبه زیاده میدهند. برای چه؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه چنانچه در تمام زمین پائین و بالا آب است، هیچ جا خالی نیست، همچنان همه جا آفریدگار است. اگر کسی را تشنگی رو دهد و آب از زمین خواهد که بنو<sup>580</sup> شد، ممکن نیست و اگر چاه کند آب پیدا سازد تشنگی دور کردن ممکن است. همچنین<sup>581</sup> ایزد تعالی وجود صافی نهادان را ظاهر ساخته و از مردم دیگر آنها را مرتبه زیاده داده. و نیز انبار کنجد صد من یا هزار من اندرون خانه افتاده است، اگر کسی از و روشنائی خواهد، نمیشود. وقتی که کنجد را عطار<sup>582</sup> در جواز کشیده روغن برآرد در چراغ انداخته<sup>583</sup> روشنائی از و هویدا گشت. ازین ممر تفاوت قرار داده اند.

<sup>575</sup>Omitted چراغ روشن

<sup>576</sup> Added نه

<sup>577</sup>Added چراغ

<sup>578</sup>Added ن

<sup>579</sup>Corrected for زنان

<sup>580</sup> Corrected for بو

<sup>581</sup>Ms Folio 174 (a)

<sup>582</sup>Correction for عصار

<sup>583</sup>Correction for انداخت

## C. 21

سوالِ عزیز آنکه بت پرستی در هند چیست و فرموده کیست؟

جوابِ کامل اینکه این معنی را برای استقرارِ دل مقرر کرده اند، شخصی که از معنی آگاه است در صورت از این معنی معذور است. چنانچه دختران ناکتخدا<sup>584</sup> صور بازی میکنند، و کد خدای آنها مینمائند. وقتی که خود کتخدا شوند از آن کار باز مانند. همان قسم کار بت پرستی است، تا که از باطن آگاه نیست در صورت، بصورت وابستگی است. هر گاه از باطن آگاهی یافت از صورت خواهد شتافت.

## C. 22

سوالِ عزیز آنکه بعضی میگویند: پیر من خس است، اعتقاد من بس است.

جوابِ کامل آنکه این معنی را مردم غلط فهمیده اند. اگر پیر بهتر خواهد بود مرید بمراد خواهد رسید. چنانچه عورت اگر با مرد صحبت خواهد داشت اطفال بهم خواهد رسانید،<sup>585</sup> و اگر با خواجه سرا و مخنث الفت خواهد کرد محروم خواهد ماند.<sup>586</sup>

مصرع: او خویشتن گم است کرا رهبری کند.

## C. 23

سوالِ عزیز آنکه آفرینش جهانیان از یک قدرتِ آفریدگار است، هر گاه قدرت یک بود، استهاور و جنگم پیدا کرد، و نیز در جنگم بیهوش و هوشیار واقع<sup>587</sup> گشت، و بعضی دیوتهای پنج سروپ از آن بالاتر، و باز برهما و بشن و مهیش از آن فائق تر پیدا گردید. در این صورت از آفرینش<sup>588</sup> چون فرق افتاد؟

جوابِ کامل آنکه الحق همچنانست که قدرت یکی بود، اما از آن پنج چیز بتفاوتِ درجات خلقت پیدا و هویدا گردیده. یعنی استهاور از زمین پیدا شده تخم آن زمین است که جنبش ندارد، و قائم است بصورت<sup>589</sup> زمین وابستگی دارد. و جنگم از آب پیدا شده تخم او آب است

<sup>584</sup>Correction for ناکتخدا

<sup>585</sup>Added Ms. B#1.10 چنانچه عورت اگر با مرد صحبت خواهد داشت اطفال بهم خواهد رسانید

<sup>586</sup>Added Ms. B#1.10 Omitted خواهد ماند

<sup>587</sup>Correction for واقعه

<sup>588</sup>Ms Folio 174 (b)

<sup>589</sup>Corrected

و آب همیشه جنبش دارد و در گردش است، و آب بر زمین غالب است. در این صورت جنگم بر<sup>590</sup> استهاور غالب میشود

## C. 24

باز عزیز میگوید که در جنگم هم آدم است و هم حیوانات، پس آدم بر حیوانات چون غالب گشت؟

کامل میفرماید که آدم چتن است و حیوانات جرّ. اگر به پرسند که تخم هر دو آب است چون تفاوت شد؟ جواب این فرق به سبب جماع است. یعنی آدم در جماع عورت بیکدیگر مقابل میباشد، حیوانات پیش و پس میشوند. بنا بر مقابل چتن و بهوش گردید و حیوانات بسبب پس و پیش بیهوش گشت. ازین جهت آدم بر حیوانات غالب است، و آدم محتاج دیوتها است آنها از آتش اند و آتش بر آب غالب است، و بر دیوتها اوتار<sup>591</sup> غالب اند که آفرینش آنها از<sup>592</sup> باد است<sup>593</sup> و باد بر آتش غالب است، و باز شبد غالب است. شبد یعنی سخن لامکان قدرت همون است.

## C. 25

سوالِ عزیز آنکه در کتابِ رامائن نوشته اند که چون رامچند فتح لنکا کرد مردمان<sup>594</sup> بسیار از هر دو طرف به قتل رسید، بعد از آن<sup>595</sup> بدرگاه ایزدی استدعای آنها نمود، بقدرت باری تعالی بارش آب حیات گردید، لشکر رامچند بتجدید زندگانی یافتند و مردهای لشکر<sup>596</sup> راون برنخاستند، و تاثیر آب حیات چنانست که بر هر مرده که رسد زنده گردد. چه توان گفت؟

جوابِ کامل که چون هنگامه رزم آراسته شد از همان روز لشکر<sup>597</sup> راون خیال صورت پاک رامچند در دل داشته<sup>598</sup> جنگ میکردند و کشته میشدند، از تصور آن صورت پاک مُکت

<sup>590</sup> A line has been eliminated which was been repeated by copyist

تخم او آب است و آب همین جنبش دارد و در گردش است و آب بر زمین غالب است در این صورت جنگم

<sup>591</sup> اوتار Added

<sup>592</sup> Omitted آب و

<sup>593</sup> Added باد است

<sup>594</sup> Corrected for مردگان

<sup>595</sup> Added from Ms. A دید بسیار از هر دو طرفیهقتلرسیدبعد از آن

<sup>596</sup> Ms Folio 175 (a)

<sup>597</sup> Added from Ms.B #127 راون برنخاستند، و تاثیر آب حیات.... جوابِ کامل که چون هنگامه رزم آراسته شد از همان روز لشکر

شدند، ازینجهته باز زندگی نیافتند، و لشکران رامچند تصور صورت راون در خاطر داشته  
کارزار مینمودند و مُکت نشده بودند، از تاثیر آب حیات باز زنده گشتند.<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> داشته Added from Ms.B #127

<sup>599</sup> The copyist finishes off by completing the line with dots and leaves two third of this and the following folio vacant.

### 5.3. TRANSLATION OF MANUSCRIPT C

#### Questions and Answers Exchanged by Prince Dārā Shukōh and Bābā Lāl

##### C. 1

Q How does the supreme soul become individual soul and then again become the supreme soul?

A The way it (water) becomes (pure) from alcoholic water. Whenever it (alcoholic water) is poured on the earth, all impurities, malicious properties and intoxicants get filtered through the earth and pure water reaches the inner core of the earth, becoming water again. So in the same way, the individual soul of a human being also changes. Whenever the impurities (lit. of intoxication) of the five senses are filtered through (human) existence it (individual soul) joins the Truth.

##### C. 2

Q. What is the difference between the individual soul and the supreme soul?

A. There is no difference.

##### C. 3

Q If there is no difference, then, how do reward and punishment come into being?

A. It is due to the effect of the container. For example: The Ganges and the water of the Ganges.

##### C. 4

Q What difference do you see in that?

A There is a big difference. If the water of the Ganges is kept in a water pot and if a drop of alcohol (wine) enters into it, it (the water) will be considered to be carrying alcohol (wine). However, if one hundred thousand water pots of alcohol are poured into the Ganges, in this case it will still remain the Ganges. (Like the Ganges) the supreme soul is pure and without impurities and the liberator (*mukhalliṣ*); however, the individual soul is

imprisoned in existence. If the specific nature of existence is left behind (or filtered in) existence, it (individual soul) becomes supreme soul. (Nonetheless) as long as it remains in existence, it remains individual soul.

## C. 5

Q Everyone says that the pain and pleasure of existence are felt. One complains when pain is felt, yet the individual soul is pain-proof and is free of it. How then can this be understood?

A The individual soul is mixed up with existence. On this basis it (individual soul) feels pain and pleasure; indeed the body and its images (*naqshhā*) of body is the inert body (*jarr*) i.e. like an idol. The individual soul becomes completely aware and very careful when it has the companionship of a perfect *faqīr*. Due to that (vigilance) the specificity (nature) of body will be filtered in (or left in the) body and (as a result) the pain and pleasure of the body become neutralized (equal) for the individual soul and it will become supreme soul. As long as it (individual soul) resides in body, it remains individual soul and both pain and pleasure continue to reach the individual soul. Good and bad character (lit. acting) also becomes its (individual soul's) share due to its companionship with body. If someone asks: Since individual soul was cautious (aware), why did it get imprisoned in body? The answer is that people (who) come to a stranger's place of their own accord and become guests (they) do not have any choice (free will). Wherever the master of the house appoints for them to sit, there they sit, and wherever he appoints for them to stand, there they stand. Now, if someone asks (in this case) who is the master (of the house), then (I answer) the master of the house is the images (*naqshha*) of the body; however the individual soul is awake and cautious.

## C. 6

Q The house is inert body (*jarr*) and likewise is the master of the house; however, awareness is with the individual soul. How then does the soul not become aware (of them by itself) so as to be overpowered by the existence?

- A The (original) house (of the individual soul) is the *lāmakān* (lit. with no abode). After it leaves *lāmakān* and comes to the house of others, it is distracted (from its origin) and (as a result) becomes perplexed, just like a person who arrives in a big city and finds him/herself in the wrong alley, grows worried and is unable to recognize his/her own home. When he/she asks someone (about the house) and that person gives him/her the sign (or whereabouts of his house), then (only) he/she recognizes his/her own house and enters in, he/she is cautious, aware and having a choice. But, as long as the individual soul does not recognize its own home, it comes to the houses of others and is overpowered and so the nature (*nafs*) of the existence decides for it to be bound and powerless. In a similar way, when a king leaves his throne and sits alone in some isolated place, no one recognizes him as the person that he is, but the moment he sits (once again) on his throne everyone will become obedient to his orders. Similarly, the soul is imprisoned in the existence and is confused and is distracted and forgets about its own self and becomes individual soul (*jīv ātmān*). However, once it receives the patronage of the perfect master, it ascertains the truth and returns to its (original) home to become supreme soul.

Verse: As I ascend higher, the fire starts descending

I will be able to climb this five-step ladder

Only if the true master holds my hand

## C.7

- Q God – the almighty - is perfectly pure. (If, as you say,) a particle from the light of God gets imprisoned in existence to be held (responsible) on the Day of Judgment for good and bad deeds, what is the reason?
- A A king with all the requirements of authority sits on his royal throne. His orders are enforced throughout the world and its people. No one has the strength (power) to deny the orders of the one whose orders are obeyed by the world (*jahān muṭāʿ*). However, if the same king emerges during the night all alone, the guards of the city (police) will arrest him as a thief. Even if he tells them that he is in fact their king but they will not let him go but (instead) admonish him. Similarly, God almighty is pure and is free from

all(*mubarra*) and yet part of the light from God is willingly imprisoned in existence and is powerless and constrained (lit. arrested). Despite this imprisonment, if with the word of the perfect master it (individual soul) realizes regarding itself that it is (lit. I am) a part of the whole (One) and does not get tempted to its own wishes, then there is no interrogation because it is simply pure. Nevertheless, due to the companionship of existence (body) and complete ignorance of its own self, it becomes entangled (arrested) in the wombs of 84 living things (forms of various species of the mineral, vegetative, animal and human kingdoms) – one after the other.

### C. 8

Q. Since it is said that a particle (lit. drop) of the light of God exists in every existence, how can this particle be verified? (or: what is the Truth about that particle?)

A Like oil is present in milk. Whenever curd (yogurt) is added to the milk it becomes curdled and from that butter is produced. After this, when butter is heated, oil is extracted by a large filter (lit. drainer). After that the (extracted) oil is never mixed with milk. In another example: like fire in wood, no one recognizes the (potential of) fire present in the (wooden) torch and everyone knows it as the (wooden) torch. (However,) whenever a torch is lit by the heat of another torch, no one speaks about the torch; (instead) everyone knows about fire in this form. When the word (*sukhan*) of a perfect master is remembered by the heart, (the individual soul) realizes its own self and (as a result) all wishes in existence will be burnt away, (while) that part of the light of God will manifest (itself, free) from existence.

Verse: As you move away from the existence of (your lower) self,

Due to the remembrance of the Truth

Each and every hair (of body) becomes full of light.

### C. 9

Q As it is evident that a spark (lit. drop) of the light of God is present in every body, anyone who finds that (spark) finds in his/her own existence. When a human being comes into this world, he/she gets established in this world and forgets the Creator. How then can



that spark (lit. drop) achieve realization so that it can reach the sublime (lit. pure) essence?

- A Without a medium (intercessor), reaching that point (pure essence) is difficult. If someone wants to meet the king without any intermediary, it is impossible. Suppose a bright metallic mirror fallen into the house, but befallen by rust: brightness will not shine in it. Now, if the same mirror is given to a polisher (*saiqal gar*) and he will polish (*saiqal*) it to make it bright (again), the mirror, which (earlier) did not show any reflection (lit. sight), will automatically start reflecting (lit. showing) the face. In the same manner, if the self is forsaken and is submitted to the (guidance of a) perfect guide then the guide, through the contemplation of the figures (*ṣuwar*), will make it (soul) reach *lāmakān* and attain (salvation). If you need a safe abode (tranquility), then seek the companionship of the dervishes (*fuqarā'*) because tranquility is not present anywhere else. At that level (place) the intermediary is the guide, and without a guide, attaining knowledge is very difficult.

Verse: The people of sight (knowledge) who are mirrors of each other

Like mirrors, they are not aware of their own existence

And if you seek light, like a mirror

Do not look unto yourself, so that everyone looks into you

Another example is that of an oyster which sits at the bottom of the salty river. When spring rain (*naisān*) trickles and falls, at that time the oyster comes to the surface and opens its mouth, as it needs that drop of (rain) water, takes it in its mouth and goes down and sits at the bottom (once again). That drop of water becomes a pure pearl. Similarly, if the word of the perfect guide is guarded by keeping it in the heart and that word is understood as the Word, that word makes (the soul) reach (the highest realms of) *lāmakān* (without abode) and *lāhūt* (revealing the divine nature of itself).

## C. 10

- Q Why has the drop of the divine light come into the 'veil of existence' (at all)? What does this mean?

A (It is due to) the will of the Sustainer.

### C. 11

Q God almighty is without wish; how is it then that He wishes?

A As particles of the sun, having turned into fire, pass through water and enter into every piece of wood without any medium, the soul in the same way enters into the veil of existence. When one piece of wood is rubbed by another piece of wood, fire springs up, burning other pieces of wood and the light of the fire merges into the (light and) strength of the sun. Similarly, the sea and a wave of the sea are said to be two but (in fact) they are one. So too with gold and golden jewelry: earrings and bracelets etc. are called jewelry; however, in the end, they all are gold. Wherever, with the generosity and kindness of the perfect master, heart, spirit, intellect and wisdom become firm, and the jewelry disappears, the light of soul manifests (itself). It exists everywhere but is free from the veil of existence. If it is asked: What does this mean: Is there any other purpose than creation of the existent? Nobody knows the way to Mighty Creator except he who knows himself; so that in reality there is no difference (in the self and God) and nor will there be.

### C. 12

Q After that the emperor (Prince) said: There is a great difference between gold and jewelry. In the beginning, gold is pure until the time a goldsmith makes it into jewelry by adding silver to it. When gold becomes (jewelry) it loses its value. In the same way, Allah almighty is pure. (However) it (soul) descends into the existence and due to the impurities of five senses it then becomes polluted and enters into the 84 wombs of various creatures. What is the reason for this?

A It is because of the mighty companionship of existence, much in the same way as water from the Ganges becomes impure when it is put in a blue indigo bag. However, if the water from the Ganges is poured from the same bag back into the Ganges, it remains the Ganges. Moreover, when jewelry is put in a melting pot and with the heat of a fire brought to it, it is melted; with the beating of a hammer, it becomes a thin film; and when

salt is rubbed into it and the heat of fire is applied, that burns silver away, leaving pure gold behind which does not have any less value (than pure gold). If the wish (or want) of existence is burnt in the existence (body) and with the word of a perfect guide one recognizes his/her own self, (then) it is nothing but pure, and does not enter into the 84 wombs. However, if the wish (or want) of the existence is not abandoned and (the soul) remains inclined towards the wishes and desires, then it moves through 84 wombs of various creatures and becomes entangled (in that situation) due to his/her own wishing, and there is no doubt about it.

### C. 13

**Q** They say that things pass in accordance with destiny (one's own lot) and they also say that nothing lies in one's own hands. Destiny is decreed by the mighty Creator. If good and bad are from the Almighty, why then is one considered responsible for his/her own performance?

**A** The act of the Creator was that He created Adam as a compendium of wisdom. More is the effect of companionship and the power to choose. For example, a spider makes its own web but catches its own feet and hands, which it is difficult to disentangle later. Also (to think of another example), a monkey by whose side is placed a pot that has a narrow opening and in which beans have been thrown. The monkey will put his hand inside the pot and grab beans in his fist but cannot bring his hand out of the pot due to the narrow opening. It (the monkey) will not leave its handful and imagines that a person has caused his hand to get stuck; this is due to his own foolishness. If a person (who is stuck like monkey and spider) opens its fist and breaks the spider's web, achieves liberation. The Creator is far beyond good and bad and for this (reason) every person has to face the results of his/her own actions. And until the time he/she gives him/herself over to the companionship of a perfect master he/she will not achieve liberation. Otherwise (i.e. without the master), according to his/her own good or bad deeds he/she will keep himself/herself entrapped.

**C. 14**

- Q** The way of the world is to eat, to see, to talk, to listen and to sleep and use all (one's) limbs. The people of purity also –although they are not like the other group – more or less use those (senses and limbs). What then is the difference between people of the world and the people of purity?
- A** What matters is the heart, the people of purity guard their hearts while people of the world give their hearts away. For example, when a child is embraced by an unfamiliar woman it is not (considered) a vice. However, if she looks at a young man, a hundred vices will be attributed to her. Similarly, the people of purity live as child does. However, people of the world follow the ways of the world. Another example is that of the flower of the lotus, which always stays in water. Whenever the water (level) goes higher, it (the lotus) maintains a level higher (than water); however it will not leave the water and the water will not drown it. Moreover (another example is) how the tongues of a few (people) taste oil and (yet) do not become greasy and stay dry. In the same way, the people of purity simply stay in the world while the people of the world remain occupied by negligence or unconsciousness.

**C. 15**

- Q** Since people of purity are in the world, do they have a wish in their hearts to meet the persons of the world (lit. master of the world) or not? If they are approached by the people of the world what do you think (they should do)?
- A** As people, small or large some of them carrying loads on their heads, travel the road between India and Khurasan and out of fatigue and thirst, wish for water and the shadow of a tree, and (on arriving) under a tree eagerly take their loads off their heads and take some rest - the tree spends its comfort to them (but does not really care whether they take their chance) from its shadow - in the same way, the people of purity stay in the world and live without any wish. (This is) because they have burnt their desires inside their existence and they have reached the Truth and so are known as the people of purity.

**C. 16**

- Q The time when the people of world are asleep is known as the inner world (*malakūt*) and in the Hindi language it is known as the state of sleep (*soyan*), To which stage do the people of purity belong and where do the people of the world belong?
- A The people of purity remain at the level of the divine power (*jabarūt*). This stage is known as the permanent felicity (*sakhūpat*) in Hindi whereas the people of world are at the level of unconsciousness. A person who is conscious in wakefulness is awake in sleep, whereas the one who is negligent in wakefulness likewise remains unconscious in sleep.

**C. 17**

- Q When the people of the world go into the state of unconsciousness, some dreams become true after they are awoken. What do you say about this?
- A Three qualities (*gunas*) of nature: purity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and ignorance (*tamas*) are the states in sleep. In Persian they are known as ‘the soul at peace’ (*naḥs-i muṭma’ina*), ‘the blaming soul’ (*naḥs-i lawwāma*) and ‘the soul that inspires evil’ (*naḥs-i ammāra*). Whatever appears in the state of passion and ignorance is false, whereas that which appears in the state of purity (*sattva*), meaning when the soul is at peace, manifests after awakening (is true). When the heart moves towards the level of purity (*sattva*) then whatever is seen in (the state of) purity, becomes certitude.

**C. 18**

- Q. The people of purity live in this world and the house of this world is a (box of) collyrium. As such, a white cloth may be stained by the color black.. How do they remain in this world?
- A In the (same) way that fish live in salty water. It will not drink water because (it knows that) if it drinks, its body will disintegrate. When the sweet water from the other rivers would enter the sea of salty water, the fish will drink that (sweet) water. Salty water cannot enter the sweet water. The people of purity live in this world in a similar way.

**C. 19**

Q. Though the people of purity have come into this world for the benefit of the general populace and show kindness for everyone, nevertheless, the creatures of God – masses and elite -- have become helpless (impotent) and are captivated (caught up). Why then out of their love, do they not liberate them from the prison of the world so that they may reach the sublime essence?

A The love and affection of the people of purity is such: Wherever they extend their loving glance, the existence of human beings becomes pure. However, people do not submit their hearts to the people of God and are drowned in wishes of their own. For this reason they are helpless, (but) if they abandon their arrogance and submit themselves with humility to the perfect master and the guidance (lit. word) of a master is tied on their hearts, the master can make them just like him. Similarly, if three things, viz., lamp, oil and match, are not together present in the correct proportions, a lamp will not give light. Whenever they (the people of the world) attach (themselves) to (such) a lamp, they bring light and affect (to others), just as a lamp does.

**C. 20**

Q Everything is created by Mighty Creator, but the people of purity have a higher status. Why?

A Below and above this earth and water, there is no place which is empty. Similarly, everywhere the Creator is present. If someone becomes thirsty and wishes to drink water from the soil, this is impossible. However, if he/she wishes to draw water from the soil to quench his/her thirst, this is possible. In a similar way, God the most High has manifested the existence of the people of purity and has given them a higher status amongst people. If a pile of sesame (which may weigh) 100 maunds or 1000 maunds is lying within a house and someone wants to obtain light from that (pile), it will not produce any until such time as the sesame is brought to the druggist who will extract the oil from it using a press so that when it is put inside a lamp the light from it will spread. In this way, the path of distinction is established.

**C. 21**

Q. What is idol worship in the Hindu world, and who ordered it?

A. This (practice) was established to strengthen the heart (faith). A person who understands the tradition is excused (exempted) from this formal tradition. For example, young unmarried girls play with dolls and play housekeeping. When they themselves have become housekeepers (become married), they give all that up. It is the same thing with idol worship; as long as the essence of the form is not known, there is an attachment with the form. Whenever the knowledge of essence is achieved, the form is hastened to pass.

**C. 22**

Q. (What if) someone says that my master is vile and that my faith is enough for me?

A. People have misunderstood this aspect. Whenever an able master is found, the follower attains his/her wish. Similarly, if a woman will sleep with a man she will bear children. If she falls in love with a eunuch or likewise she will be deprived (of children).

Verse: He who is lost himself, how can he guide others?

**C. 23**

Q The creation of the creatures of the world derives from the power of the Creator. Everywhere power is same yet creates immovable beings (*isthāvar*) and movable beings (*jangam*). Among movable beings there are conscious beings and unconscious beings. And a few deities (*devtā*) possessing the five forms (*sarūp*) are higher than them (immovable beings) and yet there are others: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who are born higher than everyone else. Given this fact, what type of discrimination has been emerged in creation?

A The Truth is like that, (i.e.) that the power is same, yet from these five things discrimination of the status of creation is manifested and created. For example, immovable beings are created from earth and originated from earth; they do not have movement and stay firm in that they are connected with earth. Movable beings are created from water and as they originate from water and water always has movement--they move in circles. For this reason, water prevails on earth and movable beings therefore dominate immovable beings.

## C. 24

Q In (the category of) movable beings there are human beings as well as animals. Why then do human beings dominate animals?

A Human beings are awakened beings (*chitan*) and animals inert beings (*jarr*). However, are you asking why, if the origin of both is water, there is discrimination? Then the answer is that it is due to copulation (intercourse). When a man copulates with a woman, they face each other, whereas when animals copulate, one is on the back of the other. Because they (human beings) are facing each other they remain awake and conscious, whereas animals, because they copulate from the back, lose their consciousness. For this reason human beings are superior to animals, and they are dependent on deities (*devtas*) because these deities are created from fire and fire is superior to water. Over the deities the incarnations (*avatars*) are dominant because they are made of wind, and wind is superior to fire: and again, the Word (*shabad*) is (the most) dominant, meaning the Word which belongs to *lāmakān*. The One creative power is just this.

## C. 25

Q In the *Ramayana*, it is mentioned that when Rāmchand conquered Lanka (Sri Lanka), large numbers of troops on each side were killed. After that the response to the prayers to the Most High manifested. With the power of God the most High the rain became the water of life and the army of Rāmchand came back to life whereas the army of Rāwan did not stand up (become alive). But the property of the drink of immortality is that whenever it is bestowed on (lit. it comes to) a dead person it gives life; what do you say?

A. When the war against Rāwan started, (from then onwards) the forces of Rāwan thought of Rāmchand in their hearts while fighting and were slain. Due to the imagination of that sublime form (of Rāmchand) they achieved salvation. For this reason, they did not (need to) receive life once again. The forces of Rāmchand on the other hand thought of Rāwan during the war and (therefore) did not achieve salvation, though they did regain life due to the effect of the drink of immortality.



## 5.4. COMMENTARY ON MANUSCRIPT C:

### C 1-4: THE SUPREME SOUL AND AN INDIVIDUAL SOUL

*C. 1 Q. How does the supreme soul become individual soul and then again become the supreme soul? A. The way it (water) becomes (pure) from alcoholic water. Whenever it (alcoholic water) is poured on the earth, all impurities, malicious properties and intoxicants get filtered through the earth and pure water reaches the inner core of the earth, becoming water again. So in the same way, the individual soul of a human being also changes. Whenever the impurities (lit. of intoxication) of the five senses are filtered through (human) existence it (individual soul) joins the Truth. C. 2 Q. What is the difference between the individual soul and the supreme soul? A. There is no difference. C. 3 Q. If there is no difference, then, how do reward and punishment come into being? A. It is due to the effect of the container. For example: The Ganges and the water of the Ganges. C. 4 Q What difference do you see in that? A. There is a big difference. If the water of the Ganges is kept in a water pot and if a drop of alcohol (wine) enters into it, it (the water) will be considered to be carrying alcohol (wine). However, if one hundred thousand water pots of alcohol are poured into the Ganges, in this case it will still remain the Ganges. (Like the Ganges) the supreme soul is pure and without impurities and the liberator (mukhalliṣ); however, the individual soul is imprisoned in existence. If the specific nature of existence is left behind (or filtered in) existence, it (individual soul) becomes supreme soul. (Nonetheless) as long as it remains in existence, it remains individual soul.*

Dārā has raised a set of four pertinent questions here. This same set of questions is common to all manuscripts of *Su'āl-o-jawāb*, with little variation in the content. However, here it appears at the beginning, whereas in other manuscripts it appears towards the middle of the dialogue.<sup>600</sup> In manuscript B it in fact appears twice: in the middle of the First Majlis and then again in the Second Majlis, where a similar series of questions is treated in a little more depth. Dārā begins his query with a question about the relationship between an individual soul and the supreme soul and then moves on to the specifics of this relationship, beginning with the nature of an individual soul (*ātman*) and the supreme soul (*paramātman*) and following this with the issue of religious benefits (rewards) and punishment.

The format of Question and Answer in addressing the question of soul is reminiscent of the beginning of the Eighth Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Arjuna asks Krishna: What is

<sup>600</sup>In manuscript A this set appears as question/answer pairs 12, 13, 14 and 15. See also Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 293-94; in manuscripts B and F as 14, 15 and 16; in manuscript D as 12, 13, 14 and 15; and in manuscript E as 25, 17, 18 and 19. See Table III, 172.

Brahman? What is the Self, and what is action? However, here the first question is about the supreme soul becoming an individual soul and then again individual soul becoming (returning to?) the supreme soul. This shows that Dārā and Lāl Dās both shared the understanding that an individual soul belongs to the Supreme Soul and that they are similar in nature. This becomes evident from manuscript B where in an answer to a question regarding the difference between the Creator and the creation, Lāl Dās replies that the Creator and creation have the same essence but do differ in magnitude. In the 13<sup>th</sup> question of the First Majlis Dārā asks “How would you differentiate between the creation and the Creator?” Lāl Dās reply was “The Creator and the creation are like (water of) a river and the water in a jar. Although the essence is one, nevertheless there is a huge difference in terms of proportion.”

He seems to tread a fine line here. He highlights their difference in terms of magnitude but emphasizes their similarity by saying that their nature is the same. After establishing that the Creator and creation are similar in nature, Dārā invites Lāl Dās in manuscript B to explore the issue in more depth by asking the very question that opens manuscript C.

Dārā goes into specifics by asking: If *ātman* (individual soul) and the *paramātman* (supreme soul) are the same in nature, how then does the “supreme self” become an individual “soul” and again how can the same individual “soul” become the “supreme soul”? This question is also addressed in manuscript A.<sup>601</sup> The question is principally about the spiritual voyage – individual soul leaving its origin and then again becoming one with its origin. Perhaps the idea of *fanā*’ (annihilation) is implied here in which individual soul, after experiencing *fanā*’, loses its identity to become one with the supreme soul. The answer of Lāl Dās responds to this idea. In fact, Lāl Dās elaborates his reply with the example of alcohol: due to impurities, clear water becomes alcohol; only after removing all the impurities does it become clear water again. Thus a polluted individual soul cannot become one with the supreme soul which is clear and clean.

*Ātman* literally means breath; popularly it is known as the inner self (individual soul). According to the Upanishads *ātman* denotes the ultimate essence of the universe as well as the vital breath in human beings. It is not born nor does it die; in fact, it is

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<sup>601</sup> See Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 293-94.

imperishable.<sup>602</sup> *Paramātmān*, on the other hand, literally means the supreme self (supreme soul)<sup>603</sup> or Brahman. The idea of Lāl Dās regarding the similar natures of “individual soul” and “supreme soul” may be compared with Sankara’s theology. The Hindu theologian Sankara (end of 8<sup>th</sup> C.E.?) developed a doctrine according to which the true nature of *ātman* is identical with the absolute (*brahman*). Flood<sup>604</sup> explains the essentials of his theory in the following words:

He (Sankara) tries to establish that spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*) or illusion (*māyā*) is caused by the superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of what is not the self onto the self. All knowledge is distorted by superimposition or projection, which prevents us from seeing our true nature as the self’s (*ātman*’s) pure subjectivity, ontologically identical with the absolute (*brahman*).

Furthermore, for the school of Sankara, reality is non-dual (*advaita*). There is only one reality – *Brahman* (*paramātmān*), which is without attributes and un-describable. *Brahman* and *atman* are identical. Sankara interprets the Upanishadic phrase *tat tvam asi* (that thou art)<sup>605</sup> in a literal sense: individual soul (you) is supreme soul (that). For him, it is only due to illusion (*māyā*) that one perceives individual soul as different from supreme soul. Once the veil of *māyā* is lifted, the soul (*ātman*) realizes its true nature and achieves liberation (*moksha*). Human beings can attain this liberation while they are alive (*jīvan muktī*). Sankara’s approach was later criticized by Hindu theologians and philosophers such as Rāmānuja (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Madhva (1197-1276). Rāmānuja challenged the concept of *māyā* and the belief that the supreme reality (*paramātmān*) is without attributes. Moreover, he rejected the doctrine of the phenomenality of the world, admitted the inalienable individuality of *ātman* and held that *Brahman* (*paramātmān*) is personal.<sup>606</sup> As he saw it, salvation cannot be achieved by the disappearance of the *ātman* (individual soul) and *ātman* cannot be dissolved in *Brahman* (*paramātmān*). For Madhva, *ātman* and *paramātmān* are ultimately separate and not identical in any way, while the triad of *Brahman* (*paramātmān*), *atman* and the world exists permanently, even though the world and *ātman* are

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<sup>602</sup>See John Grimes, *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 1996) (hereinafter referred to as *A Concise Dictionary*), 68-69.

<sup>603</sup>*Ibid.*, .225.

<sup>604</sup>See Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 241.

<sup>605</sup>See *Chandya Upanishad* of the *Sama Veda*. It retains this saying in the context of the dialogue which happened amongst philosopher Āruni and his son Svetaketu: “That which is the finest essence – this whole world has that as its self. That is Reality. That is *Ātman*. That are Thou (*Tat tvam asi*), Svetaketu.” See Moore, *Indian Philosophy*, 68-69.

<sup>606</sup>Moore, *Indian Philosophy*, 508.

dependent on *Brahman*. *Ātman* is blissful by nature though it is subject to pain and suffering on account of its connection with the body and the latter's past *karma*.<sup>607</sup>

The answer to the second question, i.e., that there is no difference between the individual soul and the supreme soul, indicates that Lāl Dās followed Sankara's thought, although he seems to emphasize more the personal effort required to cleanse the soul of the impurities caused by the five senses. Lāl Dās in effect blames the individual for accumulating impurities (*ālā'ish*); therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual to rid his soul of them. Thus he sees *māyā* as an impediment to perceiving the reality of the self. Sankara's system of thought, based as it is on non-dual reality (*advaita*), can be compared to Ibn al-ʿArabī's system of thought based on *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being).<sup>608</sup> In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* Ibn al-ʿArabī says:

He is their existence and from Him they acquire existence. And existence/Being is nothing other than the Real, nor is it something outside of Him from which He gives to them...<sup>609</sup> For the Verifiers it has been established that there is nothing in Being/existence but God. As for us [creatures], though we exist, our existence is through Him...<sup>610</sup> the existent things become distinct and plural through the plurality of the entities and their distinction in themselves. Hence there is nothing in Being/existence except God...<sup>611</sup>

We know that Dārā was fully informed about the philosophy of Ibn al-ʿArabī<sup>612</sup> and it is equally possible that he was aware of the criticism being leveled at *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) in the Indian context. For example, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, following, Ala al-Dawlah al-Simnani, criticized Ibn al-ʿArabī and propagated the idea of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. Friedmann explains:

He [Sirhindi] considers the outward meaning (*zahir*) of the shariah as the touchstone for the correctness of his Sufi experience and finds himself in agreement with Ala al-Dawlah al-Simnani, who was one of the earliest Sufi critics of Ibn al-Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being.<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Dr. Muhammad Durrany sees the followers of Shankara and Ibn al-ʿArabī as sharing the same beliefs. He writes: "The followers of Advaita and 'Wahdat-ul-Wujūd' believe that whatever there exists on earth is all God in His universal or Virāt form, and whatever is seen other else is nothing but mere illusion or Māyā." See his *The Gītā and the Qur'an* (Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1982), 229.

<sup>609</sup> Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, (I, 406, 14) cf. William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY, 1989) (hereinafter referred to as Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*), 94.

<sup>610</sup> Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, (I, 279, 5) cf. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 94.

<sup>611</sup> Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, (II, 160,1) cf. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 95.

<sup>612</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 73-74.

<sup>613</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi* (Montreal: McGill University, 1971) (hereinafter referred to as Friedmann, *Sirhindi*), 24.

Like Ramanuja, Sirhindi saw creation as different from the Creator and he explained *hamah ust* (All is He) as meaning *hamah az ust* (All is from Him).<sup>614</sup> He elaborates that beings are manifestations of the One Divine Essence. The Essence does not dwell in them, is not united with them and is not influenced, coloured, or augmented by them.<sup>615</sup> By the time Dārā began studying Sufism, both schools had its followers and much was written about this debate in India. Was Dārā aware of the similar theological debates among Hindu scholars such as Sankara and Rāmānuja? Whether he knew about the debate in Hinduism is not clear from his biography. Nonetheless, Dārā, following Lāl Dās, explains in a later work the nature of individual soul and supreme soul and their relationship with one another in *Majma' al-Bahrayn*. According to him, *ātman* is pure self and is akin to *paramātman*, which is the essence of all souls. In addition to this, he describes *paramātman*<sup>616</sup> and names it as *abū al-arvāḥ*<sup>617</sup> (lit., father of the souls). It is interesting that, although Dārā's explanation in *Majma' al-Bahrayn* agrees with Sankara and Ibn al-Arabi in general and with Lāl Dās in particular, he neither refers to any of the above mentioned thinkers nor does he compare their various schools of thought.

Dārā's poetry also reflects a similar philosophy. His *Dīwān* contains numerous verses which clearly show that he was a believer in Ibn al-Arabi's philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. For example, he says:

We have not seen an atom separate from the Sun;  
Every drop of water is the sea in itself  
With what name should one call the Truth  
Every name that exists is one of the God's names.<sup>618</sup>

<sup>614</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup>Daryush Shayegan, *Hindouisme et Soufisme* (Paris: La Différence, 1979), 31. In the Persian text Dārā writes "*dhātī ke jami' arvāḥ dar ān mundaraj and ān rā paramātman va abū al-arvāḥ gūyand*" (see Dārā, *Majma'*, 88).

<sup>617</sup> See Dārā, *Majma'*, 88.

<sup>618</sup>See Dārā, *Dīwān*, 127. یک ذره ندیدیم ز خورشید جدا هر قطره آب هست عین دریا  
Meaning: [In] the way we do not see a ray (particle) as separate from the sun,  
In fact, every drop is the very ocean itself.

A little difference in rendering is found in the text of the verse in Hasrat's *Dara*, See Hasrat, *Dara*, 145. A similar idea can be found in the long gīnan popular among the Ismailis of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, known as *Bujh Nirānjan*.

Neither does He have any name nor place, nor is He without name and place;  
With whatever name He is described, all names are His.  
The one invisible One assumed a hundred thousand forms and was contained in the three worlds.  
He became evident in everything, [yet] He is not to be seen.

According to Ali Asani, "Ismaili gīnan literature is a genre of Indo-Muslim vernacular literature used to propagate the Ismaili form of Islam in the Punjab, Sind and Gujarat." See Ali Asani, *The Bujh Nirānjan – An Ismaili Mystical Poem* (Harvard: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1991), 131. Composed sometime during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *Bujh Nirānjan*, although a part of Khoja Ismaili tradition, has been lately identified as a composition written

Poetry was apparently an outlet for Dārā, as it was for others, when it came to experiencing the ideas inherent in *wahdat al-wujūd*. According to Ali Asani “almost all Sufi poetry in the vernaculars is saturated with the idea of Unity of Being.”<sup>619</sup> Bulhe Shah – a Qādirī Punjabi Sufi poet of the 17<sup>th</sup> century confirms Asani’s view when he writes:

He is one, but one among many because  
There are no secrets in a crowded house;  
Every place He is seen, each place His own  
For in the stream of oneness none may drown.<sup>620</sup>

In further exploring the relationship between the individual soul and the supreme soul, Dārā’s next two questions (C3 and C4) revolve around the reward and punishment connected to the nature of the soul. Later, after three other sets of questions/answers, Dārā returns in question 7 (see below) to a similar issue: “A particle from the light of God becomes imprisoned in existence. (Yet) why is it that it (the particle) will be held [responsible] on the Day of Judgment for good and bad deeds?” The reason for this enquiry was to understand the nature of the soul. If it is same in nature as the supreme soul, then why do reward, punishment and judgment exist? The reply to the first part (Question 3) was that “it is due to the effect of the container.” He illustrates this with the example of the Ganges and the water of the Ganges and explains to Dārā, on his further questioning, that it is due to the nature of the Ganges, which is not akin to its water when held in small containers. To understand this, one has to understand the degree to which the river is held sacred by Hindus.

It is believed by Hindus that the Ganges originates from the head of Shiva and has the power to cleanse the impurities of a believer. To a believer, it is a commendable act to immerse oneself in the Ganges to attain purification. Thus, the Ganges is a purifier and due to its qualities of vastness, purity and connection to Shiva (nature of container reflects nature of Shiva) it swallows up contamination, hence, it remains pure and the question of good and bad does not exist whereas a small quantity of Ganges water held in a container (apparently not connected with Shiva) can easily be contaminated and depending on the container can go bad. One finds a

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by Qadiri sufis adopted by Khoja Ismailis as a part of their literature. The Nizari Ismailis recite this composition in their prayer halls and traditionally maintain that it was composed by one of their dais Pir Sadardin. However, Asani disputes this traditional claim and with the help of a manuscript unearthed at the British Library proving that it was written by Qadiri Shaykh Isa Jundullah (d.1621). See Asani, *Bujh Niranjana*, 19- 41.

<sup>619</sup>Ibid.,131.

<sup>620</sup>Bulleh Shah, *Bulleh Shah-A Selection*, rendered into English verse by Taufiq Rafat (Karachi: Vanguard Publications, 1988), 137.

similar pattern of questions and answers on this topic in manuscripts A and B.<sup>621</sup> However, the latter manuscripts contain different explanations offered by Lāl Dās. In the former, the answer is given in one set of three questions and answers whereas in the latter, the response is divided between two sets – one in the First Majlis and the other in the Second. The reply of Lāl Dās in manuscript A and in the First Majlis of manuscript B is similar to what we see in manuscript C: reward and punishment are contingent on the limitation of the container, and he cites the example of the Ganges, which is of immense depth and beyond limit in its extent. Hence it is the depth and nature of the Ganges that prevent innumerable jars of alcohol from polluting the water, whereas even a single drop of alcohol will pollute a jug of water. In the context of how a small piece of dirt cannot affect the ocean, Rumi offers a similar example: “One does not protect the ocean from a dog’s saliva, for an ocean is not polluted by a dog’s mouth, but a cup is, for a small vessel’s contents are changed for the worse from the licking of a dog.”<sup>622</sup> In the Second Majlis of manuscript B, Lāl Dās explains how the condition of the container affects the water inside the container.<sup>623</sup>

Similarly, in the following question/answer set (C4) in manuscript C, Lāl Dās notes that the supreme soul is pure like the Ganges and without impurities and is a liberator (*mukhalliṣ*), whereas the individual soul is imprisoned in existence. Once the specific nature of existence departs, individual soul becomes supreme soul. Nonetheless, as long as it remains entangled in existence, it remains individual soul. The answer of Lāl Dās offers a certain depth. He treads a path between the thought of Sankara and that of Rāmānuja. On the one hand he believes, like Sankara, that the nature of the individual soul is akin to the supreme soul, yet on the other hand the individual soul is imprisoned in existence, which is the real world of Rāmānuja. As such it will commit acts – good and bad – for which it will be rewarded and punished. To escape the cycle of good and bad, reward and punishment, the individual soul needs to reconnect with the supreme soul, transcending the world of existence, and leaving the prison of time and space.

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<sup>621</sup> Waseem, *On Becoming*, 112; see Manuscript A, Question 15; see also Huart & Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 294 and Manuscript B, Question 16.

<sup>622</sup> Aflaki, *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn*, 600; cf. Schimmel, Annemarie. *And Muhammad is His Messenger (The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety)* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 63.

<sup>623</sup> See Manuscript B, Majlis 2, Question 3. Also, see C5 question and answer.

## C5: PAIN, PLEASURE AND THE COMPANIONSHIP

*C. 5 Q Everyone says that the pain and pleasure of existence are felt. One complains when pain is felt, yet the individual soul is pain-proof and is free of it. How then can this be understood? A. The individual soul is mixed up with body. On this basis it (individual soul) feels pain and pleasure; indeed the body and images (naqshhā) of the body are the inert body (jarr) i.e. like an idol. The individual soul becomes completely aware and very careful when it has the companionship of a perfect faqīr. Due to that (vigilance) the specific (nature) of body will be filtered in (or left in) body and (as a result) the pain and pleasure of the body become neutralized (equal) for the individual soul and it will become supreme soul. As long as it (individual soul) resides in body, it remains individual soul and both pain and pleasure continue to reach the individual soul. Good and bad character (lit. acting) also becomes its (individual soul's) share due to its companionship with body. If someone asks: Since individual soul was cautious (aware), why did it get imprisoned in existence? The answer is that people (who) come to a stranger's place of their own accord and become guests (they) do not have any choice (free will). Wherever the master of the house appoints for them to sit, there they sit, and wherever he appoints for them to stand, there they stand. Now, if someone asks (in this case) who is the master (of the house), then (I answer) the master of the house is the khyal (naqshhā) of the body; however the individual soul is awake and cautious.*

Dārā moves on in this set of questions and answers to the idea of pain and pleasure followed by the importance of the companionship of perfect men. Based on the understanding that the nature of the individual soul is similar to the supreme soul, Dārā wonders: Why does the individual soul not act like the supreme soul (i.e., above human limitations, immune to pain or pleasure). Here the discussion begins with the relationship of soul with body and the connection of individual soul with the supreme soul. Dārā questions why there should be pain and pleasure, seeing as individual soul is in fact part of the supreme soul. Lāl Dās's reply is consistent: the reason for such feeling is due to the fact that soul is imprisoned in the body. However, he offers a little more elaboration. He identifies two aspects of a body: the body (*wujūd*) and the imaginative figure of body (*naqshhā-yi wujūd*). One may point out that the term *naqshhā* has replaced the original reading of *nafshā* hence the discussion is here based on the proposed emendation. The term *nafshā-yi wujūd* occurs for the first time in C.5; it does not appear in other manuscripts and is unique to C. There is a strong possibility that the term was misspelled and it should have been *naqshhā* (figures, pictures) instead of *nafshā*. The term *naqshhā* can also be understood as imagination (*khayāl*). The idea of imagination (*khayāl*) resonates very much with the idea of *māyā* (illusion). Thus, Lāl Dās seems to be highlighting two aspects of *wujūd*: 'real existence'



and the ‘imaginative or illusionary existence.’ This would also tally with ‘Azîz-i Nasafî’s concept of *wujûd*. According to ‘Azîz-i Nasafî’ a group of ‘monists’ distinguishes phenomenal *wujûd* as ‘shadow’ from ‘real’ *wujûd* as ‘light’— one can compare the phenomenal *wujûd* with the imaginative figure of body (*naqshhā-yi wujūd*) and the ‘real’ *wujûd* with the body (*wujūd*). The comparison shows that Lāl Dās is certainly not far from Nasafî.<sup>624</sup>

Since soul is imprisoned in body, whatever the body may feel, it transmits to the soul. Similarly, as companion to the body, whatever the soul feels, it conveys to the body. However, in the presence of ‘perfect *fuqrā*’, the individual soul remains awake and content. Due to that vigilance the nature of the individual soul leaves existence behind and after losing its “illusionary or imaginative aspect” becomes supreme soul and transcends the feeling of pain and pleasure. A similar idea can be found in the Ismaili Ginans. Imam Begum (d.1866), a well-known Ginan composer of Indo-Pakistan, sings: “When I found the true master, miseries were gone and the problems of this servant were resolved; I achieved happiness.”<sup>625</sup>

However, Lāl Dās maintains that as long as the individual soul remains attached to existence, both pain and pleasure will continue to affect the individual soul. Moreover, it acquires good or bad character from the actions performed by the body as it is imprisoned in existence. The individual soul, if awake, and for all the time it is imprisoned in the body, feels that pain of imprisonment.<sup>626</sup> In manuscript B, Dārā brings up an interesting point -- that body and soul are separate in the way that the body and its shadow are separate. Lāl Dās moves away from this example by giving another, more familiar one: that of a river and a drop of water. If a drop of water goes back into a river, it becomes river; however, if it remains separate it realizes

<sup>624</sup> See Hermann Landolt’s “Le Paradoxe de la ‘Face de Dieu” in *Studia Iranica* 25, 163-192.

<sup>625</sup> “Satgur milya tiyare dukh ja tarriyaji; Sarve sariya dasi ne kaaj; Anand hoon pami.” See G.Allana, *Ginans of Ismaili Pirs*, Vol.1 (Karachi: Ismaili Association for Pakistan, 1984) (hereinafter referred to as Allana, *Ginans*), 326-27.

<sup>626</sup> A similar idea can be found in an Ismaili Ginan sung by Pir Hasan Shah:

Pinjar padiyo parivarno,  
Koik bujat jan  
Merey tan ki vedna,  
Sainya tapat bujhaav

Translation:

Family ties have become a cage;  
This is known only to a few;  
My being is in pain;  
O Lord, come and cool off the heat (of my being)  
See Allana, *Ginans*, 232.

its limits. In Manuscript B Lāl Dās also gives a logical and unique explanation of how the soul becomes separated due to the acts of the body. He says:

Know (also) that water extinguishes fire. However, when it (water) comes (in contact with the fire) through the medium of a container, fire destroys water. Similarly, by developing lust, greed, sorrow and anguish; although the drop (soul) is the essence, one destroys it. Thus essence is free of attributes and, like a river it would not care about a drop (of water). If it enters (the river) then it is the best. Otherwise, it (depends on its) intention (because) wherever it will wish (to go, there) it will spread. Thus, God is God and the devotee is a devotee; however, if he/she avoids spreading out (in all directions rather going back to the Sea), it is better.<sup>627</sup>

The being stops suffering when the individual soul leaves the body and experiences oneness with the supreme soul.<sup>628</sup> In other words, individual soul experiences union (*jam'*) and abandons separation (*tafriqa*).

Hujwiri explains *jam'* and *tafriqa* in his celebrated work *Kashf al-Mahjūb* in detail.<sup>629</sup> He explicates the process of *jam'* that while in separation when one depends entirely on God and commits all his attributes to His charge and refers all his actions to Him; his identity ceases and God manifests in his acts. He quotes one important hadith in which it is mentioned that the servant of God due to the remembrance of God comes so near to God that his every action becomes God's action.<sup>630</sup> Thus saints and prophets become united with God while performing duties of servant-hood - externally they experience *tafriqa* whereas internally they experience *jam'*. The experience of *jam'* can be interpreted as the death of a person's identity. Such an experience during a Sufi's lifetime is one of the cornerstones of Sufism. This experience is

<sup>627</sup> See Manuscript B, Majlis 2, Question 3:

بدانکه آب آتش را نابود می سازد، چون در پرده ظروف آید آتش آب را نابود کند، همچنان از مبتلای خواهش غیر هوا و حرص غم و غصه درآمده باوجود آنکه قطره ذات است نابود میگردد، پس ذات منزله از صفات است مانند دریا از قطره چه پروای دارد اگر داخل شود سعادت اوست به پیوندد و الا خواهش اوست هر کجا که خواهد برفگند پس خدا خدا است و بنده بنده هر چند که پراگنده نشود بهتر است

<sup>628</sup> One can compare this thought with the idea of the relationship between *nafs* (soul) and *rūh* (spirit). The three levels of *nafs* (soul) --*ammāra*, *lawwāma* and *muṭma'inā*, -- while connected to each other are meant to provide specific functions: *ammāra* is the one with good and bad nature acquired by the influence of place and company; *lawwāma* is the one which is always wake and keeps warning the soul not to listen to *ammāra*; and finally, when the soul rejects *ammāra* it attains the third level where it is more connected to the spirit (*ruh*) which has the nature of supreme soul. See Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston:1997), 45. Also see Carl Ernst's "Mystical Language and the Teaching Context in the Early Sufi Lexicons," in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>629</sup> Ali b. Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co, 1936) (hereinafter referred to as Hujwiri, *Kashf*), 252.

<sup>630</sup> Hujwiri quotes the complete hadith:

"My servant continually seeks access to Me by means of works of supererogation until I love him; and when I love him, I am his ear and his eye and his hand and his tongue: through Me he hears and sees and speaks and grasps." (See Hujwiri, *Kashf*, 254)

encapsulated in the popular Prophetic tradition “die before ye die.” Schimmel says that this tradition “gave the Sufis the possibility of pondering on the implications of the slaying of the lower qualities and ensuring the spiritual resurrection in this life.”<sup>631</sup>

As we saw above, in his answer to Dārā’s question regarding the individual soul feeling pain or pleasure and its sojourn and subjugation in body, Lāl Dās provides an exception. In his answer to question no.5 above, he said that “the individual soul becomes completely aware and very careful when it has the companionship of perfect *fuqarā’*.” If the individual soul remains in the companionship of the ‘perfect men’ it transcends the feeling of pain and pleasure. Later, responding to question no.9 (below), he reiterates the same idea by saying: “If you need a safe (tranquil) abode, then seek the companionship of the *fuqarā’* because tranquility is not present anywhere else.”<sup>632</sup> In the text of manuscript C, the term *fuqarā’* (sing. *faqīr*) has been used by Lāl Dās twice to designate perfect men. He refers to the same concept by using the term *murshid-i kāmīl* in questions 6 to 13; and then in questions 14 to 20, Dārā designates these perfect men by yet another title, *ṣāfi nihādān* (the people of purity). The theme of the “ideal *faqīr*” takes up five out of the seven *majālis* (lit. sessions) in manuscript B. Thus, the theme of the perfect man dominates in both manuscripts B and C. Apart from the above terms, there are other terms such as *jōgī* (wanderer, equivalent to *faqīr*), *jōgīsar* (perfect *jōgī* or equivalent to the ideal *faqīr*) and *siddha* (perfect being) which have been used in the context of the perfect man in other manuscripts of the dialogue apart from manuscript C.

Judging by manuscript C, it is evident that Lāl Dās assigned much importance to the company of a perfect master, or someone like a perfect master. Dārā seems especially curious to learn from Lāl Dās the status and qualities of such people. However, for Davis, this curiosity can

<sup>631</sup> Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 235. In this context a popular short story in Rumi’s *Mathnawī* explains this tradition. A merchant leaves for India and before leaving on the voyage asks his (caged) parrot what he would prefer to have as a gift. The parrot requests of him that, on his way, whenever he sees parrots he should let them know about his plight of spending life in a cage. The merchant promises that he will do as asked. On completing his voyage and while returning home he sees a group of parrots and delivers the message but then the leader of the group has a fatal fall from a branch. The merchant sees this, becomes sad and with heavy heart returns home. He informs his parrot about the incident and describes it as heartbreaking for him. On finishing his story, he sees the parrot trembling and falling down inside the cage. After removing her from the cage, to the merchant’s surprise the parrot flies to a high branch. Bewildered by this, he asks the bird: “what was the advice from the parrots that allowed you to trick me so successfully?” The parrot replies: “The advice was given by performing an action. The leader of the parrots acted dead to send the message that you must become dead like me in order to find deliverance.” The moral of the story is that the body resembles a cage and if one is to attain liberation then one has to die in the cage. See “The Mathnawī-ye Ma’nawī” Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning of Jalaluddin Rumi. Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R.A. Nicholson’s 1926 British Translation) © Ibrahim (translation, footnotes, and transliteration), 1547 – 1854. First published on Sunlight (yahoogroups.com), 11/18/99.

<sup>632</sup> See below, Chapter V.

be explained by what he calls the “autobiographical issue.” Since Dārā saw himself as a perfect master, Davies claims, it became extremely important for him to know how a perfect *jōgī* (*jōgīsar*) can remain ascetic after he has taken the form (*avatār*) of a king.<sup>633</sup> It is true that by the time Dārā met Lāl Dās he already was the ‘Crown prince’ and had received permission from Mullā Shāh to accept followers (*murīdān*) and to guide them.

Perhaps Davis has based his argument on the three sets of questions and answers in manuscript A which are devoted to this issue.<sup>634</sup> In this set Dārā first asks Lāl Dās how a *jōgīsar* who has taken the *avatār* of a king can remain loyal to his ascetic values because as a *jōgī* he should not arouse any fear (amongst his followers), pointing out that when a *jōgīsar* becomes sovereign, due to circumstances, he is inevitably going to have to kill or order someone’s death. In his second question, Dārā asks: What is the guarantee that a *jōgī* wearing the cloak of king will not start acting as a king, forgetting his real nature? Lastly, Dārā complains that people approach him dressed like dervishes, and knowing the truth behind this hypocrisy he wants to avoid such people. Responding to the first question, Lāl Dās tells Dārā that just as in war a king must fight (even if he is a *jōgī* at heart), a *jōgī* has to fight day and night against his sensory desire (*khwāhish-i hiss*). He advises Dārā that, once one knows the enemy, one should act accordingly. In answer to the second question, he replies that a *jōgī* remains alive inside the king even when he is busy dealing with the people of the world. However, when he is in the company of *fuqarā*’ he is connected to God and is not bothered by the world and in fact remains a *jōgī*. As for the third question – similar to the question 15 of manuscript C, Lāl Dās tells Dārā that he should not stop meeting with people (even those who come wearing Sufi garb to impress him) because he may find the people of God amongst them who may have chosen this way to proceed. He gives the example of a stone collector who collects stones without discrimination and finds one day the philosopher’s stone in his collection of stones. This may justify Davis’s claim that his query was all about his own self. He may have perceived himself as a perfect man. However, manuscript B paints a different picture.

In majlis 2 of manuscript B, we find a very interesting response to Dārā. Majlis 2 focuses on the journey of the soul and the essential role played by a Sufi master in the return of the soul.

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<sup>633</sup> Davis, “Dara,” 167.

<sup>634</sup> See Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 297-98.

At the end of the majlis, it seems that Lāl Dās warns Dārā that he should not only be able to talk the role of a master but act it as well. Following is the record of conversation:

Lāl Dās: O son of the king, I am asking you now: Is your speech mere talk (as it is) not in accordance with your state?

Dārā: Perhaps your kind favor will bring good luck and I will achieve that state.

Lāl Dās: O Prince, rule and be victorious.

Dārā: After I am free of pride and egotism (of worldly kingship) my intention is precisely that.

Lāl Dās: Without leaving the world there is no escape.

Dārā: I should expel the world from my heart, for I understand that I have been distracted.<sup>635</sup>

While asking Dārā ‘to rule and be victorious,’ was Lāl Dās chastising Dārā and asking him discreetly to leave kingship aside and seriously follow the path of Sufism? Though the statement of Lāl Dās is vague and so is the answer of Dārā. Did Dārā commit himself to the cause of spirituality once he retires from ‘pride and egotism’ (perhaps kingship)? It is difficult to deduce a clear answer however the above record of conversation is unique as we see table being turned here: Lāl Dās is enquirer and Dārā is responder and one cannot completely reject the assumption that the discussion was about abandoning the crown and becoming more active as a Sufi master.

However, the discussion with Lāl Dās on this particular issue – “the status and qualities of spiritual guides”-- was important not only for Dārā’s own dual position as heir-apparent and sufi-master, but also in order for him to understand the hierarchy among *jōgīs*. There were *jōgīs* and there were perfect *jōgīs*--for example, Rama and Krishna, both of whom had royal duties like Dārā. It is highly possible that he had these personalities in mind when he was asking his questions but chose not to be explicit. It seems that his queries about this concept belonged to a bigger project – to understand Hindu terms from a Muslim perspective and then apply them in his later works. For example Dārā uses the term *siddha* for the perfect man in his later works *Majma’ al-Baḥrayn* and *Samudra Sangama* using it to describe a prophet and the prophet Muhammad, respectively.

<sup>635</sup>See Manuscript B, Majlis 2, Questions 6-8.

سؤال کامل که ای بادشاهزاده از تو میپرسم که گفتار تو قال است نسبت بحال ندارد؟ جواب شاهزاده که مگر لطف گرامی شما اقبال کند شاید که بحال آید. جواب کامل که ای شاهزاده کشوری و کشورکشائی کن. جواب شاهزاده که فارغ از مائی و منی کن که ارادهء خاص آنست جواب کامل که بی فراغ از دنیا صورت نه بدد جواب شاهزاده که دنیا را از دل افکنده بل پراگنده میدانم

The main point of discussion in this question answer is the power and influence of the perfect master who has been given various names including *faqīr*. To understand the term *faqīr* and its various synonyms in Sanskrit such as *jōgī*, *siddha* and *vitarāga* used by Lāl Dās and Dārā in the manuscripts we will examine and discuss them in this section. The term *faqīr* is most often used by Dārā in the context of spiritual leadership. As mentioned earlier, the theme of the “ideal *faqīr*” takes up five out of the seven *majālis* in manuscript B; however, it appears twice or more in the majority of the other manuscripts, including C. The term *faqīr* was common to the religious traditions of South Asia. Steingass provides us the meaning of the term *faqīr* as a person who possesses “one day’s sufficiency for self and family.”<sup>636</sup> The notion of *faqīr* can be found in the Qur’ān though it may not have been derived directly from the Qur’an.<sup>637</sup> However, it was the treatment of the same subject by ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī (d. 1071), whose *Kashf al-Mahjūb* became popular in India and was well known in Ṣūfī circles from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, that proved the most influential. Hujwīrī was followed on this issue by the well-known 17<sup>th</sup> century Qadīrī Ṣūfī Sulṭān Bāhū (1631-1691), a contemporary of Dārā and Lāl Dās, who was born and raised in Punjab (Jhang District). Amongst other works Sulṭān Bāhū wrote *Kitāb ‘Aynul Faqr*<sup>638</sup> -- an extensive treatment of the topic of *faqr*. In his work, Bāhū equates *awliyā’* with

<sup>636</sup> See F. Steingass, A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1982), 935. The other meanings of *faqīr* include: member of a religious order of mendicants; a dervish; subdued, total emptying of the worldly self, opening up to God’s grace and guidance, etc. Rizvi translates *faqīr* as “asceticism” which is the definition of “*zuhd*” rather than of the term in question. (See Rizvi, *Sufism*, 415).

<sup>637</sup> The word *faqīr* occurs twelve times therein;<sup>637</sup> three times as *al-faqīr*, twice as *faqīran* and seven times as *al-fuqarā’*: God hath heard the taunt of those who say: “truly, God is indigent and we are rich (3:181); Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed one in want (22:28); And he said: “Oh my lord! Truly am I in (desperate) need of any good that thou dost send me!” (28:24); If the guardian is well-off, let him claim no remuneration, but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable (4:6); O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor (4:135); If ye disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if ye conceal them and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you (2:271); (Charity is) for those in need, who, in God’s cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about (2:273); Alms are for the poor and the needy (9:60); If they are in poverty, God will give them means out of this grace (24:32); O ye men (people)! It is ye that have need of God: but God is the one free of all wants (*ghani*), worthy of praise. (35:15); (But) God is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy (35:15); (Some part is due) to the indigent *muhājirīn*, those who were expelled from their homes and their property (59:8).

<sup>638</sup> Sulṭān Bāhū, *Kitāb ‘Aynul Faqr* (Lahore: Nawal Kishore Printing Press, 1906) (hereafter to be referred as Bāhū, *Kitāb*).

*fuqarā'*.<sup>639</sup> For him, the final stage of *faqr* is *faqr-i-Muhammad*, and a *faqīr* should try to reach that stage.<sup>640</sup>

In other words *faqīr* means 'poor' however, traditionally and commonly the term *faqīr* is used in the sense of one who is not worldly-minded and free from any worldly 'desires' (*khwāhishhā*), as the text of the manuscript B makes abundantly clear in many places, and this may well correspond to the term *vitārāga* as Jean Filliozat seems to confirm.<sup>641</sup> Dārā introduces himself in *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* as a *faqīr* and as a *vitārāga* in *Samudra Sangama*. The term *vitārāga*—an equivalent term for *faqīr* -- can be translated as the 'one whom passions have left,' or simply 'one free from desires.'<sup>642</sup> At times Indian Muslim *fuqarā'* were also known as *jōgīs*. In Sanskrit, *jōgī* (=yogi) literally means one who practices renunciation. It is applied to a wanderer or a person who follows the yoga system of philosophy and who lives the life of a beggar.<sup>643</sup> Both the terms *faqīr* and *jōgī*, are used, sometimes interchangeably, in South Asian vernacular languages.<sup>644</sup> Moreover, although the Persian text of manuscript B features the term *faqīr*, it is not clear whether Dārā used the word "*faqīr*" or "*jōgī*" in the original dialogue.<sup>645</sup> Manuscript B however provides a detailed list of the attributes, qualities and habits of a *faqīr*.<sup>646</sup>

<sup>639</sup> Bāhū writes that in fact the *fuqarā'* are the *awliyā'* who are the truthful followers of *sharī'a* and are the best examples of the true religion. God creates them so that they can help in strengthening the true religion. They themselves follow a true path and invite others to follow them. (See Bāhū, *Kitāb*, 157).

<sup>640</sup> Bāhū describes the three stages as: "The first is poverty of annihilation (*faqr-i fanā*) which is (at the level of) "there is no God" (*lā ilāhā*). The second is the poverty of subsistence (*faqr-i baqā*) which is (*il-Allāh*) and the third is the poverty of highest extent (*faqr-i muntahā*) which is *Muhammad ar-rasūl Allāh* (See Bāhū, *Kitāb*, 62).

<sup>641</sup> Filliozat equates *faqīr* with *vitārāga*. Waseem, *On Becoming*, 143.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.

<sup>643</sup> H.A. Rose, *A Glossary*, 388-389.

<sup>644</sup> In his work, Davis observes that by the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, a blurring of religious identity continued. Basing on the reports of censuses he thinks that "the terms (sic) jogi had come to represent both Hindu and Muslim, while faqir is seen largely Hindu." (See Davis, "Dara," 179). The comment seems to be based only on popular report. However, with Muslim thinkers of Indo-Pak faqir remained a term which had positive connotations. It has been used by Muslim poets Mirza Asadullah Ghalib (d.1869) and Allama Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938). In fact, Iqbal chose the title of faqir for himself. A work was later written by Faqir Syed Wahiduddin on a few selected events of his biography with the title *Rozgar-i Faqir*. See Faqir Syed Wahiduddin, *Rozgar-i Faqir* (Lahore: Lion Art Press, 1963). *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl* retains a verse from Iqbal's Urdu poetry (See Iqbal, *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl* [Lahore: Shaykh Ghulamali and sons, 1979], 349 which says:

"a faqir who has the scent of Ali is better than the Persian King Dara and Roman King Alexander"

دارا و سکندر سے وہ مرد فقیر اولیٰ ہو جس کی فقیری میں بوے اسد اللہی

<sup>645</sup> See Manuscript B, folios 248-259. It seems that when Dārā asked questions about *faqīr*, he most probably meant "*jōgī*." Nonetheless, in the absence of any manuscript which may have retained the original (pre-edited or pre-compiled) conversation and the terms used, it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion. Since our discussion is

Leaving aside the question whether Lāl Dās was a Kabirpanthi or Ismaili Gupti, ideas similar to Lāl Dās's were echoed by Kabir and by Ismā'īlī preachers. In one of the poems in his collection *Bijak*, Kabir enumerates the qualities of a *jōgī* that resemble the profile of a *faqīr*.<sup>647</sup> Both the terms *faqīr* and *jōgī* are likewise present in the *gināns* – religious poetry composed by Ismā'īlī pīrs and *dā'īs*.<sup>648</sup> Apart from the *gināns* of the Ismā'īlī Khoja tradition, which are very well known amongst *guptīs*, there exist a few other works by *guptīs* written at the beginning of the twentieth century. They precisely reflect the same oral traditions and understanding of these concepts. Thus in one chapter of the *Neklan̄k Darpan*, Karam Hussain explains that the true *jōgī* is the one whose 'inner self' is pure.<sup>649</sup>

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limited to the manuscript, we will confine ourselves to the term *faqīr* as it appears in the dialogue. Also see my "Convergence and Divergence of Religious Vocabularies: The Concept of Faqir in a Sufi-Yogi Dialogue and in the contemporary South Asian Religious Traditions of the 17<sup>th</sup> century," for *ARC, The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies*, McGill University (hereinafter to be referred as Hayat, "Convergence and Divergence of Religious Concepts"), volume 35 (2007): 227-248.

<sup>646</sup>For example, according to Lāl Dās, the journey of a *faqīr* begins with annihilation in God (*fanā*) and ends with subsistence in God (*baqā*).<sup>646</sup> For a *faqīr*, this world is not a permanent abode.<sup>646</sup> Moreover, a *faqīr*'s relationship with God is such that God's shadow is always on his head.<sup>646</sup> Lāl Dās' image of the ideal *faqīr* resonates with the contemporary Indian Ṣūfī understanding of the phenomenon as well with the Hindu and Sikh views on the ideal *jōgī*. See Hayat, "Convergence and Divergence of Religious Concepts," 227-28

<sup>647</sup> According to Kabir, a true *jōgī* becomes immortal after attaching his self to the Lord.

Moreover, like the *faqīr* of Lāl Dās and Sulṭān Bāhū, Kabīr's devotee (*bhagat* or true *jōgī*) does not leave the presence of the Creator. Kabir says:

His (*jōgī*'s)<sup>647</sup> body is visible but remains unseen: therein is a root of constant lives,

If one knows the fashion of that yogi, he will live and move in Rāmā and view the three worlds.

He will pluck the fruit of the immortal vine and drink its juice. Kabīr says, he will live from age to age

See Kabir, *The Bijak of Kabir* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), 127. See also Hedayettullah, *Kabir*, 198.

<sup>648</sup>Pīr Shams (d.1356 A.D.?) is traditionally identified as the pīr who set the Ismā'īlī *da'wa* (in the Indian subcontinent) in motion.<sup>648</sup> Interestingly, on the basis of oral tradition, Pīr Shams' personality is portrayed as having the qualities of both a powerful *jōgī* and a Muslim *faqīr*, perhaps due to his experiences amongst non-Muslims and Muslims. Pīr Shams uses a different term in one of his *gināns* for the person who seems to represent the *jōgī*: *abadhu*. Zawahir Moir translates this as 'master yogi,' perhaps on the basis of the content of the *ginān*. However, it could also be seen as a corrupted form of the Arabic term "*abduhu*" which means "His (God's) servant." Whatever the origin of the term, Pīr Shams' enumerates the qualities of a *jōgī* which makes him master *jōgī*:

O *abadhu*, make the way your bag, contentment your vessel, and make meditation your staff. Wear patience and compassion as your two earrings, and make knowledge your food. That *jōgī* is a master in the world, whose mind is not attached to any other thing. That *jōgī* is a master in the world. O *abadhu*, my Guide bestows knowledge and the perception of renunciation, so make his company your ashes. Meditate truly upon the True Faith, for thus does a *jōgī* become *abadhu*.

I have kept the translation of Zawahir Moir in the above verses, except that the terms *abadhu* and *jōgī* have been left untranslated, appearing as they do in the original text (see Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismā'īlī Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1992), 153.

<sup>649</sup>The author illustrates the point with an interesting example from the life of Krishna. To show the real *jōgī* to Rādhā, Krishna took Rādhā with him to pay visits to two different personalities: a *jōgī* and a worldly person. The first of these, who lived outwardly like a *jōgī* in jungle, welcomed the couple, but when both (Radha and Krishna) were asleep he approached Rādhā with hungry eyes and bad intentions. On the contrary, when they met the second



Amongst *jōgīs*, the one who is truly perfect is known as the *jōgīsar* (perfect *jōgī*) or *siddha* (perfect being). Both terms seem to be interchangeable and are believed to carry the same meaning – a perfect *jōgī*. In manuscript B Dārā asks Lāl Dās when a *jōgī* becomes *siddha*,<sup>650</sup> whereas in manuscript A, he asks Lāl Dās how to recognize *jōgīsar*, i.e., the perfect *jōgī*.<sup>651</sup> The reply of Lāl Dās to both is similar: the *jōgī* who has reached the state where one loses the consciousness of sleep and awakening is *siddha*. Later, Lāl Dās further explains to Dārā that *turiya* (the fourth state of consciousness which is beyond the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and which pervades and transcends all these states) manifests itself in *siddha* and that the *siddha*, also known as *mahāpurakh* (the perfect man), is the only one who attains salvation because he transcends the world of desires. If we examine the term *siddha* and its usage in various Hindu and Jain scriptures, we may achieve a better understanding of the term. The term *siddha* derives from the Sanskrit verbal root *sadh/ sidh*, which means ‘to realize, succeed,’ or ‘perfection’.<sup>652</sup> As a noun, *siddha* means ‘the perfected one’, a term generally applied to one on the spiritual path who has through his practice realized his dual goal of superhuman powers and bodily immortality.<sup>653</sup> According to popular Hindu belief the perfect *yogi* is Shiva and hence he is the *siddha* – par excellence.

In Jain philosophy the *siddha* is the perfected soul who can perceive the absolute and whole truth, who surveys the whole universe in a single act of timeless knowledge. In this context there is the famous Jain parable of “The Blind Men and the Elephant” - which later became popular and has been retold in various cultures and genres of literature including Rumi’s *Mathnavi*.<sup>654</sup> According to the story “a king who, in a fit of practical joking, assembled a number of blind men and told them each to touch an elephant and tell him what they felt. The man who touched the trunk declared that it was a snake, he who touched the leg, a tree trunk, he who touched the tail, a rope and so on.” The moral of the story is that it is only the *siddha* who can

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person – externally involved in women and alcohol – he welcomed the couple with such purity of heart and humility that Rādhā was surprised. After this visit, Krishna explained to Rādhā that the first person was a hypocrite while the real *jōgī* was the second person. The emphasis of the message was more on the purity of the inner self and not on external appearance. See Karam Hussain, *Neklank Darpan*, lithographed edition (Multan: Ismaili Mission Club, 1910).

<sup>650</sup> See Manuscript B, Majlis 1, Question 17.

<sup>651</sup> See Manuscript A, Question 16.

<sup>652</sup> John Grimes, *A Concise Dictionary*, 293. The term *siddha* is also used as an adjective: thus *siddha marga* means perfect path; *siddha jnana* perfect knowledge; *siddha purusa* perfect human being, etc.

<sup>653</sup> In *Bhagavad Gita* Arjuna sings praise of Krishna by saying that: “The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the two Ashvins, the Maruts and the mannes and the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas, all gaze at Thee and are quite amazed.” See Moore, *Indian Philosophy*, 140.

<sup>654</sup> Rumi, *Mathnavi*, Book III, story V.

see the whole truth -- like the king -- while others should only know and remain contented with their partial knowledge and acknowledging the many sidedness of the truth.<sup>655</sup>

The term *siddha* is explained by Lāl Dās as the ‘perfect *jōgī*’, however, Filliozat explains the meaning of *siddha* in a broader sense:

*Siddha* means ‘Perfect,’ particularly one who has succeeded, and it may be pointed out that this word is not used in a negative sense. It has a precise connotation in Sanskrit and in most Indian languages, and it means one who possesses *siddhi*, supernatural power. *Siddhi* is success, especially of one who has surpassed others in the spiritual order.<sup>656</sup>

A few years later, perhaps based on the understanding that he had gained from this discussion, Dārā used the term *siddha* in a more creative way in his Sanskrit work *Samudra Sangama*. Dārā pays his salutation to the prophet in the following words:

Infinite salutation to the one who is a guide to the supreme light, the cause of the emanation of the world, the Perfect (*siddha*) among our Perfect, favoured (*satkrta*) and formed (*sammatita*) by the Supreme Lord.<sup>657</sup>

As for the supernatural powers of the *siddha*, it seems that Dārā believed that prophet Muhammad had miraculous powers: for example, in the beginning of the first majlis of manuscript B, Dārā asks “it is said that *hazrat-i risālat panāh*<sup>658</sup> [Prophet Muhammad] did not have a shadow, but how can a body exist without a shadow? To this Lāl Dās replies that a body has a shadow; however, he was the shadow of God almighty and a shadow does not have a shadow.<sup>659</sup> In Dārā’s understanding the Prophet Muhammad was a *siddha* not only due to the miraculous powers he possessed but also due to the reason that he was able to hear that primordial sound which is eternal. In section two of *Samudra Sangama* Dārā relates the senses to the elements by saying:

<sup>655</sup> See Theodore de Bary, WM. (ed.) *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University, 1958). (hereinafter referred to as *Sources of Indian Tradition*), 72.

<sup>656</sup> Filliozat, ‘Dara Shukoh’s *Samudrasangama*’ in Waseem’s *On Becoming*, 137.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>658</sup> *risālat panāh* (Keeper of the Prophecy) is an honorific title used for Muhammad.

<sup>659</sup> Manuscript B, Majlis 1, question 2. One finds similar discussion in *Rumūz*, where at the end a long statement (perhaps by Lāl Dās) includes an eulogy in the honour of Prophet mentioning that neither he had a shadow nor any bee would sit on his body (to pollute a holy body) because he was a shadow of and shadow of a shadow is impossible to exist and similarly bees are not interested to sit on a shadow. See *Rumūz*, 30.

The faculty of audition depends upon the perception of sound in the material space. But the reality of the spiritual world is evident to the *siddha*, because they alone are able to hear the unprovoked sound. And this meditation on the form of audition is common to all *siddha*. And our monists say that this meditation is the audition of the Eternal.<sup>660</sup>

It is not surprising at all that Dārā applies the term *siddha* to the Prophet as he must also have been familiar with the famous ‘Sufi ḥadīth’ *al-faqrū fakhri* (meaning: poverty is my pride). And by doing so in *Samudra sangama* he correctly appropriated and adapted the traditional understanding of the term. Consequently, perhaps he was trying to make his audience, who were mostly Hindus, understand the status of the prophets. It is noteworthy that the section on *nubuwwah wa wilayah* (prophethood and sainthood) in his *Majma*’, which contains many names of *awliyā*’, is entitled *siddharva rsisvaratva* (the fact of being perfect and the fact of being a master of clairvoyants) in his *Samudra Sangama*.<sup>661</sup> Thus, the perfect master par excellence is Prophet Muhammad, and like any other Ṣūfī master, he becomes a *siddha* (perfect *jōgī*) who abandons this world and worldly affairs for the sake of Truth. In the light of Dārā’s own thought and in the context of Muslim understanding it seems that Dārā was justified to use this term for the Prophet. This brings us to another question: Why did he not use *siddha* to compare prophethood in the section on prophet-hood and saint-hood in *Majma*’ as he does with other terms? In fact, he compares *mahā sudh* with the term prophet<sup>662</sup> in the preceding chapter entitled ‘Discourse on the Names of God, the Most High’ (*Asmāi Allāh Ta’ālā*) without any detailed discussion. He leaves four sections of *Majma*’ without making any comparison such as the

<sup>660</sup>Filliozat, ‘Dara Shukoh’s Samudrasangama’ in Waseem’s *On Becoming*, 139.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 146. It was not only Dārā who saw the Prophet as a *siddha* or a perfect *jōgī*. Muslims of the Indo-Pak sub-continent have also long seen Prophet Muhammad as the perfect *jōgī*. One such example could be found in a *qawwālī* sung by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (d. 1998) in a popular Punjabi language ‘*mei(n) jānā jōgī dey nāl*’:

I wish to go with the *jōgī*  
 With earrings in my ears  
 I wish to go with the *jōgī*  
 He is not (simply) *ajōgī*  
 But a form of the sustainer,  
 And to him suits the attire of a *jōgī*  
 I wish to go with the *jōgī*  
 This *jōgī* is a wise *jōgī*  
 He carries the necklace of *il-Allāh*(except Allah)  
 His name is *Kamlīwālā*<sup>661</sup>  
 If this *jōgī* will come to my place  
 I will sacrifice myself.  
 O *jōgī* come to my place  
 May my life be sacrificed! Come to my place.

<sup>662</sup> Dārā writes: *wa nabī rā mahā sudh nāmand*. See *Majma*, 99.

Discourse on Light, Discourse on the Vision of God, Discourse on the prophet-hood and saint-hood and Discourse on *Brahmānd*. The former three concern themselves with Muslim thought and contain no comparisons with Hindu terms and terminology, while the last chapter -- entitled *Brahmānd*, focuses on Hindu thought alone without making reference to Muslim thought or terminology. Was *Majma* 'a work in progress'? <sup>663</sup> Was he going to come back to *Majma* 'and re-write these sections? We may never know the answers of the above questions however there is a probability that Dārā would have gone back to add in his work *Majma* ' as he has done in other works.<sup>664</sup>

## C 6: THE SOUL ON A VOYAGE OF CHOICE

*C. 6 Q. The house is inert body (jarr)<sup>665</sup> and likewise is the master of the house; however, awareness is with the individual soul. How then does the soul not become aware (of them by itself) so as to be overpowered by the existence? A. The (original) house (of the individual soul) is the lāmakān (lit. with no abode). After it leaves lāmakān and comes to the house of others, it is distracted (from its origin) and (as a result) becomes perplexed, just like a person who arrives in a big city and finds him/herself in the wrong alley, grows worried and is unable to recognize his/her own home. When he/she asks someone (about the house) and that person gives him/her the sign (or whereabouts of his house), then (only) he/she recognizes his/her own house and enters in, he/she is cautious, aware and having a choice. But, as long as the individual soul does not recognize its own home, it comes to the houses of others and is overpowered and so the nature (nafs) of the existence decides for it to be bound and powerless. In a similar way, when a king leaves his throne and sits alone in some isolated place, no one recognizes him as the person that he is, but the moment he sits (once again) on his throne everyone will become obedient to his orders. Similarly, the soul is imprisoned in the existence and is confused and is distracted and forgets about its own self and becomes individual soul (jīv ātmān). However, once it receives the patronage of the perfect master, it ascertains the truth and returns to its (original) home to become supreme soul.*

The questions that Dārā raises throughout the dialogue seem ultimately to focus on the concept of soul: its creation, its journey in this world and its return to its origin. Lāl Dās, in the fifth set of questions and answers, appears to acknowledge this curiosity. Perhaps this is why he,

<sup>663</sup>I am thankful to Prof. Fabrizio Speziale for sharing this view at the Perso-Indica Conference held in Bonn during February 2014.

<sup>664</sup> For example *Risala-i Haqqnuma* has six chapters, despite the fact that Dārā states in his foreword that it was to have only four chapters. It seems that he added two chapters later (see Davis, "Dara," 249, 270, 276). Similarly there are instances which show that he went back to another of his works, i.e., *Sakina* to add a few historical facts (see Hayat, "Concept," 69).

<sup>665</sup> John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English* (New Delhi: 1997), 380

on the basis of what he said earlier to Dārā regarding the individual soul's awareness and consciousness, raises here the question: Why does a conscious and fully awake individual soul take up earthly existence as its abode? He answers his own query by saying that it is the decision of the individual soul to transfer its existence from *lāmakān* (lit. with no abode) to this earthly abode. He compares the individual soul with a person who comes to dwell in an abode owned by a stranger and, lacking authority, performs only what the stranger tells him to do. In this context, for Lāl Dās, the owner of the place is equivalent to the nature of existence (*naḥs-hā-ī wujūd*). Perhaps by *naḥs-hā-ī wujūd* he meant *naḥs-i ammāra* (lower soul).<sup>666</sup> As such, due to this domination the individual soul becomes helpless and follows the directions of the lower soul. However, individual soul has not forgotten its origin completely and retains it (on the level of sub-conscious). Dārā picks up on the issue of 'inertness' from Lāl Dās's answer and continues to question the latter as to why the individual soul, though awake, is overpowered by the lower soul. The reply of Lāl Dās is not direct however; instead, he chooses to talk about the voyage of the individual soul and seems to be answering Question One (above) with more elaboration. He compares the individual soul with a person who has forgotten his path. Using Sufi terminology, he says that the abode of the soul is *lāmakān*. In other words, the origin of the individual soul (*ātman*) is actually *paramātman* (as established in the first four sets of questions and answers). Thus *paramātman* is the abode (also known as *lāmakān*) of the individual soul (*ātman*). Lāl Dās then highlights the steps of this voyage: after the soul leaves *lāmakān* and enters into the domain of others, the individual soul forgets its way and like a lost individual becomes perplexed, worried and unable to recognize his true home. After being provided with guidance, the soul recognizes his own abode and returns to his original home and becomes part of the supreme soul (*paramātman*).<sup>667</sup>

<sup>666</sup> one may point out that Baba Lāl later explains three types of *naḥs*: 'the soul at peace' (*naḥs-i muṭma'ina*), 'the blaming soul' (*naḥs-i lawwāma*) and 'the soul that inspires evil' (*naḥs-i ammāra*) and seems to suggest an equivalence with the three qualities (*gunas*) of nature: purity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and ignorance (*tamas*). For further discussion see above, 142 and below 187, 196.

<sup>667</sup> In one of the Ismaili Ginans, the composer Pir Sadardin uses similar language:

O you living creature,  
[Remember that time] when you were in your mother's womb,  
You were knowledge-able [at that time],  
And you were slowly gradually moving upward  
Such was the difficult time you endured [in the womb]  
O you the living creature,  
You made a promise before coming to this Kaljug,  
[Leaving the womb] your soul understands that it is now free

Lāl Dās recommends almost the same formula. However, he touches on one additional, important subject, i.e., self-recognition. He cites the example of a king who leaves his throne and sits alone in an isolated place. Nobody recognizes the king and his powers until he comes back and sits on his throne. On his return, of course, everybody recognizes him and gives him due respect. Similarly, if the soul moves from place to place and forgets its location of origin, which is *lāmakān*, it will not achieve its true goal of becoming one with *paramātmān*. The voyage of spiritual choice also seems to become a voyage of ‘forgetfulness.’ Similar ideas can be found in popular Sufi literature. For example, Shaykh Fariduddin Attar’s *Mantiq at-Tayr* develops the same idea, where ‘forgetful soul’ returns to its origin after being awakened and guided by its master. Sufi literature emphasizes recollecting that moment (*azal* lit. beginning of the beginning) when God revealed Himself as the Lord of the primordial covenant in the inmost recesses of the human soul (*sirr an-nafs*). The Qur’an too reminds humanity of that moment in the following words: "Am I not your Lord?"<sup>668</sup> As a covenant, the pre-existing souls of all humanity acceded to the lordship of God before the beginning of time.

The prescription offered by Lāl Dās for the return of the soul (*atmān*) to its origin ends with a verse which seems to have been composed by him – very much similar in form and theme with the vernacular poetry of that time. The composition highlights the importance of the ‘Perfect Master’ by stating the difficulty faced by the individual soul in ascending upwards on its voyage. The individual soul implores in this verse that, on its ascent (towards the supreme soul), it should meet with fire and so need the helping hand of the ‘Perfect Master’ to climb the “ladder” successfully. In one of the Ismaili Ginans the idea of a helping hand is expressed in this way:

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Your practice is greed and selfishness.

[In fact] you have broken your promise with your Lord. See Allana, *Ginans*, 226-27.

While in his mother’s womb the individual soul was more knowledgeable and gave his oath of allegiance to the Creator. Similar concept of *alastu* is popular in Sufi writings. However, after coming into this world soul forgot the oath or promise which he made to his Lord. In another passage, Pir Shams offers a recipe for escaping the forgetfulness and ignorance. He says:

Souls have fallen in ignorance;

Due to egoism they have lost their beloved

[Death] will come suddenly and will take [them].

If you accompany your true master,

You will forget about the ignorance and many other things

And you will understand the word of your heart.

The Ismaili Pir is suggesting here that if one wants to forget all other things and follow the right path, one has to seek the company of a true master. (See Ginan Eji Kesri sinha... in *Ginan-e-Sharif* (Karachi: Ismailia Association for Pakistan, 1973) (hereinafter referred to as *Ginan-e-Sharif*), 26.

<sup>668</sup>*alastu bi-rabbikum*, 7:172.

O Beloved,  
 The Creator, the Creator of [this] creation  
 has lead me safe across the sea  
 Pir Sadardin held my hand so that  
 I can safely embark upon my destination<sup>669</sup>.

The word ‘*punjvedi*’ for ladder could also be translated as “five-step ladder.” Lāl Dās may also be deliberately evoking the important universal symbol of ‘mystical ascent’ taken from the events of the Prophets including Prophet Muhammad’s ascension (*isrā’*). According to legend, the Prophet used a ‘ladder (*mi’rāj*) to ascend to the seventh heaven where he experienced God’s presence.<sup>670</sup> It may also mean ‘the ladder of five pure ones.’<sup>671</sup> However, the latter translation is only possible if Lāl Dās is seen as a Gupti Ismaili composer, since it aligns so well with the Shi‘ī understanding. Nonetheless, there is another possibility that the number five, however, could mean the ‘five elements’ - four ‘natural’ i.e. fire, water, earth, air plus word on the top (*lā-makān*) - of which Lāl Dās talks later.<sup>672</sup>

### C 7-9: SOUL - A PARTICLE FROM THE LIGHT OF GOD

**C. 7 Q** *God – the almighty - is perfectly pure. (If, as you say,) a particle from the light of God gets imprisoned in existence to be held (responsible) on the Day of Judgment for good and bad deeds, what is the reason? A. A king with all the requirements of authority sits on his royal throne. His orders are enforced throughout the world and its people. No one has the strength (power) to deny the orders of the one whose orders are obeyed by the world (jahān mutā’). However, if the same king emerges during the night all alone, the guards of the city (police) will arrest him as a thief. Even if he tells them that he is in fact their king but they will not let him go but (instead) admonish him. Similarly, God almighty is pure and is free from all (mubarra) and yet part of the light from God is willingly imprisoned in existence and is powerless and constrained (lit. arrested). Despite this imprisonment, if with the word of the perfect master it (individual soul) realizes regarding itself that it is (lit. I am) a part of the whole (One) and does not get tempted to*

<sup>669</sup> Text of the Gīnan says:

Sakhi Khalak khalakanhaar tene lai tariya ji,  
 Pir Sadardin pakdi bannye bhavsāgar ootariya re  
 See Allana, *Gīnans*, 214-15.

<sup>670</sup> Ibn Ishaq reports the hadith on the authority of Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī:

“After the completion of my business in Jerusalem a ladder was brought to me finer than any I have ever seen... my companion mounted it with me until we came to one of the gates of heaven called the Gate of the watchers. For a complete account of the *mi’rāj* see A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, a translation of Ibn Ishaq’s *Sirat Rasul Allah* (Karachi: Oxford Press, 2011)181-87.

<sup>671</sup> According to popular Shi‘ī understanding “five pure ones” are: Prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah and Hasan and Husayn.

<sup>672</sup> See below, C20 and C23-24.

its own wishes, then there is no interrogation because it is simply pure. Nevertheless, due to the companionship of existence (body) and complete ignorance of its own self, it becomes entangled (arrested) in the wombs of 84 living things (forms of various species of the mineral, vegetative, animal and human kingdoms) – one after the other. **C. 8 Q.** Since it is said that a particle (lit. drop) of the light of God exists in every existence, how can this particle be verified? (or: what is the Truth about that particle?) **A.** Like oil is present in milk. Whenever curd (yogurt) is added to the milk it becomes curdled and from that butter is produced. After this, when butter is heated, oil is extracted by a large filter (lit. drainer). After that the (extracted) oil is never mixed with milk. In another example: like fire in wood, no one recognizes the (potential of) fire present in the (wooden) torch and everyone knows it as the (wooden) torch. (However,) whenever a torch is lit by the heat of another torch, no one speaks about the torch; (instead) everyone knows about fire in this form. When the word (sukhan) of a perfect master is remembered by the heart, (the individual soul) realizes its own self and (as a result) all wishes in existence will be burnt away, (while) that part of the light of God will manifest (itself, free) from existence. Verse: As you move away from the existence of (the lower) self, Due to the remembrance of the Truth, Each and every hair (of body) becomes full of light. **C. 9 Q.** As it is evident that a spark (lit. drop) of the light of God is present in every body, anyone who finds that (spark) finds in his/her own existence. When a human being comes into this world, he/she gets established in this world and forgets the Creator. How then can that spark (lit. drop) achieve realization so that it can reach the sublime (lit. pure) essence? **A.** Without a medium (intercessor), reaching that point (pure essence) is difficult. If someone wants to meet the king without any intermediary, it is impossible. Suppose a bright metallic mirror fallen into the house, but befallen by rust: brightness will not shine in it. Now, if the same mirror is given to a polisher (saiqal gar) and he will polish (saiqal) it to make it bright (again), the mirror, which (earlier) did not show any reflection (lit. sight), will automatically start reflecting (lit. showing) the face. In the same manner, if the self is forsaken and is submitted to the (guidance of a) perfect guide then the guide, through the contemplation of the figures (ṣuwar),<sup>673</sup> will make it (soul) reach lāmakān and attain (salvation). If you need a safe abode (tranquility), then seek the companionship of the dervishes (fuqarā') because tranquility is not present anywhere else. At that level (place) the intermediary is the guide, and without a guide, attaining knowledge is very difficult. Verse: The people of sight (knowledge) who are mirrors of each other, Like mirrors, they are not aware of their own existence, And if you seek light, like a mirror, Do not look unto yourself, so that everyone looks into you. Another example is that of an oyster which sits at the bottom of the salty river. When spring rain (nīsān)<sup>674</sup> trickles and falls, at that time the oyster comes to the surface and opens its mouth, as it needs that drop of (rain)

<sup>673</sup> Another meaning for ṣūr (written like suwar, “forms”) is the trumpet of Isrāfīl summoning humankind to resurrection.

<sup>674</sup> A month from the Syrian calendar corresponds to the month of April. Water of nīsān believed to produce pearls if they fall into shells and venom if they drop upon snakes.



*water, takes it in its mouth and goes down and sits at the bottom (once again). That drop of water becomes a pure pearl. Similarly, if the word of the perfect guide is guarded by keeping it in the heart and that word is understood as the Word, that word makes (the soul) reach (the highest realms of) placeless lāhūt.*

This series of three question and answer sets (questions 7, 8 and 9) is based on the premise that the individual soul is a part of the supreme soul. Dārā pursues this further, saying that if individual soul is a part of the supreme soul (literally a particle from the light of God) then why does the individual soul have to face judgment for good and bad deeds and ascertain its own truthfulness? Moreover, why does it become forgetful after descending to this world? His question implies that, since the individual soul has descended from the supreme soul, it must have the same nature as the supreme soul. As such, the individual soul should always be good, truthful, alert and above judgment. Lāl Dās replies by developing the example he used in the previous set –that of the king who left his throne and returned to reclaim it. The king tries to explain his position but no one believes him for the longest time. It is only after he is recognized that he is able to return to his throne and resume governing. Perhaps Lāl Dās implies here that the individual soul has chosen to leave its abode and, like the king, must not expect to regain its true identity until it returns to its place of origin.

Thus, the individual soul is as essentially pure and blameless as the supreme soul. However, the individual soul has chosen this voyage and in the process has imprisoned itself. Only when it remembers the words of the ‘Perfect Master’ will it become conscious of its identity and recognizes that it is a part of the sum total (supreme soul). At that point it will no longer have any inclination towards worldly temptations and wishes but will be a purified soul safely returned to its origin. According to Lāl Dās, such a soul will not face judgment because it is pure; nonetheless, the individual soul that is too much occupied in self-serving will be condemned to multiple rebirths – and will remain captive in the cycle of being born 84 times from womb to womb.

One can compare this train of thought with the central idea of Attar’s *Conference of the Birds*. The leading character Hoopoe reaches out to the birds - who are in slumber - and awakens them, sending them back to their king. A similar idea can be traced in other Sufi writings such as Ghazzali’s *Risālat at-ṭayr* (Recital of Birds) and Ibn Sina’s *Hayy bin Yaqzān*. These Sufi works contain almost all the ingredients that Lāl Dās is explaining: the Sufi master,

consciousness, the pathway to the king's palace and finally, self-realization.<sup>675</sup> However, at this point Lāl Dās introduces the notion of "84 wombs." This concept, which enjoyed widespread acceptance in the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain belief-systems, represents the punishment for a soul that has failed to attain salvation. An echo of it can also be heard in Ismaili Ginans. Syeda Imam Begum<sup>676</sup> says:

*Vaar chorasi fariyo;  
Tuney saan na avi rey...*

Translation:

You moved 84 times (from womb to womb),  
yet you are shameless (and you are still in slumber).

Dārā continues his questioning on the basis of his belief that the individual soul is akin to the supreme soul. This time he asks: If the individual soul is a drop of the supreme soul, then why does it have to be ascertained? Lāl Dās explains that soul is enveloped in a body and it has to be ascertained to recognize the similar nature shared by the individual soul and the supreme soul. He provides two examples: oil in milk and fire in wooden logs. In his first example Lāl Dās elaborates on the issue of identity, saying that after the oil is extracted from milk – being originally a part of milk – it never loses its identity even if it is thrown back into the milk. Here, perhaps Lāl Dās is equating milk with the physical world of which soul is a part. Once the soul is extracted from this material world – achieved by following the path set by a Sufi master -- then the soul of a person remains pure even if thrown back into the material world; it will not lose its identity as the drop of the oil does. In the second example he shows that, potentially, fire is present in a wooden log; as soon as it is activated the log becomes a torch. Thus, once the flame is ignited the log becomes a torch and it loses its identity as a log of wood; rather, it is known as the flame-carrying torch. Hence in both examples (oil and torch) the hidden essence –once identified and ascertained -- never loses its identity. The path that a soul should follow – he suggests -- involves remembrance (*dhikr*) of the word of a Perfect Master. According to Lāl Dās once the self is recognized through remembrance, all desires, wishes and temptations of the self (*nafs*) are consumed and the soul, which is a part of God's light, emanates from the body. This is also reflected in the verse in which he says: "As you move away from the *nafs* (*nafs-i*

<sup>675</sup> See Farid ud-Din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds*. Translated with an introduction by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (Canada: Penguin Books, 1984).

<sup>676</sup> *Ginan-e-Sharif*, 50.

*ammara*); every hair (of your body) becomes enlightened once it is immersed in the remembrance of the Truth.”

The last question in this series is about the forgetfulness of the soul. Dārā asks Lāl Dās how the soul can achieve realization (leaving behind forgetfulness) and return to the Creator. Lāl Dās’s answer is very precise and vivid: This is impossible without an intercessor. He compares this with the role of “bureaucracy” in gaining access to a king, which is impossible without the intercession of a courtier. The term used here in the manuscript is “*wasīla*,” a Sufi term which can be found in the Qur’an. The Qur’an talks about *wasīla* in the following terms<sup>677</sup>: “O ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah, and seek the *wasīla* (the intercessor) unto Him, and strive in His way in order that ye may succeed.” The Master in Sufism<sup>678</sup> is seen as the *wasīla*, just as the Imam is seen in Shia Islam.<sup>679</sup> Similarly, in Hinduism<sup>680</sup> and Sikhism<sup>681</sup> the intercessor is the *guru* (Master) who guides a novice towards the right path.

In another example, when explaining the importance of the Perfect Man, Lāl Dās speaks of the “polisher,” perhaps alluding to the Perfect Master who removes the rust from the mirror and makes it bright and useful again. According to him, “once a mirror becomes rusted it does not reflect the brightness. However, if the same mirror is given to a polisher (*ṣaiqalgar*), he will restore its polish (*ṣaiqal*) and bring back its brightness. The mirror, which originally had lost its power of reflection (lit. sight), will automatically start reflecting (lit. showing) the face.” The symbol of mirror in this answer alludes to the soul or heart of a wayfarer. Sufi literature has many similar examples of such a symbol used in various stories and parables. One of the more popular stories in the *Mathnawi* is about a mirror. Mawlana Rumi relates the tale of a painting competition between Chinese and Greek artists. The former created a marvelous painting on one

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<sup>677</sup> أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ

<sup>678</sup> For the comparison and position of qutb and Imam see Scimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 200.

<sup>679</sup> Imam Jafar as-Sadiq said: “We (Imams) are the gates of God. We are the medium for His people. He who approaches Him through us is brought near Him. He who seeks our intercession is interceded for. He who seeks His favours through us is favoured by Him. He who turns away from us goes astray.” See Qazi Numan, *Kitabul Himma* translated by Jawad al-Muscati and A.M. Moulavi, 42. Cf. Kassam Ali M.J. *Ever Living Guide* (Karachi: Ismailia Association Pakistan), 31.

<sup>680</sup> Sankara defined a *guru* as one who is firmly convinced that he or she is the supreme consciousness; one whose mind is rooted in the highest reality. (See *A Concise Dictionary*, 133)

<sup>681</sup> Pashaura Singh defines guru as:

The channel through which the voice of Akal Purakh [the Eternal One] becomes audible..Nanak became the embodiment of the eternal Guru only when he received the divine Word and conveyed it to his disciples. The same spirit manifested itself in his successors. See Willard G. Oxtoby, Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain. *World Religions Eastern Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), 123.

wall whereas the Greeks only polished their assigned wall. Both teams were separated by a thick curtain. When the king came to see the results, the curtain was lifted and he was in awe because both walls had a similar painting except that the one which was reflecting the other was brighter than the original. The Greeks were adjudged the winners for having converted their wall into a mirror. Ismā‘il Rusukhi Anqarawī (d.1041/1631), the great Mevlevi commentator on the *Mathnawi* and contemporary of Dārā Shukōh, explained the same verses as follows:

(The Sufis) have polished their hearts – which are purified of greed, lust, avarice, and hatred – from the rust of ‘others besides’ (God); they have purified and burnished (their hearts) with the remembrance of God (*dhikr Allah*).<sup>682</sup>

Lāl Dās is applying a similar analogy -- the heart as a mirror which has grown rusty-- but he differs in prescribing a method for removing the rust. He emphasizes the need for total and complete submission to the Master. Once the self has submitted, it is the Master who will remove the rust, rather than the wayfarer trying to polish his or her own mirror. For Lāl Dās, it is the Perfect Master who, by removing all the dirt and rust, brings brightness (life) to the soul. Later, in the context of the importance of the Master he quotes a quatrain from Bābā Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (Kāshī) which beautifully expresses the qualities of a mirror: it reflects what is in front of the mirror and the mirror’s own identity is forsaken – the object which is in front of the mirror sees its own self in the mirror and nothing else. Thus, subject becomes object erasing all differences. Moreover, mirror exists for others and does not have any identity. Similarly the people of purity are so humble that the identities of their own personalities do not exist, such that when other people see the people of purity they only see their own reflection. Thus the message of the poetical composition is that people of purity are needed like mirrors to reflect other personalities. By showing others their own reality they guide them.

For Lāl Dās, the connection with the Perfect Master is not only important for salvation; it is also a source of tranquility. He says: “If you need a safe abode (tranquility) then tranquility is in the companionship of the dervishes (*fuqrā*). Anywhere else, tranquility is not present.” Not only is the Perfect Master needed for tranquility he is also needed for the sacred word which should be remembered and guarded in the heart. Lāl Dās ends his answer with the example of an oyster. He perceives a disciple who waits for the Perfect Master as an oyster waiting for the

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<sup>682</sup> See Kenan Rifai’s *Listen: Commentary on the Spiritual Couplets of Mevlana Rumi*. Translated by Victoria Holbrook. Louisville, Kentucky, 2013.

material to create a pearl. Much as an oyster waits for the rain and comes out of the depths to absorb the heavenly drop and after swallowing the drop goes back to the depths to create a precious pearl out of that drop, similarly a disciple takes the Word of his master and works on it to connect him/herself with his/her master.

In a nutshell, in the above three sets of questions and answers the discussion continues the theme of ascent to the top, made possible thanks to the power of the Word given by the master. The soul ascends to the *lāhūt* (the ‘non-place’ of divine nature) i.e. its absoluteness.<sup>683</sup>

## C 10 – 12: CREATION; THE WILL OF THE SUSTAINER

*C. 10 Q Why has the drop of the divine light come into the ‘veil of existence’ (at all)? What does this mean? A (It is due to) the will of the Sustainer. C. 11 Q God almighty is without wish; how is it then that He wishes? A As particles of the sun, having turned into fire, pass through water and enter into every piece of wood without any medium, the soul in the same way enters into the veil of existence. When one piece of wood is rubbed by another piece of wood, fire springs up, burning other pieces of wood and the light of the fire merges into the (light and) strength of the sun. Similarly, the sea and a wave of the sea are said to be two but (in fact) they are one. So too with gold and golden jewelry: earrings and bracelets etc. are called jewelry; however, in the end, they all are gold. Wherever, with the generosity and kindness of the perfect master, heart, spirit, intellect and wisdom become firm, and the jewelry disappears, the light of soul manifests (itself). It exists everywhere but is free from the veil of existence. If it is asked: What does this mean: Is there any other purpose than creation of the existent? Nobody knows almighty Creator. (Only) he who knows himself, knows (really), so that in reality there is no difference in the self nor will there be. C. 12 Q After that the emperor (Prince) said: There is a great difference between gold and jewelry. In the beginning, gold is pure until the time a goldsmith makes it into jewelry by adding silver to it. When gold becomes (jewelry) it loses its value. In the same way, Allah almighty is pure. (However) it (soul) descends into the existence and due to the impurities of five senses it then becomes polluted and enters into the 84 wombs of various creatures. What is the reason for this? A It is because of the mighty companionship of existence, much in the same way as water from the Ganges becomes impure when it is put in a blue indigo bag. However, if the water from the Ganges is poured from the same bag back into the Ganges, it remains the Ganges. Moreover, when jewelry is put in a melting pot and with the heat of a fire brought to it, it is melted; with the beating of a hammer, it becomes a thin film; and when*

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<sup>683</sup> For this theme (including the power of the Word given by the master and the ascent in five stages to *lā-makān*) see Professor Landolt’s intro to *Isfarāyīnī*, *Le Révélateur des Mystères*.

*salt is rubbed into it and the heat of fire is applied, that burns silver away, leaving pure gold behind which does not have any less value (than pure gold). If the wish (or want) of existence is burnt in the existence (body) and with the word of a perfect guide one recognizes his/her own self, (then) it is nothing but pure, and does not enter into the 84 wombs. However, if the wish (or want) of the existence is not abandoned and (the soul) remains inclined towards the wishes and desires, then it moves through 84 wombs of the various creatures and becomes entangled (in that situation) due to his/her own wishing, and there is no doubt about it.*

The example of a pearl may have compelled Dārā to ask Lāl Dās why a drop of water has to leave its origin (a river) and acquire independent existence. The reply of Lāl Dās is precise: “It is the will of the Sustainer.” Then in the question-answer set that follows, Dārā picks up on the ‘will of God’ and asks: If God is without wish then how can he wish? Perhaps he is referring here to the understanding that God is perfect and complete; as such the idea of “his wish or will” contradicts that understanding and belief. However, he was aware of the *hadith qudsi* “I was a hidden treasure, and I wanted to be known so I created the world” which he quotes in his work *Risala-i Haqnuma*, written some years earlier.<sup>684</sup> God’s wish was translated into *kun* and as a result creation came into being. Later, as we have pointed out, he introduces in *Majma’* the word *kun* and talks about Bāshist-- whose thought resonates with the *hadīth* (quoted above). In Chapter II, entitled ‘Discourse on the Senses,’ he writes:

Consequently, Bāshist says that when the Lord desired to be determined as the only one, His will was transformed into *paramātmā*; and on the increase of this determination, the stage of *ahankār* was attained and, when a second determination was added to it, *mahātat* who is *Aql-i kull* (Perfect Wisdom) received its name (identity).<sup>685</sup>

While Dārā doesn’t directly compare Bāshist’s saying with the popular *hadith*, he does quote the same *hadīth* in the first chapters of both *Majma’* and *Samudra* in the course of discussing the concept of ‘*Ishq* (love). If Dārā was expecting Lāl Dās to think along the lines of either the *hadīth* or Bāshist’s statement as cited above, perhaps to his surprise, Lāl Dās approached the issue from a different angle, offering three examples: sunshine, a river and jewelry. In the first

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<sup>684</sup> Dārā writes: “Oh friend, when the Pure Essence and the Real Sun and the stage of attributelessness appears which is announced by *was a hidden treasure* like *loved* in friendship and throws off the veil of concealment, (then) the Perfection of the Essence becomes linked to the pleasure of union and witnessing the vision of itself.” See Dārā, *Risāla-i Haqq nūmā* cf. Davis, “Dara,” 275.

<sup>685</sup> Dārā, *Majma’*, 85.

one, he shows that, as sunshine is nothing but the natural effect of the sun, similarly, individual soul is not a separate identity; it is an effect of the Creator. Furthermore, since sunshine has the same qualities as the sun, *ātman* has qualities similar to those of *paramātman*. Thus, once absorbed by wood, sunshine manifests its potential when sticks are rubbed together and they release fire and light, which in turn merges with sunshine -- returning in this way to its point of origin. The second example is of waves in a river. Though they could be seen as two different identities they are (in fact) one – a wave rises from the river and then returns to it. The third example is of jewelry, which is essentially gold in various forms – bracelets, earrings, etc. Lāl Dās emphasizes here the role of the Perfect Master in banishing jewelry and thereby bringing out the reality of the gold. Similarly, form disappears and the light of the soul manifests.

Leaving aside the two examples of sunshine and a river, Dārā takes up the third example of jewelry in his next question and opens the discussion by stating that there is a huge difference between gold and jewelry made of gold as the goldsmith mixes silver with gold before turning it into jewelry. As such, gold loses its value. Similarly, Allah Almighty, when he descends into the world of existence (very bold words! perhaps he means soul as a part of the Almighty) becomes polluted due to the impurities of the five senses (terrestrial soul) and ends up taking on various forms in 84 wombs. Why does this happen? Lāl Dās's reply is that it is due to the companionship of body. He offers the example of the river Ganges – when the pure water of the Ganges is put into an indigo bag it takes on the impurities of the bag but when the water from the bag is thrown back into the Ganges it becomes the water of the Ganges – pure and clean. Similarly, he says, when jewelry is subjected to high temperature and salt, the process disintegrates the silver and other impurities, leaving behind pure gold. Lāl Dās compares wishes and wants with such impurities and suggests that the process of remembrance of the word given by the Master burns away wishes and desires, leaving the soul pure and awake (i.e., having self-recognition) and no longer obliged to undergo the cycle of being reborn into 84 wombs.

In explaining the nature of jewelry Lāl Dās uses the Punjabi term *wālā*, which technically means an earring. The manuscript retains the term in the original language, perhaps confirming that the language used by Lāl Dās was the vernacular (Urdu/Hindi) which was later translated into Persian. Lāl Dās also seems to have been well-versed in the process of extracting pure gold

from jewelry.<sup>686</sup> The Punjabi term and his expertise could both support the assumption that Lāl Dās was a Gupti Ismaili, or at least had some close connections with Guptis, for it is well known that Gupti Ismailis were from Punjab and often practiced the profession of goldsmiths.<sup>687</sup>

The language used in the corresponding passages of the *Risāla* is similar to that used in this set of questions and answer. For example, Dārā concludes the *Risāla* by saying that:

Oh friend, the many verses and hadiths and sayings of former sheikhs are an indication of this idea. If you acquire the joy of finding Him, you will behold the sun of reality from every mote. When you have brought this connection [between the mote and the sun] to perfection, no fancy will remain in the essence of your becoming, and truly pleasure and desire—which are witness to this singularity—will spontaneously rise up from inside you, making the whole from your part and making the sea from rain drops and making you the sun from particles and making existence from non-existence.<sup>688</sup>

In the above passage he writes about the connection of the soul with Reality by using two examples: sun and sea. Both are mentioned in the above question and answer set; however, they are used by Lāl Dās and not by Dārā. There seem to be two possibilities as to why the language is so similar. The first possibility is that he acquired this understanding by discussing matters with Lāl Dās and later inserted this material in *Risāla*. Craig Davies says of the *Risāla*:

Oddly enough this treatise is divided into six, not four, sections by section headings. There may be a number of possible explanations. However, it seems most likely that none of the sections headings existed at the time Dara composed this. *Majma'al-bahrayn*, for instance written some nine years later, comes down to us in some manuscripts with no headings. Another possibility is that the last two section headings were added later to correspond with the content of each section. One due to this is that section six entitled *Wahdatal-wujud* does not mention the term *wahdat al-wujud* in the section.<sup>689</sup>

The second possibility is that the first two examples of sun and water were already known to Sufis and naturally to Dārā; therefore, they passed over these and concentrated on the third example of gold and jewelry.

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<sup>686</sup> As a son of a goldsmith, I have personally watched similar process of extraction of gold many times.

<sup>687</sup> For a discussion on Gupti Ismailis see above Chapter III.

<sup>688</sup> Davis, "Dara," 281.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., 249.



### C 13: FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION

*C. 13 Q They say that things pass in accordance with destiny and they also say that nothing lies in one's own hands. Destiny is decreed by God almighty. If good and bad are from the Almighty, why then is one considered responsible for his/her own performance?*

*A The act of the Creator was that He created Adam as a compendium of wisdom. More is the effect of companionship and the power to choose. For example, a spider makes its own web but catches its own feet and hands, which it is difficult to disentangle later. Also (to think of another example), a monkey by whose side is placed a pot that has a narrow opening and in which beans have been thrown. The monkey will put his hand inside the pot and grab beans in his fist but cannot bring his hand out of the pot due to the narrow opening. It (the monkey) will not leave its handful and imagines that a person has caused his hand to get stuck; this is due to his own foolishness. If a person (who is stuck like monkey and spider) opens its fist and breaks the spider's web, achieves liberation in this case. The Creator is far beyond good and bad and for this (reason) every person has to face the results of his/her own actions. And until the time he/she gives him/herself over to the companionship of a perfect master he/she will not achieve liberation. Otherwise (i.e. without the master), according to his/her own good or bad deeds he/she will keep himself/herself entrapped.*

Earlier, we saw how the discussion focused on whether, if the individual soul is a part of the supreme soul, it has to face judgment for good and evil deeds. In this set Dārā once again brings up the issue of good and bad actions performed by an individual and the justification for his being held responsible for such acts. Dārā asks Lāl Dās:

[T]here is nothing in one's own hands except that fate which is decreed by God Almighty. If good and bad are from the Almighty, why then is one's own performance held against him?

Lāl Dās is very clear in his answer – each human being is responsible for his own acts because God has granted him the wisdom needed to exercise his power of choice. As such, a human being is responsible for the choice he makes, for he can liberate himself by letting go of his choice. He provides two examples of creators whose work compromises their own liberty. His first example is a spider, which becomes entangled in its own web.<sup>690</sup> In the second, a monkey's hand is caught in the narrow mouth of a container of chick peas because he has made a fist

<sup>690</sup>The parable of the spider and its web is told in a different context in *Mundaka Upanishad*:

“The spider emits and draws in (its thread)...so the whole universe arises from the Imperishable.” Roma explains: The idea is that just as a spider creates the web out of itself, yet itself remains untransformed and unchanged, so Brahman creates the universe out of Himself, yet Himself undergoes no changes whatsoever. See Dārā, *Samudra*, 131

containing the peas.<sup>691</sup> However, if both the spider and the monkey would only give up their attachments, i.e., the spider by breaking his web and the monkey by opening his fist and releasing the peas, they will be liberated. However, in the case of human beings, liberation and salvation depend on complete submission to the perfect master; otherwise, one will remain bound to the world due to one's own actions. Perhaps this means that once a person submits himself to the perfect master, his personality is transformed and he learns to transcend good or evil acts.

In manuscript A, a similar type of discussion on freewill can be found, specifically in questions 43 and 44.<sup>692</sup> There Lāl Dās explains in his replies that free will and divine providence operate in different ways. For him, they play their respective roles in everyone's life from birth until death. He alludes to the example of an infant who later becomes a youth. In the beginning, when the infant is in his mother's womb, it is divine providence alone that takes care of his development. When the baby comes into the world half of his free will is granted to him so that when the baby wishes to have milk, he cries so that the mother gives suck to the baby. Once the baby grows into a youth, he develops the faculty of reason allowing him to distinguish between good and evil, in effect creating free will. This is why the small baby can enter the harem and suck at its mother's breasts or those of the other women without there being any evil in it. But when he grows up and becomes an adolescent, the harem gates are closed to him. At this age, if he submits to and transcends reason, and has no longer any desire, God will come to him and provide for his subsistence.

In manuscript B, at question 36 of the third majlis, Lāl Dās defines the nature of the actions of a devotee while performing worship. He explains that during the act of worship one should delegate all powers to one's master and perform the act without having any wish for a

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<sup>691</sup>Native [Indian] tribes used to catch monkeys by hollowing out a coconut and filling it with rice or other delicacies, then leaving it tethered to a tree for a monkey to find. A monkey would reach in and grab the desired delicacy and be trapped because the hole had been deliberately made just big enough for a flexible hand to enter but not for a closed fist to leave. In short order, the monkey went from getting his dinner to being someone else's dinner. Nathan S. Collier posted on November 30, 2007 on NSC Blog. Retrieved on July 10, 2014 from <http://www.nscblog.com/miscellaneous/the-monkeys-fist-an-ancient-parable-for-modern-times/>

<sup>692</sup> Also see Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 305.

particular result.<sup>693</sup> Lāl Dās tells Dārā that such an act will be appreciated by the Merciful and Compassionate one. He says:

If you delegate your power, then O my King, understand that generosity of the Gracious and the compassion of the Merciful are distinct gifts bestowed (lit. returned) during the generous time. Refuge might come from His court and (you might) become unique because well-being is there. Moreover, the clarity depends on the will of God, (His) nature and (His) intention. The wise people remain silent and yet the excited and ignorant reveal this (secret) with their tongue. O King, the path of the Truth is narrow and the world of wishes (to have others' possessions) is dark.

#### C 14: THE PEOPLE OF PURITY

*C. 14 Q. The way of the world is to eat, to see, to talk, to listen and to sleep and use all (one's) limbs. The people of purity also –although they are not like the other group – more or less use those (senses and limbs). What then is the difference between people of the world and the people of purity? A. What matters is the heart, the people of purity guard their hearts while people of the world give their hearts away. For example, when a child is embraced by an unfamiliar woman it is not (considered) a vice. However, if she looks at a young man, a hundred vices will be attributed to her. Similarly, the people of purity live as child does. However, people of the world follow the ways of the world. Another example is that of the flower of the lotus, which always stays in water. Whenever the water (level) goes higher, it (the lotus) maintains a level higher (than water); however it will not leave the water and the water will not drown it. Moreover (another example is) how the tongues of a few (people) taste oil and (yet) do not become greasy and stay dry. In the same way, the people of purity simply stay in the world while the people of the world remain occupied by negligence or unconsciousness.*

In our discussion above of Question 5 on the perfect men we learned that one of the names for members of this group is 'people of purity' (*ṣāfi nihādān*). In the next seven questions (14-21), Dārā poses a series of queries regarding this group. He begins his enquiry by asking how the 'people of purity' differ from the people of the world. Then he goes on to ask about their wishes, their stages in sleep, their higher status, their stay in this world and their delayed salvation.

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<sup>693</sup>Lāl Dās's idea resonates with the discussion between Arjuna and Krishna in *Bhagvad Gita*. Krishna explains the importance of Action. For Krishna, Actions are best offered to him as an act of *bhakti* to him. Krishna teaches that *niskamakarma*, to act without desire for the fruits of one's actions is the ideal way to perform actions: He says: "Having abandoned attachment to the fruits of action, always content and independent, he does nothing even though he is engaged in action. Having no desires, with his mind and self controlled, abandoning all possessions, performing action with the body alone, he commits no sin." See *The Bhagvad Gita* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 56-57.

In this question, which in terms of content is similar to the texts found in manuscripts A and B, Dārā asks Lāl Dās how the people of purity differ from the people of the world, since on the level of appearance (*zāhir*) both are identical – both groups eat, drink, sleep and perform their work with their bodies. This identical appearance is a theme encountered elsewhere, such as in the Qur'an where it is said that the Meccans questioned Prophet Muhammad's authority, since they saw him as similar to them in appearance, and therefore refused to recognize him as superior to them (i.e., as an elevated soul). The Qur'an condemns their understanding and their self-comparison with the Prophet in the following words: 'See thou (O apostle) how they coin comparisons for thee! But they have gone astray, so they shall not be able to find the (right) way' (25:9). Rumi likewise deals with this issue in his *Mathnavī*, where he writes:

Do not compare the actions of the people of purity by the analogy of yourself. Though *sher* (شیر) and *shir* (شیر) are similar in writing (nonetheless, very different in meaning). Both species of bee (زنبور) (common bee and honey bee) eat and drink from the same place but from the one comes out a sting and from the other one comes out honey. Both species of deer (آهو) eat grass and drink water from the same place. One produces dung and other produces musk.<sup>694</sup>

Lāl Dās approaches the question in a different way. Addressing the 'why' of the issue – i.e., why the people of purity are different from others -- he explains using the three examples of a child, a lotus and a soldier. In the case of a child, Lāl Dās emphasizes pureness of heart. For him, the people of purity control their hearts and therefore they become innocent like children. Therefore, if a female stranger embraces a child it is not considered an act of vice. However if a young man who is a stranger to her so much as looks at her, a hundred vices are involved. In manuscript A, Dārā's question is similar; however, the answer contains a few differences and some more details. Lāl Dās says:

For example, a young man and an infant are similar in their faculties – eating, drinking, seeing, listening, and sleeping. If a child not related to the woman puts his arms around her, there will be no embarrassment. However, if a young man, a stranger to the family, looks at her, a hundred blames will be laid on him. Those who have pure heart (soul) live like infants. The world is what the inhabitants of the earth make of it.<sup>695</sup>

گرچه ماند درنیشن شیر و شیر  
لیک شد ز آن نیش و زین دیگر عسل  
هر دو گون زنبور خوردند از محل  
هر دو گون آهو گیا خوردند و آب

See for the complete text and translation of 3 verses of *Mathnavi* in Reynold A. Nicholson's *The Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi*; Edited by Reynold A. (Nicholson. London: E.J. Brill, 1925), 18.

<sup>695</sup> Manuscript A, Question 7; also see Huart and Massignon, 'Les entertiens,' 291.

In the example of an innocent child, it is noteworthy that in the manuscript A the object is woman who if embraced by a child will not matter but when a young man looks at her it becomes a blameworthy act. However in the manuscript C it is a woman who if embraces a child will not matter but if she looks at a stranger young man it creates a blameworthy act. The major difference is about the blameworthy act. A child is 'pure' and "blameless" whether embraced by a woman or embraces a woman. However, it is a young man or a young woman who become blameworthy by embracing the other. Nonetheless, the rendering of manuscript C seems to reflect the sociological aspect of the Indian society. It is often a woman who is more vulnerable and is blamed easily than a man.

In the second example offered as explanation, Lāl Dās uses the analogy of the lotus which floats on water without actually being immersed and maintains its height just above the surface.<sup>696</sup> Finally, the third example is that of a soldier whose tongue comes into contact with oil; however, it does not absorb any of the oil and remains unaffected by this contact. All three examples emphasize that the nature of the people of purity remains unique and untainted by the society and circumstances surrounding it (even though the last example of a soldier seems to be an insertion from a later time).<sup>697</sup> Lāl Dās intends by them to show how the people of purity live in this world but do not get involved in it.

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<sup>696</sup> The example of the lotus is very common in Indian culture; the majority of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain temples feature engravings of the lotus and the literature speaks a great deal about it. In Hinduism, the lotus (also known as *padma* or *kamal*) generally represents beauty and non-attachment. The lotus is rooted in the mud but floats on the water without becoming wet or muddy. Though there are other water plants that bloom above the water, it is only the lotus which, due to the strength of its stem, regularly extends eight to twelve inches above the surface of water. The *Bhagavad Gita* reminds its followers to be like the lotus. It says: "One who performs his duty without attachment, surrendering the results unto the Supreme Lord, is unaffected by sinful action, as the lotus leaf is untouched by water" (*Bhagavad Gita* 5.10). In Buddhism, the lotus represents spiritual development: the roots of the flower are in the mud, the stem grows up through water and the flower lies pristinely above the water, enjoying the sunlight. In a similar way spiritual growth begins from the mud of materialism, passes through the water of experience and finally enjoys the sunshine of enlightenment.

<sup>697</sup> Reference here to the use of rifles and pistols is a sign that the example does not go back to the time of Dārā Shukōh. Firearms were more prevalent after the demise of Aurangzēb. The addition may date from as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the main reasons for the mutiny of the soldiers of the East India Company in 1857 was the use of cartridges in their rifles which were greased with animal fat. The soldiers had to bite them to use them and were as a result at risk of consuming pig or cow fat which was used in the production of tallow. This was against their religion (pork was offensive to Muslims and beef to Hindus).

## C 15: WISH OF THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

*C. 15 Q Since people of purity are in the world, do they have a wish in their hearts to meet the persons of the world (lit. master of the world) or not? If they are approached by the people of the world what do you think (they should do)? A As people, small or large some of them carrying loads on their heads, travel the road between India and Khurasan and out of fatigue and thirst, wish for water and the shadow of a tree, and (on arriving) under a tree eagerly take their loads off their heads and take some rest - the tree only content that people may come and sit under its shadow - in the same way, the people of purity stay in the world and live without any wish. (This is) because their wishes have already been burnt inside their existence and they have reached the Truth and so are known as the people of purity.*

In asking this question, Dārā is seeking Lāl Dās's opinion about the people of purity and whether they entertain the desire to meet with kings or rulers or if people of the world show desire to see them, what would they do. Lāl Dās uses the example of a tree to explain that the people of purity are like places of shade or shelter providing rest and tranquility for anyone wishing to lay down his burden and restore his spirit. The tree, Baba seems to be saying, is of course approached by the busy travelling people in the desert and naturally spends its comfort to them but does not really care whether they take their chance from its shadow.

As for the wishes of the people of purity, these no longer exist as they have been consumed by the flame in their bodies.<sup>698</sup> Incidentally, in the meeting between Lāl Dās and Dārā, the role of Lāl Dās reflects this image of a tree and the shelter it provides. It was Dārā who went to him and not other way round. Moreover, their meeting places were mausoleums and parks and not the grand Mughal palaces of Lahore. In the second part of his question, Dārā maintains that the people of the world often approach a king or *sāhib-i dunya* and therefore asks Lāl Dās for his opinion on the issue. This second part of the question suggests that Dārā may have had more on his mind than one can perceive superficially. As mentioned earlier, he had raised the issue of his

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<sup>698</sup>The idea of burning is very interesting here, it resonates with the Rumi's understanding mentioned in *Mathnavi* and later explained in Anqarawi's commentary. Rumi says: Ignite a fire of love in (your) soul; Burn up thoughts and explanations completely. According to Anqarawi it means: Ignite a fire of love for God in your soul and heart and make the pretensions of words and speech (your) enemy. Because the desire of the hypocritical ego is (manifested) through these eloquent expressions. Verse 1763 from "The Mathnawî-yé Ma'nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi. Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation), Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration) First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/8/01.

being approached by people in the garb of mystics to impress him and had admitted his discomfort in dealing with them in manuscript A.<sup>699</sup> Here the question is formulated differently, however issue is same, Dārā asks Lāl Dās:

Even as my heart longs for *fuqarā'*, people come (to me) in the garb of *darvish* for the sake of receiving more honor for themselves. However, when the truth comes out regarding this matter, my heart feels very bad (and) in fact (at that time) I prefer to abstain from them.<sup>700</sup>

To this Lāl Dās replies:

Do not close this path, because the people of Allah come from every path. Like someone who always picks up stones (indiscriminately), it is possible that he/she may also find the philosopher's stone.<sup>701</sup>

Dārā is told by Lāl Dās that he should keep his heart and also his doors open to such people - maybe in this way he would find someone who is a genuine mystic. Was Dārā asking the above question regarding the people of purity merely to gain clarity respecting the people who approached him as king or crown prince? By raising that question he clearly wanted to know how to consider such people. But could they be seen as the people of purity? Lāl Dās's answer is clear: the people of purity are not like the people approaching Dārā because the people of purity do not have any wish to come and see a king or prince. However, when he earlier tells Dārā "do not close this path" implying that he should continue meeting with the people even if they come in the garb of mystics, he was perhaps telling Dārā to act like the people of purity and become like a tree to provide people indiscriminately with the shelter of hope, peace and tranquility.

## C 16 -17: SLEEP AND DREAMS

*C. 16 Q. The time when the people of world are asleep is known as the inner world (malakūt) and in the Hindi language it is known as the state of sleep (soyan), To which stage do the people of purity belong and where do the people of the world belong? A. The people of purity remain at the level of the divine power (jabarūt). This stage is known as the permanent felicity (sakhūpat) in Hindi whereas the people of world are at the level of unconsciousness. A person who is conscious in wakefulness is awake in sleep, whereas*

<sup>699</sup> See Huart and Massignon, 'Les entretiens,' 298.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid., also see manuscript B, Majlis 1, Question no 26.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

*the one who is negligent in wakefulness likewise remains unconscious in sleep. C. 17 Q. When the people of the world go into the state of unconsciousness, some dreams become true after they are awoken. What do you say about this? A. Three qualities (gunas) of nature: purity (sattva), passion (rajas) and ignorance (tamas) are the states in sleep. In Persian they are known as 'the soul at peace' (nafs-i muṭma'ina), 'the blaming soul' (nafs-i lawwāma) and 'the soul that inspires evil' (nafs-i ammāra). Whatever appears in the state of passion and ignorance is false, whereas that which appears in the state of purity (sattva), meaning when the soul is at peace, manifests after awakening (is true). When the heart moves towards the level of purity (sattva) then whatever is seen in (the state of) purity, becomes certitude.*

In the following 2 sets of questions and answers, the discussion between Dārā and Lāl Dās focuses on sleep and dreams. Dārā first introduces the idea of level of the Invisible world (*malakūt*) for the people of world providing a Hindi word *soyen* for the sleep. He then enquires as to which level corresponds to the people of purity and which to the people of the world. The answer of Lāl Dās is that the people of purity belong to the level of *Jabrūt*, which he further equates with the *sakhūpat* (permanent felicity). In contrast to the people of purity, the people of the world remain at the level of unconsciousness. A person who is conscious in wakefulness is in the identical state of consciousness during sleep, whereas the one who is negligent in wakefulness will remain likewise during sleep.

In manuscript A the question asked by Dārā is simple and makes no reference to the context of sleep; however, the answer given by Lāl Dās turns on this subject.<sup>702</sup> Dārā asks: what are the respective ranks of the people of purity and the people of the world? To this, Lāl Dās replies: the people of purity live in *Jabrūt*, which is *sakhūpat* (permanent felicity)<sup>703</sup>, whereas the people of world are deprived of consciousness; they are neither in the state of wakefulness nor in that of sleep and are thus excluded from *Jabrūt*.

Lāl Dās mentions here only one of the four worlds, or four levels of consciousness, referred to in various Sufī works. Later, in the same manuscript A, Dārā enquires “What is the sleep of the *faqīrs*?” To which Lāl Dās replies:

It is a sleep in which a man quits all worldly ambitions and liberates himself from ‘you and me.’ Thus one sleeps oblivious to all the affairs of the world. Perhaps this sleep of

<sup>702</sup> Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 297

<sup>703</sup> Ibid., Massignon keeps *sakhūnat* in the text instead of *sakhūpat*.



the *faqīrs* is equivalent to *jognanda* (yoga of sleep), as it is expressed in Hindi -- that sleep which frees a person from the daily cares of the world, a liberation (*moksha*).<sup>704</sup>

In section 7 of his later work *Majma'*, entitled 'Discourse on the Four Worlds,' Dārā produces a short and precise explanatory note about the levels of *Nāsūt*, *Malakūt*, *Jabarūt* and *Lāhūt*. He says:

(1) *Jāgrat* is identical with *Nāsūt* (or, the Human World), which is the world of manifestation and wakefulness; (2) *Sapan*, which is identified with *Malakūt* (or, the Invisible World), is the world of souls and dreams; (3) *Sakhūpat* is identical with *Jabarūt* (or, the Highest World), in which the traces of the both worlds disappear and the distinction between 'I' and 'Thou' vanishes – whether you see it with your eyes open or closed...; (4) *Turiya* is identical with *Lāhūt* (or, the World of Divinity), which is (identical with) Pure Existence, encircling, including and covering all the worlds...<sup>705</sup>

In his *Samudra* Dārā corrects the term *Sakhūpat* with the term *Suṣupti*, which means deep sleep or sleep without dreams.<sup>706</sup> The scheme of comparison in *Majma'* has been criticized by Roma Chaudhary in the following terms:

The Indian view of *Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Suṣupti* does not seem to have any real similarity with the Sufi view of *Nāsūt*, *Malakūt* and *Jabarūt*. The *Nāsūt* or the Human World, of course is like the state of *Jāgrat*. But the *Malakūt* or the Invisible World of Angels (Heavens) is by no means parallel to the state of *Svapna*, which is merely a state of dreaming – nothing more....<sup>707</sup>

Yet in another passage Chaudhary says:

These [four stages] are not taken as stages in the evolution of God, or descent of God to the World. Conversely *Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Suṣupti* are also not considered higher and higher stages bringing man near to God or stages of ascent of man to God... these are, as a matter of fact, only taken to be ordinary psychological and empirical states of soul...<sup>708</sup>

The above passages suggest that the comparisons made by Dārā in *Majma'* touching on this particular subject represent the clear influence of Lāl Dās's own interpretation of these spiritual states and do not appear to be based on any Indian philosophical work.

<sup>704</sup>Massignon edits *moksha* as *mokab*. However, *moksha* seems to be more appropriate. See Huart and Massignon, "Les entretiens," 312.

<sup>705</sup>Dārā *Majma*, 47.

<sup>706</sup>A *Concise Dictionary*, 306.

<sup>707</sup>Dārā, *Samudra*, 60. Though Roma dismisses the comparison however ironically partly agrees with it!

<sup>708</sup>Dārā, *Samudra*, 60.

In the context of the people of purity, and right after inquiring into their status in the manuscript C, Dārā goes on to ask Lāl Dās about dreams. He particularly asks about those dreams which, after awakening, become ‘sure knowledge.’ As a Sufi master himself he was aware of the Sufi tradition of believing in the dreams of the prophets as signs from God. For example, the dreams of Abraham<sup>709</sup> and Joseph<sup>710</sup> are mentioned in the Qur’an – the former believed in the dream’s message literally and offered his son for sacrifice, whereas the latter knew the correct interpretations of the dreams to guide others. Dārā also believed in the truthfulness of his own dreams: witness for example his allegiance to Miyan Mir on the basis of the latter’s accepting him in a dream.<sup>711</sup> Moreover, he mentions other dreams which empowered him with knowledge. For example, he changed his attitude towards the poet Sanā’ī<sup>712</sup> and accepted the individual ranking of four Caliphs.<sup>713</sup> He was also instructed in a dream to translate *Jog Bashist*.<sup>714</sup> Perhaps all the above dreams were, for him, examples of ‘sure knowledge.’

In response, Lāl Dās explains the three qualities of sleep which are defined as the states that the sleeper experiences: *sātik*, *rājas* and *tāmas*. He compares them with *naḥs-i ammāra*,

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<sup>709</sup> Qur’an mentions Prophet Abraham’s dream in Chapter 37:

And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Abraham) said: O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then, when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had flung him down upon his face. We called unto him: O Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! thus do We reward the good. Lo! that verily was a clear test. Then We ransomed him with a tremendous victim. And We left for him among the later folk (the salutation): Peace be unto Abraham! (verses 102 -109)

<sup>710</sup> Qur’an in Chapter 12 provides detail of the dreams Prophet Joseph interpreted. For example he interprets a dream of the king:

And the king said: Lo! I saw in a dream seven fat kine which seven lean were eating, and seven green ears of corn and other (seven) dry. O notables! Expound for me my vision, if ye can interpret dreams. (43) They answered: Jumbled dreams! And we are not knowing in the interpretation of dreams. (44) And he of the two who was released, and (now) at length remembered, said: I am going to announce unto you the interpretation, therefore send me forth. (45) (And when he came to Joseph in the prison, he exclaimed): Joseph! O thou truthful one! Expound for us the seven fat kine which seven lean were eating and the seven green ears of corn and other (seven) dry, that I may return unto the people, so that they may know. (46) He said: Ye shall sow seven years as usual, but that which ye reap, leave it in the ear, all save a little which ye eat. (47) Then after that will come seven hard years which will devour all that ye have prepared for them, save a little of that which ye have stored. (48) Then, after that, will come a year when the people will have plenteous crops and when they will press (wine and oil). (49) And the king said: Bring him unto me. (verses 43-50)

<sup>711</sup> See Dārā, *Sakīna*, 54-55. Also Hayat, “Concept,” 29-30.

<sup>712</sup> Dārā was hesitant to visit Hakim Sinai’s tomb. He was not happy with some of Sinai’s verses having Shi’i colour. It was after a dream that he convinced himself that those verses were not written by the poet himself but were result of later insertions by others. See Dārā, *Safīna*, 167.

<sup>713</sup> Dārā cites a dream in which he saw all four Caliphs with the Prophet Muhammad, and shook hands with every one of them, beginning with Abu Bakr and ending with Ali. See Dārā, *Safīna*, 23

<sup>714</sup> See above, Chapter II.

*nafs-i lawwāma* and *nafs-i muṭmaina*. Thus, whatever manifests in *rājas* and *tāmas* is false, and by process of elimination only the stage of *sātik* is at the level of the Truth. One who perceives dreams on that level perceives the Truth and this remains the Truth even after the person awakens.

### **C 18-19: THE WORLD – A BOX OF COLLYRIUM AND A PRISON**

*C. 18 Q. The people of purity live in this world and the house of this world is a (box of) collyrium. As such, a white cloth may be stained by the color black.. How do they remain in this world? A. In the (same) way that fish live in salty water. It will not drink water because (it knows that) if it drinks, its body will disintegrate. When the sweet water from the other rivers would enter the sea of salty water, the fish will drink that (sweet) water. Salty water cannot enter the sweet water. The people of purity live in this world in a similar way. C. 19 Q. Though the people of purity have come into this world for the benefit of the general populace and show kindness for everyone, nevertheless, the creatures of God – masses and elite -- have become helpless (impotent) and are captivated (caught up). Why then out of their love, do they not liberate them from the prison of the world so that they may reach the sublime essence? A. The love and affection of the people of purity is such: Wherever they extend their loving glance, the existence of human beings becomes pure. However, people do not submit their hearts to the people of God and are drowned in wishes of their own. For this reason they are helpless, (but) if they abandon their arrogance and submit themselves with humility to the perfect master and the guidance (lit. word) of a master is tied on their hearts, the master can make them just like him. Similarly, if three things, viz., lamp, oil and match, are not together present in the correct proportions, a lamp will not give light. Whenever they (the people of the world) attach (themselves) to (such) a lamp, they bring light and affect (to others), just as a lamp does.*

This series of two questions and answers looks at the world and the relationship to it of the people of purity and the people of the world. In his first question in this set Dārā begins by making the striking comparison: “... and this world is a box of collyrium (*khāna-i makohlī*). As such, the white cloth may be stained by ink.” His allegory is an interesting and even challenging one. Collyrium, or kohl, is used throughout much of Asia as an eye cosmetic and has been since ancient times. In the sub-continent it is also known as *kājal*, which is traditionally made by grinding lead sulfide with other ingredients. It is worn mostly by women as eyeliner or mascara. Moreover, mothers would apply kohl to protect or strengthen their infants’ eyes. A few would apply kohl to guard the child against the evil eye. The color of *kājal* or kohl is black (mostly due

to the lead) and can create stains should it come in contact with any cloth. Usually it is kept in a silver jewelry box,<sup>715</sup> which, from the outside may look very attractive but as one opens it the black kohl can cause stains – if not enough care is taken. For Dārā, the people of purity are like a white cloth: if they, like a white cloth, were placed within something that can stain like kājāl, they too would emerge less than pure. Based on this logic, he seems to be asking: How is it possible for the people of purity to remain unstained in this world?

Lāl Dās's reply comes with an example. Freshwater fish, while passing through saline water, will not take in any of that water but will hurry on towards freshwater. According to marine science, it is true that there are two types of fish and that physiologically freshwater (anadromous) fish are different from saltwater fish (catadromous). Their scales reduce water diffusion through the skin, and in fact those freshwater fish that have lost too many scales die. Lāl Dās thus makes two important points: 1) freshwater fish, though they look like other fish, are different from saltwater fish in nature; and 2) they know not to take in saline water and avail themselves only of freshwater. This allows him to say that the people of purity, though they look like other people, are in fact different from other people and that they also know how to keep a distance between themselves and the people of the world.

Another example offered by Lāl Dās, which has been mentioned elsewhere<sup>716</sup> and has been used in all religions of the East, is that of the lotus. The symbol of the lotus conveys that this beautiful flower grows in the muddiest of waters but never remains immersed in the water. It takes its energy from the soil and water but always keeps its head above the level of the water.

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<sup>715</sup>There is an interesting story in Attar's *Ilahinameh* regarding Alexander in which a box of collyrium constitutes one of the three most desirable things, it states:

Alexandar has read in a book about three desirable things: the water of life, as well as a magic drum and a box with collyrium both made by Hermes Trismegistus. The effect of water life is immortality, and the magic drum is a remedy for colic. Whoever beats it breaks wind, which brings him a cure. Whoever uses collyrium sees all that is in the heavens, on the earth and beneath the earth. After long travels Alexander finds the drum and the box of collyrium in a mountain cave. One of his generals beat the drum. He then breaks wind loudly, and out of shame and anger he smashes the drum into two. Alexander goes to the land of darkness in search of the water of life but is forced to return without having found what he wanted. He goes to Babylon and there becomes mortally ill with colic. One of Plato's disciples, who's his table-companion, reproaches him, saying that if he hadn't turned over the magic drum at that time to an unworthy person, he wouldn't now die of colic. But he should not be grieved. For what value can a dominion and a kingdom have, if its continuation is bound to an unclean wind. See *Ilahinameh*, cf. Hellmut Ritter, Translated by John O'Kane with Editorial assistance of Bernd Radtke, *The Ocean of the Soul: Men, the World and God in the stories Farid al-Din Attar*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 216-219.

<sup>716</sup>See above Section C 14.

Dārā follows up with his next question, which is connected to the above: Why then do the people of purity have to be here in this world? Perhaps they have come to this world for the betterment of people, but people have become impotent and do not listen to them. So why do they not help people to leave this prison (the world) to reach their holy essence? A similar question can be found in the manuscript A. Dara asks:

Hindu books inform that the aim of the *avatārs* is to annihilate the corrupt, punish tyrants, protect the men of purity and establish the righteousness. During the *satjug*, justice reigned in entirety. In the *tretajug* three fourth was the reign of justice and one fourth was of injustice; in the *dvaparajug* it was half and half; in *kaljug* three fourth was of injustice and one fourth was of justice. At the end of the *dvaparajug* to serve people, to defeat tyrants and to protect the people of purity the *avatār* of Sri Krishna appeared and took with him the people of purity of that time however, the (people of) world did not find the way of following truth. What do you think about all this?<sup>717</sup>

From his introduction to the above questions it seems that Dārā was aware of the statement of Krishna in *Bhagvad Gītā*, where he says:

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth [create incarnate] Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age. He who knows thus in its true nature My divine birth and works is not born again, when he leaves his body but comes to Me.<sup>718</sup>

Thus Dārā knew the purpose of the *avatārs* and he also knew that Krishna took people of purity with him or simply put: helped them in achieving salvation. However, he seems to be disappointed by the attitude of the people of present times (*kaljug*?) who busy themselves with worldly affairs and do not care about their salvation. He was aware of the fact that as time has moved from *satjug* to come down to the present times (*kaljug*) it has seen a decline in the formation of a just society. Citing all this, he asks Lal Das to comment on it. The manuscript A misses the honest question which Dara poses in C. In the manuscript C he asks Lāl Dās as: why

<sup>717</sup> Manuscript A, Question 21; also see Huart & Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 296.

<sup>718</sup> *The Bhagvad Gita*, 4:7-9 A similar *raison d’être* of the *bodhisattava* is mentioned in a 7<sup>th</sup> century work written by Shāntideva entitled as *Compendium of Doctrine*: :

He is strong in his own strength... and he resolves thus: Whatever all beings should obtain, I will help them to obtain... The virtue of generosity is not my helper – I am the helper of generosity. Nor do the virtues of morality, patience, courage, meditation and wisdom help me – it is I who help them. The perfections of the bodhisattva do not support me – it is I who support them... I alone, standing in this round and adamant world, must subdue Mara, with all his hosts and chariots, and develop supreme enlightenment with the wisdom of instantaneous insight! (See *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 160)

then out of their love, do they not liberate them (people) from the prison of the world so that they may reach the sublime essence?

The answers of Lāl Dās are different: in the manuscript A it is about the guidance according to times whereas in the manuscript C it is about the blessed presence of avatars. In the manuscript A Lal Das responds to Dara that the exclusive reason of the descent of an avatar is to repeal the way and method of the previous age and to establish a new (way) for the present times as such providing the protection to the people of purity by taking them (to salvation) was a method of past and is not in accordance to the fourth and the last age (i.e. present times). Thus he clearly demonstrates that what was applicable during the times of Krishna is no more applicable in present times.

In the manuscript C Lal Das emphasizes the importance of the action to attain the blessings of the people of purity. In one of his earlier replies, Lāl Dās used the simile of a tree which is available to those who seek repose by sitting in its shade. Evoking a similar concept, Lāl Dās once again reiterates that the presence of the people of purity is a blessing among the general populace. He says: ‘When they extend their kind sight, the existence of human beings becomes pure.’ This resonates with the answer of Hoopoe in Aṭṭār’s *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*. Hoopoe is a leading character in the *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr* who guides the awakened birds to the castle of their king on Mount Qāf. When one of the birds asks him why he has a crown on his head and how he happens to have the ability to see farther, Hoopoe replies that while he was at Solomon’s court, it was Solomon’s sight that bestowed wisdom and sight upon him so that he became different from other birds – an awakened soul who could guides others.<sup>719</sup> The presence of the people of purity thus brings blessings on the world and people of the world.<sup>720</sup>

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<sup>719</sup>Attar’s example has two “pure souls” here: Solomon, who is the source of blessings for Hoopoe, and Hoopoe, who leads others to become blessed.

<sup>720</sup>A similar notion is expressed in the *Bodhisattva’s* statement in Shāntideva’s *Compendium of Doctrine*:

I work to establish the kingdom of perfect wisdom for all beings. I care not at all for my own deliverance. I must save all beings from the torrent of rebirth with the raft of my omniscient mind. I must pull them back from the great precipice. I must free them from all misfortune, ferry them over the stream of rebirth.

For I have taken upon myself, by my own will, the whole pain of all things living. Thus I dare try every abode of pain, in ... every part of the universe, for I must not defraud the world of the root of good. I resolve to dwell in each state of misfortune through countless ages ... for the salvation of all beings ... for it is better that I alone suffer than that all beings sink to the worlds of misfortune. There I shall give myself into bondage, to redeem all the world from the forest of purgatory, from rebirth as beasts, from the realm of

A similar idea can be found in the Qur'an, for instance it mentions that the Prophet's mission was to be *bashīr* and *nazīr* and that he was sent to the world as a *raḥma* (blessings) for the worlds.<sup>721</sup> Lāl Dās acknowledges that people in general do not show any interest in the mission of the people of purity, but concedes that if “they abandon their arrogance and submit themselves with humility to the perfect master and carve the guidance of the master on their hearts the master can make them just like him.” He further cites the example of a lamp which gives light and enlightens others. However, he points out that three things, viz. oil, a match and a lamp, have to come together so that the lamp can produce light. Later, after a year, Dārā quotes a similar saying of Lāl Dās in *Ḥasanāt*: “The perfect guide is the one who is like a lamp, because from one lamp a thousand lamps may be illuminated.”<sup>722</sup> A testimony that Dārā used thought of Lāl Dās in his works, in this case most probably inserted this anecdote later to his earlier written work.

## C 20: HIGHER STATUS OF THE PEOPLE OF PURITY

*C. 20 Q. Everything is created by almighty Creator, but the people of purity have a higher status. Why? A. Below and above this earth and water, there is no place which is empty. Similarly, everywhere the Creator is present. If someone becomes thirsty and wishes to drink water from the soil, this is impossible. However, if he/she wishes to draw water from the soil to quench his/her thirst, this is possible. In a similar way, God the most High has manifested the existence of the people of purity and has given them a higher status amongst people. If a pile of sesame (which may weigh) 100 maunds or 1000 maunds is lying within a house and someone wants to obtain light from that (pile), it will not produce any until such time as the sesame is brought to the druggist who will extract the oil from it using a press so that when it is put inside a lamp the light from it will spread. In this way, the path of distinction is established.*

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death. I shall bear all grief and pain in my own body, for the good of all things living. (See *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 161-62)

<sup>721</sup> لِّلْعَالَمِينَ رَحْمَةً إِلَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ وَمَا

We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples. (See Qur'an, 21:107)

<sup>722</sup>In his *Ḥasanāt*, Dārā mentions that Lāl Dās, on the authority of Kabīr, describes four types of guides: “The first type is like gold, for they cannot make others similar to themselves; the second type is like an elixir -- whoever reaches them becomes gold, but they cannot transform others; the third type is like the sandalwood tree, which has the ability to create another sandalwood tree if that tree is prepared for it, but not otherwise; the fourth type is like a lamp, and he is the one known as the “perfect guide,” indeed from one lamp a hundred thousand lamps are illuminated.” See Dārā, *Ḥasanāt*, 54, and also above, Chapter 3.

Although Lāl Dās is quite vivid and precise in his answer to the questions mentioned above in question/answer sets 16-17, where he states that the highest status (i.e. *Jabrūt*) is reserved for the people of purity due to their conscious and wakeful souls, Dārā seems not to be convinced. For in question 20 he once again poses a similar query, but in a more direct manner. Here he asks: “[E]verything is created by God Almighty but the people of purity have a higher status. Why?” Perhaps he is emphasizing God’s attribute of being “Just” and on that basis is asking how the ‘people of purity’ could have been granted a higher status as compared to other beings. The response of Lāl Dās emphasizes the role of action in realizing a higher status, and is illustrated with two examples: a thirsty person in need of water and a pile of sesame seeds. He demonstrates that potentiality is present in both cases; however, unless an action is performed, it does not bring any results. For the first example, he says that wishing cannot secure the water needed to quench one’s thirst; water must first be drawn from the soil. Similarly, in the second example he maintains that a pile of sesame seeds cannot give light unless the seeds are first compressed to extract oil, and even then only when it is put in a lamp. Lāl Dās concludes that it is only action or work which helps to achieve this separation.

Perhaps this explains the descent which an individual soul experiences in leaving the highest level of immortality – supreme soul. Dārā explains this phenomenon of separation as a “descent” in *Samudra*:

The (Hindu) sages call the Truth of Truths, at this stage, ‘*Nirguṇa*’ (free from attributes or Gunas: *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*). If He then descends from the stage of “*Turīya*” to that of “*Suṣupti*”, thence to that of “*Svapna*”, thence to that of “*Jāgrat*”, then the immortal becomes mortal.<sup>723</sup>

Thus, for ascent or return one has to act or perform, and in saying this Lāl Dās is implicitly rejecting the assumption that God has created them with a higher in status. In fact, it is the work or activity of the people of purity which has given them higher status.

## C 21: IDOL WORSHIP

**C. 21 Q.** *What is idol worship in the Hindu world, and who ordered it? A.* *This (practice) was established to strengthen the heart (faith). A person who understands the tradition is excused (exempted) from this formal tradition. For example, young unmarried girls play with dolls and play housekeeping. When they themselves have become housekeepers*

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<sup>723</sup> Dārā, *Samudra*, 137.



*(become married), they give all that up. It is the same thing with idol worship; as long as the essence of the form is not known, there is an attachment with the form. Whenever the knowledge of essence is achieved, the form is hastened to pass.*

This question about idolatry, raised by Dārā, is present in all the manuscripts<sup>724</sup>, and may be analyzed on two levels: the act of idolatry itself and the people who perform the act of idolatry. Posing the first part of the question – What is the act of idol worshipping and what does Lāl Dās think about it? -- the answer offered to Dārā is significant in that Lāl Dās reveals in his reply certain differences between his thought and that of Kabīr, one of his presumed masters. Even though a *muvaḥhid*, Lāl Dās does not condemn the act of idolatry; on the contrary, he defends it and accepts idol worship as a means to reach God.<sup>725</sup> We noted above in Chapter three how Lāl Dās resembles Kabīr in their sharing a *muvaḥhid* outlook; nevertheless, unlike Lāl Dās, Kabīr strongly condemned idol worship, saying:

If by worshipping stones one could have found Harī  
I would have worshipped a mountain;  
From that (worshipping stone) it is better to worship a grindstone,  
At least from it (grindstone) world gets grinded (stuff) to eat.<sup>726</sup>

It seems that Kabir refused also to acknowledge the symbolism behind the idols, failing to see the idols as just another means of expressing the identity of God. He simply rejected idol worship as polytheism:

Man makes goddesses and gods of clay and offers them living sacrifices –  
As your lifeless gods, so you are deceased,  
who ask not for what they want themselves.  
You waiver and know not the supreme God,  
Wherefore you worship gods and goddesses<sup>727</sup>

<sup>724</sup> For example see Manuscript A, Question 6, see Huart & Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 290.

<sup>725</sup> See above, chapter IV; see also Huart and Massignon, “Les entretiens,” 290 - 91. It is interesting to note how a little emphasis in the translation may develop something that may not even be in the original. Hasrat translates the line *hargah key az batin agah nist dar surat vabasta- i surat ast* as ‘whosoever is devoid of inner consciousness, **must therefore** (emphasis is mine) attach himself to external form.’ Jafri based himself mainly on the translation by Hasrat and therefore came to very interesting conclusion: “Baba Lal believed that idol worship in Hinduism was designed to help the concentration of the devotee and that is **essential** (emphasis is mine) for those who were devoid of inner control” (See Rizvi, *Sufism*, 416). On the contrary, Lāl Dās believed it was unnecessary for true spiritualism and it is practiced only by the immature people and once they become mature spiritually they do not need this practice and to elaborate this point Lāl Dās used the analogy of little girls.

<sup>726</sup> “If by worshipping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain, better than these stones are the stones of the flourmill with which men grind their corn” (cited by Westcott cf. M. Hedayettullah, *Kabir: The Apostle of Hindu-Muslim Unity*, 267).

<sup>727</sup> *AdiGranth*; cf. Hedayettullah, *Kabir: The Apostle*, 267.

This difference of opinion between Lāl Dās and Kabīr raises strong doubts as to Lāl Dās' identity as a Kabīrpanthī. However, if Lāl Dās was a Kabīrpanthī, here he chose not to follow his guide and master.

Regarding the second level of the issue – i.e., the status of idol worshippers – the main question here is: Should Hindus be considered idol-worshippers? The corollary of this question is: How should a Muslim crown prince treat his subjects if they are idol worshippers? Should Hindus be treated as were the pagans of Arabia or the people of the book, such as Christians and Jews? This question is still a subject of debate amongst Muslims in India. When Muslims first entered India in 711 C.E., they treated Hindus as people of the book.<sup>728</sup> Later the treatment of Hindus became arbitrary, with a few Mughal emperors (such as Akbar) showing openness to Hinduism and treating Hindus on an equal footing with Muslims,<sup>729</sup> and others, like Aurangzeb (brother to Dārā and author of the latter's judicial murder), dealing with them at arm's length – in his case levying a special tax (*jizya*) on Hindus<sup>730</sup> and thereby accepting them as people of the Book. On a popular level, Sufis such as the Chishtis and Qadiris accepted Hindus with open arms; however, some Muslim thinkers, such as Sirhindi,<sup>731</sup> saw Hindus as idolaters and equated them with dogs!

## C. 22: THE NEED FOR A PERFECT MASTER

*C. 22 Q. (What if) someone says that my master is vile and that my faith is enough for me? A. People have misunderstood this aspect. Whenever an able master is found, the follower attains his/her wish. Similarly, if a woman will sleep with a man she will bear children. If she falls in love with a eunuch or likewise she will be deprived (of children). Verse: He who is lost himself, how can he guide others?*

<sup>728</sup>See S.M. Ikram, *Ab-i Kauthar* (Karachi:Feroze sons, 1965), 24.

<sup>729</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 16.

<sup>730</sup> Hodgson sums up his actions eloquently:

From 1679, however, he [Aurwngzeb] attempted to enforce all the disabilities upon Hindus that the Sharī'ah law called for in the case of dhimmī non-Muslims, most symbolically in the reimposition of the jizyah tax on the individual dhimmī; it was often a heavy tax, and was exacted in a humiliating manner, even from dhimmīs serving in the army. (See Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974), 93-95.

<sup>731</sup> See Friedmann, *Sirhindi*, 73.

The majority of the manuscripts consulted, including A and B, contain a similar question about the abilities of a master. Dārā says that there are people who say “my ‘pīr’ is impotent.”<sup>732</sup> Lāl Dās rejects this generalization, saying that they are mistaken in assuming that just because some masters are incapable of changing a disciple’s life, all masters must be just as ineffective. For this he provides a mundane example -- that of a woman’s conception: just as she can only conceive from a potent man, similarly only a capable master will bring change in the lives of his disciples. However, that master who is lost in his own self will not be able to guide his followers.

In his treatise *Risāla-i Haqqnumā’* - written earlier than his meeting with Lāl Dās - Dārā clearly makes a case for the need of a master when about to undertake the voyage of spiritual enlightenment. The sole purpose of the epistle was to guide those who lacked a master. In the dialogue under study, by contrast, he seems more interested in learning the Hindu perspective on the master-disciple relationship from Lāl Dās.<sup>733</sup> As for the disciple who is concerned whether a master will bring change into his life, Sufi literature warns him to examine his options carefully and only pay allegiance to that master who is truthful. For example, ‘Izz al-Dīn Kāshānī, in his work *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*, compares the process to the growth of a bird from an egg:

The existence of the disciple and the potentiality of spiritual perfection in him can be likened to an egg in which there exists the potentiality of becoming a bird. If the egg has the capability of receiving the power and influence inherent in the spiritual will (*himmat*) of the bird or the master, if it can gain the protection of a mature bird in whom the power of procreation and the causing of the egg to hatch has become actualized, and finally if for a period the influence of the spiritual life and the characteristics which belong to the state of bird-hood effect the egg, then at last it will cease to remain in the form of egg. It will be dressed in the form of a bird and made to reach the perfection of its capabilities. And if the egg is placed under a hen who does not possess the power of flight or has not as yet reached the degree of maturity and power to make the egg hatch, and this goes on for sometime, the potentiality of becoming the bird is destroyed in it and then there will be no way of restoring the egg to its original state.<sup>734</sup>

The two questions which are found in manuscript B shed some more light on the issue of the master-disciple relationship. Dārā asks why a disciple attains a superior level once he begins

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<sup>732</sup>The word used for impotent is “*khas*.” See Massignon, “Les entertiens,” 291. Massignon has translated it “de paille” which has been translated into English as “a wisp of straw” However *khas* and *khasi* is commonly used in Urdu or Hindi to mean “impotent.” For the French translation see Huart and Massignon, “Les entertiens,” 316 and for the English translation see Waseem, *On Becoming*, 110.

<sup>733</sup> See Dārā, *Risāla*, 3-4.

<sup>734</sup> Cf. S.H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1972), 63.

serving his master. In this instance LālDās uses the example of a girl who is not married (i.e., she is not serving a husband) and is therefore without any particular status. However, once she is married she will no longer need to be concerned for she will have been raised to the status of someone's wife. Similarly, a disciple will be identified with his master and will attain a higher level due to this relationship. Another question in manuscript B connected to the master-disciple relationship is: Why do only a few disciples attain gnosis while others do not? Lāl Dās answers by blaming disciples who do not serve their master with full commitment. He says:

Every follower who performs service to his master with the inner faith, and carves the words of his master on the tablet of his own heart with pure faith, and strictly follows his injunctions, his boat reaches the desired shore. However, the one who does not stand faithfully on the words of his master and gets inclined towards his/her own wishes by adorning five senses remains deprived.<sup>735</sup>

He adds a verse to this effect which gives a clear understanding that it is the follower who has to change and not the master. The verse says: "If the sword is crooked, it will not enter a sheath in a straight manner."

The idea of surrendering to a master is a common one, nonetheless. The example of Arjuna and Krishna in *Bhagavad Gītā* resonates with the understanding of Lāl Dās. In their dialogue, quoted in *Bhagavad Gītā*, Arjuna asks questions and Krishna responds to his queries. Arjuna is the ideal servant and Krishna the ideal master and guru. Arjuna, who in the midst of battle has refused to fight against his own people, is encouraged by Krishna to perform his duty. Krishna says:

Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy consciousness (fixed) on the supreme Self, being free from desire and selfishness, fight freed from thy sorrow.<sup>736</sup> But those who carp at my teaching and do not follow it know these mindless ones, deluded in all knowledge, to be lost.<sup>737</sup>

A similar idea of surrender is also common in works of *tasawwuf*. This type of surrender is known as allegiance (*bay'a*) to the master. For example, Nasr writes of this surrender in his *Sufi Essays*:

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<sup>735</sup> See Manuscript B, First Majlis, Q12.

<sup>736</sup> *Bhagavad Gītā*, verse 30.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, verse 32.

The disciple must surrender himself to the perfect *shaykh* without any reserve. In the hands of the master he must be like a corpse in the hands of the washer of the dead without any movement of his own.<sup>738</sup>

Lāl Dās uses the symbol of a boat and waxes poetic when he says that (a loyal follower's) "boat reaches the desired shore." The symbol of the boat is also a popular image in religious iconography. It carries with it the idea of safety and security for all those who are within the boat. In the Islamic tradition it has served to represent the vehicle of a believer who has successfully come to the end of the voyage of life. The Qur'an refers to Noah's Ark in terms of providing protection at the time of the deluge to those who accepted and followed the prophet.<sup>739</sup> In Shī'a literature, the house of the Prophet and the Imams is depicted as the Ark through which the faithful will be protected and will reach the shore.<sup>740</sup> By comparison, in one of the ginans, the Ismā'īlī preacher Imam Shah (d.1513) says that the *kaljug* is the last boat and only those who are faithful will reach the shore.

## C 23 -24: VARIOUS TYPES AND KINDS OF CREATION

*C. 23 Q. The creation of the creatures of the world derives from the power of the Creator. Everywhere power is the same yet creates immovable beings (isthāvar) and movable beings (jangam). Among movable beings there are conscious beings and unconscious beings. And a few deities (devtā) possessing the five forms (sarūp) are higher than them (immovable beings) and yet there are others: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who are born higher than everyone else. Given this fact, what type of discrimination has been emerged in creation? A. The Truth is like that, (i.e.) that the nature is one (and the same, while) from these five things discrimination of the status of creation is manifested and created. For example, immovable beings are created from earth and originate from earth; they do not have movement and stay firm in that they are connected with earth. Movable beings are created from water and as they originate from water and water always has*

<sup>738</sup> Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 63. See also Schimmel's largely similar statement: "In the first centuries of the Sufi movement the idea was already being expressed that in the hands of the master the *murid* should be as passive as a corpse in the hands of an undertaker." (Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 103)

<sup>739</sup> Qur'an, 23: 23-30; 26:19-122; 29:14-15.

<sup>740</sup> See S.V. Mir Ahmad ali's explanation of Surah al-Mu'minūn. He quotes the Prophet as saying that "the likeness of my ahlul-bait is that of the Ark of Noah. He who got into it was saved and he who turned away from it was drowned and lost." *The Holy Qur'an*, translated by S.V. Mir Ahmad ali (New York, 1988), 1050.

*movement-- they move in circles. For this reason, water prevails on earth and movable beings therefore dominate immovable beings. C. 24 Q. In (the category of) movable beings there are human beings as well as animals. Why then do human beings dominate animals? A. Human beings are awakened beings (chitan) and animals inert beings (jarr). However, are you asking why, if the origin of both is water, there is discrimination? Then the answer is that it is due to copulation (intercourse). When a man copulates with a woman, they face each other, whereas when animals copulate, one is on the back of the other. Because they (human beings) are facing each other they remain awake and conscious, whereas animals, because they copulate from the back, lose their consciousness. For this reason human beings are superior to animals, and they are dependent on deities (devtas) because these deities are created from fire and fire is superior to water. Over the deities the incarnations (avatars) are dominant because they are made of wind, and wind is superior to fire: and again, the Word (shabad) is (the most) dominant, meaning the Word which belongs to lāmakān. The One creative power is just this.*

These two questions, also found in manuscript A,<sup>741</sup> focus on the genesis and status of various creatures in the scheme of creation. Basing his questions on logical deduction, Dārā divides creation into two categories: movables and immovables. He further divides movables into two groups -- conscious and unconscious beings -- and then introduces the idea that there are spirits higher than conscious beings that are a manifestation of the Reality while maintaining the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Dārā's primary intention is to have Lāl Dās confirm his scheme of distinctions. In the beginning Lal Das is vague about the five elements<sup>742</sup> however he makes it very clear in the following question. He does accept Dārā's two original categories, but he chooses to justify their division (*isthāvar* and *jangam*) on the basis of their origin. He ascertains the higher position of movables over immovables on the grounds that the former comes from water while the latter derives from the earth. Since water is better than solid earth and anything that comes out from earth, movable beings dominate immovable beings.

<sup>741</sup> See Manuscript A, Question 34-35, also see Huart and Massignon, *Les entertiens*, 302.

<sup>742</sup> See above C6 where in the context of a "five steps ladder" a vague reference to number five has been alluded to five steps.

In the following question, Dārā asks Lāl Dās why, amongst movable beings, human beings are seen as better than other animals though both fall into the same category. Dārā may have expected an answer that other Sufis or thinkers like the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* have given: that human beings, intellectually and spiritually, are better than animals.<sup>743</sup> Lāl Dās does indeed acknowledge a spiritual hierarchy of being. Beginning with ‘movable’ (animals and humans together), which he notes are made of water, he declares these to be inferior to spirits because spirits are created from fire and fire is superior to water. Avatars are in turn superior to spirits because they originate from wind and as wind is superior to fire so is the avatar superior to spirit. He adds another category which Dārā did not include in his question: word, which exists in *lāmakān*.

But surprisingly, on the question of whether human beings are better than other animals, Lāl Dās maintains that the difference lies in their respective approaches to the act of copulation. According to him, when a man copulates with a woman they face each other whereas animals copulate from the rear. This explanation raises a number of questions as why Lāl Dās has based the superiority of human beings on one particular sexual position. Is it a sign of prurience on the part of the latter? This would be an odd position for a Hindu scholar. He must have been aware of Vatsyayana’s *Kama Sutra*. The work *Kama Sutra* has been accepted by scholars like Franklin S. Klaf as “the world’s first definitive manual on the art and science of love.” It has a complete chapter on “the postures and attitudes during intercourse.” The author graphically explains the positions and acknowledges that there are other ways apart from the most commonly used face to face position. He says:

when the woman goes down on all fours like an animal and her lover mounts her as if he were a bull or a stallion, it is known as the position of the Cow... one can vary this last form of union by adopting the position of the Dog, the union of Goat, the Doe, the violent assault of the Ass, the union of the Cat, the bound of the Tiger, the pressure of the Elephant, the rubbing movements of the Wild Boar, and the charge of the Stallion.<sup>744</sup>

Thus, the specific position defined by Lāl Dās is far from the only position that might be used to justify a higher rank in creation. Nonetheless, all other positions are named on animal positions

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<sup>743</sup> See Goodman and McGregor (ed.), *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: The Case of the Animals versus Man Before the King of the Jinn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2009). The case is brought by animals against human beings forcing the latter to defend their superiority. They manage to do so on the basis of the presence of saints in every community who ‘are the best, the purest, persons of fair and praiseworthy parts, pious deeds, myriad sciences, godly awareness, regal character, just and holy lives, and awesome ways.’

<sup>744</sup> Vatsyanyana, *Kama Sutra*. Translated by Franklin S. Klaf (New York: Lancer Books, 1964), 54-55.

which humans can imitate whereas unique position of intercourse adopted by humans cannot be imitated by animals. Even though it is unique can this become the only reason for the higher rank? Nonetheless, Lāl Dās provides an interesting *ta'wīl* of the difference between the sexual act of animals and humans: only the latter can look into the partner's *eyes*, which means that they have *chitan*. Dārā accepts the explanation and did not raise any objection. However, in Manuscript A, one finds a different answer given to a similar question. Here Lāl Dās says:

Collectively taken, man comprises individuals who are equal in the state of waking (*hosh*); animals which were created before and after man, have also attained the state of waking. Since man has lost his lower sense, which is called *maza* (taste) which corresponds to earth, man is superior to animals.<sup>745</sup>

The difference between the two texts of this question is considerable. According to the answer in Manuscript C, the difference lies in copulation (*jamā'*), whereas in Manuscript A the difference is due to the loss of the lower sense (*maza*). The key word *jamā'* (copulation) in Manuscript C is written as *jamāh* in Manuscript A, which means community, congregation or collective group of people. On the basis of this difference a significant change of meaning is possible. However, the reading in Manuscript C is reinforced by similar language in the texts of Manuscripts E and F. Thus manuscript A remains unique for this question as a whole. In this context, a few questions do arise, such as why this difference? Is this difference due to the copyist's choice or a misreading? Or is it due to various reports of the meetings written by more than one person? However, there is a strong possibility that C has the correct rendering of the question and A is a garbled form of the question (probably created by a prudish scribe or editor).

## C 25: RĀMĀYANA

*C. 25 Q. In the Ramayana, it is mentioned that when Rāmchand conquered Lanka (Sri Lanka), large numbers of troops on each side were killed. After that the response to the prayers to the Most High manifested. With the power of God the most High the rain became the water of life and the army of Rāmchand came back to life whereas the army of Rāwan did not stand up (become alive). But the property of the drink of immortality is that whenever it is bestowed on (lit. it comes to) a dead person it gives life; what do you say? A. When the war against Rāwan started, (from then onwards) the forces of Rāwan thought of Rāmchand in their hearts and were slain. Due to the imagination of that*

<sup>745</sup> See Waseem, *On Becoming*, 118. Also see Huart and Massignon, "Les entertiens," 302.



*sublime form (of Rāmchand) they achieved salvation. For this reason, they did not (need to) receive life once again. Whereas the forces of Rāmchand thought of Rāwan during the war and (therefore) they did not achieve salvation but regained life due to the effect of the drink of immortality.*

It appears that Dārā had developed a special interest in Hindu literature by the time he met Lāl Dās, although it was only after this dialogue that he began to write comparative studies of terms in Muslim and Hindu writings and then move on to translating some of these works – either by himself or supervising the translations. Nonetheless, he seems to have had considerable knowledge of epics such as *Rāmāyana*, *Mahabhartā* (including *Bhagvad Gita*) and *Harivansa*. In discussion with Lāl Dās he shows interest in two characters in particular: Ramchand and Krishna – the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> avatars of Vishnu who were also kings of their respective lands.

Earlier, we mentioned Dārā’s direct and indirect references to Krishna in Question 19 above. Here, in Manuscript C, the last question and answer set is devoted to Rāmchand, and deals specifically with the miracle mentioned in *Ramayana* according to which the army of Rāmchand was blessed with life. The copyist stops on this set of question and answer – which has been finished hurriedly and seems incomplete -- and leaves a couple of pages blank, perhaps thinking that he would come back to it.

This set of question and answer is present in almost all manuscripts including A<sup>746</sup> and B.<sup>747</sup> As the question shows, Dārā wants an explanation for this apparently selective miracle. As he saw it, the rain of the ‘water of life’ – in accordance with its nature - should have provided life to everyone rather than to a specific group – the army of Rāmchand. However, according to Valmiki’s *Rāmāyana*, Rāmchand requested of Mahendra (the god Indra) that he give life to all the valiant monkeys who had been his soldiers and who had been killed by Rāvana’s army. In response, Indra brought the soldiers of Rāmchand back to life who were killed in the battle. Examining the account in Valmiki’s text, it is clear that Rāmchand’s request was indeed limited to the monkeys who were soldiers in his army, for he says:

O Most Eloquent of Orators, let all the valiant monkeys, who for my sake descended into the region of death, be resuscitated and live again. I wish to see all those monkeys happy, who for my sake left their sons and wives, O Great Lord.<sup>748</sup>

<sup>746</sup> Manuscript A, Question 27; see also Huart and Massignon, “Les entertiens,” 299-30

<sup>747</sup> Manuscript B, First Majlis, Question 27

<sup>748</sup> See *The Ramayana of Valmiki*, ed. Hari Parsad Shastri, Vol. III. (London: Shanti Sadan, 1970), 345.

Mahendra (the god Indra) fulfills this request to the letter, saying:

O Dear Prince of the Raghus, but my words never proved vain; so be it! May all those who have been slain in battle by the titans, the Bears and the Gopucchās, whose heads and arms have been severed, be resurrected! May those monkeys rise up exalting, without pain or wounds, in all their natural vigour and courage, like sleepers who wake at the end of night, and let them be re-united with their friends, relatives and tribes!<sup>749</sup>

One expects that Lāl Dās would have corrected Dārā by providing him with the exact text of *Rāmāyana*, but instead, he responds in the language of mystical logic. His explanation shows the power and effect of concentrating on Rāmchand. Nonetheless, this understanding of Lāl Dās resonates with Krishna’s teaching. Thus in *Bhagavad Gītā* Krishna, while speaking to Arjuna, says:

And whoever remembers Me alone when leaving the body at the time of death attains to My status of being; there is no doubt of that; whatever state of being he remembers, upon giving up his body at the end, to that he attains, O son of Kunti; always being formed in that state.<sup>750</sup>

According to Lāl Dās, since in the hearts of Rāvana’s forces there was continuous thought of Rāmchand, their hearts were cleansed and they received salvation, whereas the forces of Rāmchand were busy thinking of Rāvana and so their hearts were not cleansed, rather they needed a life to come back so that they could eventually cleanse their hearts and achieve salvation.

This is a novel explanation more so a *ta’wīl* from Lāl Dās for the textual rendering and it reflects the popular understanding that right thought is important at the time of death.<sup>751</sup> It also highlights the importance of continuous remembrance and provides a logical response to the issue of discrimination. Nonetheless, there is the possibility that neither Dārā nor Lāl Dās was aware of the specifics of the request and response mentioned in Valmiki’s text.

In other manuscripts there are a few additional questions connected to *Rāmāyana*.<sup>752</sup> For example, in manuscript B, continuing the theme of *Rāmāyana*, the following three questions

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<sup>749</sup>Ibid.

<sup>750</sup>*The Bhagavad Gītā*, edited and translated by Eliot Deutsch (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), Chapter VIII, verses 5,6.

<sup>751</sup>Similar to this is a popular Hindi saying that I heard many times from my own parents : “*Hey tapā kaye kūn khapā; anta matā sohī gatā.*” Which means “O ascetic why are you worried? In the end whatever you will think you will become.”

<sup>752</sup>Manuscript B, First Majlis, Questions 27-30.

focus on Sītā. After abducting Sītā, Rāvana took her to his palace in Sri Lanka where she lived in a prison for a considerable time. First, Dārā asks Lāl Dās how Sītā was able to protect herself from Rāvana during that time. This was a question that intrigued everyone, and so to prove her chastity Sītā had to successfully walk through fire to return to Rāmchand. The account in Valmiki shows that Rāmchand asked Sītā to do so in order to assuage the doubts of the people. Rāmchand says:

On account of the people, it was imperative that Sita should pass through this trial by fire; this lovely woman had dwelt in Ravana's inner apartments for a long time. Had I not put the innocence of Janaki [Sītā] to the test, the people would have said: 'Rama, the son of Dasaratha is governed by lust!' It was well known to me that Sita had never given her heart to another and that the daughter of Janaka, Maithili, was ever devoted to me. Ravana was no more able to influence that large-eyed lady, whose chastity was her protection, than the ocean may pass beyond its bournes. Despite his great perversity, he was unable to approach Maithili even in thought, who was inaccessible to him as a flame. That virtuous woman could never belong to any other than my self for she is to me what the light is to the sun. Her purity is manifest in the Three Worlds.<sup>753</sup>

The response of Lāl Dās shows awareness of Rāmchand's thought about Sītā's plight. In fact, he goes further by saying that Sītā is a form of religion that the devil cannot reach. This prompts Dārā to ask why, since the devil also has the power to change his form, he did not come in the form of Rāmchand to lure Sītā. To this, Lāl Dās answers that Rāvana did so; however, whenever he took the form of Rāmchand, the form of Rāmchand affected his nature and he was not able to harm Sītā. Of course, whenever he returned to his original form, he became evil. Though Valmiki's *Rāmāyana* does not claim that Rāvana ever adopted this ploy, Lāl Dās's explanation establishes that form has an effect on the soul. In the third and final question, Dārā asks Lāl Dās why Sītā was not able to burn Rāvana, since Sītā is the symbol of truth. Again, the response of Lāl Dās attempts a syllogism similar to the one in the previous answer. According to him, the nature of Sītā did not allow her to be angry; that is why she was not able to harm Rāvana. Though the goal of the discussion between Dārā and Lāl Dās seems to focus on clarifying various issues in the Hindu epics, for Craig Davis, Dārā was either not convinced by the explanation or was uncomfortable in using this literature in his later writings such as *Majma al-Bahrayn*. He writes:

He also asks Baba Lal how Sita could prevent Ravana (from ravishing her) after he had abducted her and taken her to his palace. Regarding Rama and Krsna in these contexts, Dara may have reacted conservatively, revealing his Islamic upbringing. That is not to

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<sup>753</sup> Ibid., 342.

say that the Mughals did not enjoy sexuality. Quite the contrary, Mughal rulers were known for the large number of wives and concubines retained in the harem for their sexual pleasure. It appears, however, that Dara was either not convinced of the validity of such Hindu legends, or he felt it inappropriate to write about them. In any case, these accounts do not make their way into *Majma*. Dara was much more interested in issues related to *tawhid*.

Perhaps Davis is right in his analysis; however, this cannot be asserted with any certainty because not every issue discussed in the dialogue was addressed by Dārā in his later writings. There are only a few issues present in *Majma* which were discussed in the dialogue. However, we know for the fact that Dārā commissioned people to translate *Jog Bashist* and *Bhagvad Gita* (?) after he finished *Majma al-Bahrayn*. Witness for instance the special respect that he shows for Rāmchand in the preface to *Jog Bashist*, where he states that he saw Rāmchand in his dream, and that in this dream Rāmchand embraced him and gave him sweets to eat.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> See above, Chapter 1, 24, see also Dārā's introduction to *Jog Bashist*,.3-4.

### CONCLUSION:

This study, based on a dialogue between Dārā and Lāl Dās, has established a few facts, clarified some assumptions and raised a number of questions. The content analysis of the study was focused on the authenticity of the dialogue, the historical facts and circumstances around the two personalities involved in the dialogue - Dārā and Lāl Dās and lastly, the significance of the content and the place of the dialogue in the context of the works written by (or attributed to) Dārā.

Historical sources attest that the dialogue and meeting between Dārā and Lāl Dās did occur.<sup>755</sup> However, it has remained ambiguous as to precisely when Dārā requested Lāl Dās to sit with him for such conversations. Similarly, it is not clear as to the number of occasions of their meetings or whether their dialogue consisted of one long meeting or continued over a period of a few days?<sup>756</sup> Whether a single meeting or multiple meetings, it is known that they did not meet at either Dārā's palace or the house of Lāl Dās, instead Dārā and Lāl Dās are said to have met in gardens, on hunting grounds and even in the precincts of a tomb. Who chose the places and on what basis? The manuscripts and scribes do not provide us any information to resolve above questions.

The conversation shows that Dārā was impressed by Lāl Dās's understanding and knowledge of religion and theology.<sup>757</sup> It also clearly demonstrates that Dārā was keen to learn the comparison of terms and concepts used in Islam and Hinduism. Perhaps his meetings with Lāl Dās was one of the reasons that he was encouraged to study Hindu works and later write *Majma'* and *Samudra*, both dedicated to the comparison of Islam and Hinduism. In the context of Mughal history this dialogue stands out as a unique exercise because it did not show any political motive of Dārā such as Akbar's interfaith discussions at Fatehpūr Sīkrī held on the official level. On the contrary, this exercise was low key, educational and one on one. Here a Muslim Crown Prince who was also the governor of the province of Punjab sat beside a Hindu Yogi of Punjab in public or unknown places to satisfy his own intellectual pursuits.

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<sup>755</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> See Chapter II.

As for the enquirer and respondent of the *Su'āl va Javāb*, the former is renowned in Mughal history and much is available on his life and achievements however the latter is unknown in the historical sources.<sup>758</sup> Though Dārā was a Crown Prince, he preferred to remain a curious student during the conversation displaying a respectful disposition with an eagerness to learn.<sup>759</sup> Lāl Dās on the other hand was a Hindu Yogi who had some knowledge about religions and whose behavior appeared more as a wise man than a purely intellectual discussant. There are a few questions that remained unanswered about Lāl Dās such as: Was he a Hindu or a camouflaged Hindu like the Guptī Ismā'īlīs?<sup>760</sup> As it has been mentioned earlier, there is a possibility that he was a Guptī Shamsī and to a greater extent his thought on the subject of *murshid* resonates with the concept of master in Ismā'īlī literature. However in the absence of any clear evidence it is difficult to prove that Lāl Dās was an Ismā'īlī.<sup>761</sup> His life was a mystery as was his death: where he went after the conversation with Dārā and where did he die?<sup>762</sup>

Various manuscripts of the *Su'āl va Javāb* suggest that the reports of the dialogue were written by more than one scribe.<sup>763</sup> While language, content and style differ, there are a few issues that are found in common and central to all manuscripts. As such, we have different formats of reporting in manuscripts A, B and C. A majority of the manuscripts including manuscripts D, E and F follow the writing style of manuscript A.<sup>764</sup> Thus in the presence of a variety of sets of questions and answers and differences found in the content of manuscripts it is impossible to confirm that all different reports are based on one manuscript which can be termed as the “mother of all available manuscripts” as written by Chandarbhan. In the absence of one such source the assumption that Chandarbhan was the sole scribe who translated the Hindi discussion into Persian becomes doubtful. It is possible that Dārā was accompanied by more than one scribe who later wrote according to their own styles and preferences. Furthermore, the presence of the variety of reports of the dialogue confirms the fact that Dārā did not take any interest in writing or compiling this conversation. Why did Dārā not write himself or supervise

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<sup>758</sup> See Chapter III.

<sup>759</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>760</sup> See Chapter III.

<sup>761</sup> Ibid.

<sup>762</sup> Ibid.

<sup>763</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>764</sup> See the discussion on the sources in Chapter I.

the compilation of this conversation? He shows his sense of history while compiling *Safīna*<sup>765</sup> and *Sakīna*<sup>766</sup> and so, why did not he do the same to this conversation? These questions have remained unanswered and consequently they have created doubts on the authenticity of the content of the dialogue.

A close examination of the content of the manuscript C shows that the material resonates well with Dārā's later writings *Majma'* and *Samudra*, and at least in one place in his earlier work *Risāla*. For example, his discussion and comparison of *nafs-i ammāra*, and *nafs-i muṭma'ina* with *sātik*, *rājas* and *tāmas* in *Majma'* and *Samudra* does not come from any Hindu Philosophical school, and is, in fact a direct borrowing from Lāl Dās's thought.<sup>767</sup> His discussion on the connection between the soul and the Reality in *Su'āl va Javāb* is also present in his *Risāla* – or at least a later insertion into the work.<sup>768</sup> The internal evidence of the content of the dialogue and its connection with Dārā's other works further confirms that the content of the *Su'āl va Javāb* is not spurious though it may have been amended by the later copyists as the text has passed through many hands.

The work *Su'āl va Javāb* stands as both a unique and a fundamental link to Dārā's later writings. It is unique in the sense that under the Mughals no other example is extant of such an exercise being undertaken with such profound seriousness and purely for the sake of acquiring knowledge. The material of the manuscript C also is agreement with the contemporary literature of Guptī Ismā'īlis, Sikhs, Kabirpanthis and Sufis. Lāl Dās employed mundane examples, anecdotes and similes however insightful and distinct from other contemporary religious literature.<sup>769</sup> However, for a comprehensive study of the work *Su'āl va Javāb* there is a need to edit other available manuscripts and compare them with the edited manuscripts.

The study of *Su'āl va Javāb* furthermore shows that these discussions acted as a springboard for Dārā's thought. Subsequent to his discussions with Lāl Dās, Dārā was able to appreciate Hinduism with such deep understanding that he saw almost no difference in the essence of either religion and as a result, wrote the comparative works entitled *Majma' al-*

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<sup>765</sup> Hayat, "Concept," 63.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>767</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

*Baḥrayn* and *Samudra Sangam*. It was after these discussions that Dārā, in later years, held Lāl Dās in a similar status as other *awliya*'.<sup>770</sup> He also viewed the Upanishads as the hidden book referred to in the Qur'an and that the Prophet Muhammad was *Siddha* of his time. These discussions also motivated him to research and write extensively on Hinduism, including his translation of various Hindu works such as the Upanishads, *Bhagvad Gītā* and *Jōg Bāshist*.

Despite Dārā's premature death – the result of a power struggle within his own ruling family – the dialogue was to be read and copied widely in the centuries that followed, providing evidence of continued interest in Hindu-Muslim dialogue. Essentially, it stands as testimony to the fact that discussion and conversation can lead to a better understanding of another's faith, which is essential to the creation of a healthy society.

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<sup>770</sup> See Chapter III.



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**APPENDIX**  
**TABLE I**  
**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT A**  
**AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

A	A	B	C	D	E	F	R
(Notes)	01	02	xxx	01	01	01	xxx
	02	04	xxx	02	02	05	xxx
	03	05	xxx	03	03	06	xxx
	04	06	xxx	04	04	07	xxx
	05	07	xxx	05	05	08	xxx
	06	08	21	06	06	09	xxx
	07	09	14	07	07	10	xxx
	08	10	22	08	08	11	xxx
	09	11	xxx	09	09	Xxx	xxx
	10	12	xxx	10	51	12	xxx
	11	13	xxx	11	16	13	xxx
	12	14	01	12	25	14	xxx
	13	15	02	13	17	15	202
	14	16	03	14	18	16	202
	15	16	04	15	19	17	xxx
	16	xxx	xxx	16	20	Xxx	xxx
	17	18	xxx	17	21	18	xxx



	18	19	xxx	18	22	19	xxx
	19	20	xxx	19	23	20	xxx
	20	21	xxx	20	24	22	xxx
	21	22	xxx	21	10	23	xxx
	22	23	16	22	11	24	xxx
	23	24	17	23	12	25	xxx
	24	xxx	xxx	24	13	26	xxx
	25	25	xxx	25	14	27	xxx
	26	32	xxx	26	15	28, 29	xxx
	27	27	25	28	26	30	Xxx
	28	28	xxx	29	27	31	Xxx
	29	29	xxx	30	28	32	Xxx
	30	30	xxx	31	31	33	Xxx
	31	31	xxx	32	48	34	Xxx
	32	xxx	xxx	33	47	35	Xxx
	33	xxx	xxx	34	32	36	Xxx
	34	xxx	xxx	35	35	37	Xxx
	35	xxx	xxx	xxx	36	38	Xxx
	36	xxx	xxx	xxx	37, 38	39	Xxx
	37	xxx	xxx	xxx	39	40	Xxx
	38	xxx	xxx	36	29	41	Xxx

A	A	B	C	D	E	F	R
(Notes)	39	xxx	xxx	xxx	34	42	xxx
	40	xxx	xxx	37	31	43	xxx
	41	xxx	xxx	38	44	44	xxx
	42	xxx	xxx	39	52	45	xxx
	43	xxx	xxx	40	45	46	xxx
	44	xxx	xxx	41	46	47	xxx
	45	xxx	xxx	42	42	41	xxx
	46	xxx	xxx	43	xxx	44	xxx
	47	xxx	xxx	44	43	42	xxx
	48	xxx	xxx	xxx	49	51	xxx
	49	xxx	xxx	46	50	Xxx	xxx
	50	01	xxx	xxx	xxx	02	xxx
	51	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	52	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	53	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	54	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	55	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	56	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	57	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	58	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	59	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	60	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx

	61	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	62	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	63	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	64	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	65	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	66	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	67	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	68	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	69	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	70	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx

**TABLE II**  
**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT B**  
**AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

B (notes)	B	A	C	D	E	F	R
Majlis 1	01	50	xxx	xxx	xxx	02	xxx
	02	01	xxx	01	01	01	xxx
	03	xxx	xxx	xxx	40	03	211?
	04	02	xxx	02	02	05	xxx
	05	03	xxx	03	03	06	xxx
	06	04	xxx	04	04	07 *	xxx
	07	05	xxx	05	05	08	xxx
	08	10	22	06	06	09	xxx
	09	07	15	07	07	10	xxx ?
	10	08	23	08	08	11	xxx ?
	11	09	xxx	09	09	Xxx	xxx
	12	10	xxx	10	10	12	xxx
	13	11	xxx	11	16	13	xxx
	14	12	01	12	xxx	14	xxx
	15	13	02	13	17	15	xxx
	16	14, 15	03	14, 15	18, 19	16, 17	xxx
	17	16	04	16	20	18	xxx
	18	17	xxx	17	21	19	xxx

	19	18	xxx	18	22	20	xxx
	20	19	xxx	19	23	21	xxx
	21	20	xxx	20	24	22	xxx
	22	21	xxx	21	10	23	xxx
	23	22	xxx	22	11	24	xxx
	24	23	17	23	12	25	xxx
	25	25	18	25	14	27	xxx?
	26	26	xxx	26	15	28	xxx
	27	27	26	28	27	30	xxx?
	28	28	xxx	29	28	31	xxx
	29	29	xxx	30	29	32	xxx
	30	30	xxx	31	32	33	Xxx
	31	31	xxx	32	48	34	xxx
	32	26	xxx	27	26	Xxx	xxx
Majlis 2	33	xxx	xxx	xxx	16	Xxx	200
	34	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	201
	35	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	202
	36	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	203, 204
	37	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	204
	38	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	205

B	B	A	C	D	E	F	R
	39	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	206
	40	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	207
Majlis 3	41	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	01
	42	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	02
	43	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	03
	44	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	04
	45	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	46	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	47	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	06
	48	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	05
	49	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	07
	50	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	08
	51	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	09
	52	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	10
	53	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	11
	54	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	13
	55	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	14
	56	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	15
	57	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	16
	58	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	17
	59	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	18
	60	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	19
	61	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	20

	62	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	21
	63	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	22
	64	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	65	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	23
	66	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	67	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	68	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	69	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	70	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	24
	71	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	25
	72	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	26
	73	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	27
	74	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	28
	75	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	30
	76	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	77	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	31
	78	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	32
	79	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	80	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	81	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	36
	82	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	37
	83	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	38
	84	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	39
	85	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	39

	86	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	40
	87	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	41
	88	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	42
	89	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	43
	90	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	44
	91	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	45
	92	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	46
	93	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	49
	94	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	50
	95	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	96	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	52
	97	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	53
	98	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	54
	99	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	55
	100	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	56
	101	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	57
	102	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	58
	103	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	59
	104	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	60
	105	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	61
	106	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	62
	107	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	63
	108	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	109	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx



	110	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	111	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	64
	112	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	65
	113	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	114	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	66
	115	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	68
	116	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	69
	117	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	118	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	70
	119	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	71
	120	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	72
	121	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	73
	122	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	75
	123	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	76
	124	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	125	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	77
	126	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	78
	127	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	79
	128	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	80
	129	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	81
	130	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	82
	131	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	83
	132	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	84
	133	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx

	134	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	85
	135	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	86 *
	136	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	87
	137	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	88
	138	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	89
	139	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	90
	140	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	141	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	91
	142	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	92
	143	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	94
	144	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	95
	145	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	96
	146	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	97
	147	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	98
	148	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	99
Majlis 4	149	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	104
	150	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	105
	151	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	106*
	152	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	107
(Notes)	153	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	109
	154	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	110
	155	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	111
	156	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	112
	157	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	113*

Majlis 5	158	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	114
	159	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	115*
	160	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	161	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	116*
	162	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	117*
	163	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	120
	164	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	121
	165	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	122
	166	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	167	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	126
	168	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	127
	169	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	170	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	128*
	171	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	129
	172	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	134
	173	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	135
Majlis 6	174	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	139
	175	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	140
	176	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	144*
	177	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	145
	178	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	156
	179	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	159
	180	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	181	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	160

	182	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	161
	183	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	162
	184	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	164*
	185	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	166
	186	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	167
	187	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	168
	188	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	189	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	190	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	169
(Notes)	191	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	172
	192	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	173
	193	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	174
	194	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	175
	195	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	176
	196	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	177*
	197	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	178
Majlis 7	198	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	179
	199	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	180
	200	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	181*
	201	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	202	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	203	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	204	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	205	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx

	206	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	207	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	208	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	183*
	209	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	184*
	210	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	186
	211	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	187
	212	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	188
	213	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	189*
	214	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	215	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	190
	216	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	191
	217	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	194
	218	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	195
	219	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	220	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	197
	221	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	198
	222	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	199

**TABLE III**

**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT C  
AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

C	C	A	B	D	E	F	R
(Notes)	01	12	14	12	25	14	xxx
	02	13	15	13	17	15	xxx
	03	14	16	14	18	16	xxx
	04	15	16	15	19	17	202
	05	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	202
	06	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	07	xxx	xxx	45	49	50	xxx
	08	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	09	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	10	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	11	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	Xxx	xxx
	12	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	13	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	14	07	09	07	07	10	xxx
	15	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	16	22	23	22	11	24	xxx
	17	23	24	23	12	25	xxx
	18	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

	19	xxx	xxx	21	xxx	23	xxx
	20	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	21	06	08	06	06	09	xxx
	22	08	10	08	08	11	xxx
	23	34	xxx	35	35	37	xxx
	24	35	xxx	xxx	36	38	xxx
	25	27	27	28	27	30	xxx

**TABLE IV**  
**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT D**  
**AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

D	D	A	B	C	E	F	R
(Notes)	01	01	02	xxx	01	01	xxx
	02	02	04	xxx	02	05	xxx
	03	03	05	xxx	03	06	xxx
	04	04	06	xxx	04	07	xxx
	05	05	07	xxx	05	08	xxx
	06	06	08	21	06	09	xxx
	07	07	09	14	07	10	xxx
	08	08	10	22	08	11	xxx
	09	09	11	xxx	09	xxx	xxx
	10	10	12	xxx	51	12	xxx
	11	11	13	xxx	16	13	xxx
	12	12	14	01	25	14	xxx
	13	13	15	02	17	15	202
	14	14	16	03	18	16	202
	15	15	16	04	19	17	xxx
	16	16	xxx	xxx	20	xxx	xxx
	17	17	18	xxx	21	18	xxx
	18	18	19	xxx	22	19	xxx
	19	19	20	xxx	23	20	xxx
	20	20	21	xxx	24	21	xxx



	21	21	22	xxx	10	22	xxx
	22	22	23	16	11	24	xxx
	23	23	24	17	12	25	xxx
	24	24	xxx	xxx	13	xxx	xxx
	25	25	25	xxx	14	26	xxx?
	26	26 ?	26 ?	xxx	15	27	xxx
	27	26 ?	26 ?	xxx	26	29	xxx
	28	27	27	25	27	30	xxx
	29	28	28	xxx	28	31	xxx
	30	29	29	xxx	29	32	xxx
	31	30	30	xxx	32	33	xxx
	32	31	31	xxx	48	34	xxx
	33	32	xxx	xxx	47	35	xxx
	34	33	xxx	xxx	33	36	xxx
	35	34	xxx	xxx	35	37	xxx
	36	38	xxx	xxx	30	41	xxx
	37	40	xxx	xxx	31	43	xxx
	38	41	xxx	xxx	44	44	xxx

	D	A	B	C	E	F	R
	39	42	xxx	xxx	52	45	xxx
	40	43	xxx	xxx	45	46	xxx
	41	44	xxx	xxx	46	47	xxx
	42	45	xxx	xxx	42	48	xxx
	43	46	xxx	xxx	xxx	49	xxx
	44	47	xxx	xxx	43	50	xxx
	45	xxx	xxx	xxx	49	51	xxx
	46	49	xxx	xxx	50	52	xxx

**TABLE V**  
**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT E**  
**AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

E	E	A	B	C	D	F	R
(Notes)	01	01	02	xxx	01	01	xxx
	02	02	04	xxx	02	05	xxx
	03	03	05	xxx	03	06	xxx
	04	04	06	xxx	04	07	xxx
	05	05	07	xxx	05	08	xxx
	06	06	08	21	06	09	xxx
	07	07	09	14	07	10	xxx
	08	08	10	22	08	11	xxx
	09	09	11	xxx	09	11/xxx?	xxx
	10	21	22	xxx	21	22	xxx
	11	22	23	xxx	22	24	xxx
	12	23	24	16	23	25	xxx
	13	24	xxx	xxx	24	xxx	xxx
	14	25	25	xxx	25	26	xxx
	15	26	26	17*	26, 27	27	xxx
	16	11	13	xxx	11	13	xxx
	17	13	15	02	13	15	xxx
	18	14	16	03	14	16	xxx
	19	15	16	04	15	17	xxx

	20	16	xxx	xxx	16	xxx	xxx
	21	17	18	23	17	18	xxx
	22	18	19	xxx	18	19	xxx
	23	19	20	xxx	19	20	xxx
	24	20	21	xxx	20	21	xxx
	25	12	14	01	12	14	xxx
	26	26	32	25	27	29	xxx
	27	28	28	xxx	28	30	xxx
	28	29	29	xxx	29	31	xxx
	29	38	xxx	xxx	30	32	xxx
	30	40	xxx	xxx	36	41	xxx
	31	30	xxx	xxx	37	43	xxx
	32	33	30	xxx	31	33	xxx
	33	39	xxx	xxx	34	36	xxx
	34	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	42	xxx
	35	34	xxx	23	35	37	xxx
	36	35	xxx	24	xxx	38	xxx
	37	36	xxx	xxx	xxx	39	xxx
	38	36	xxx	xxx	xxx	39?	xxx
	39	37	xxx	xxx	xxx	40	xxx
	40	xxx	03	xxx	xxx	03	xxx
	41	xxx	xxx	xxx	41	04	xxx
	42	45	xxx	xxx	42	48	xxx
	43	47	xxx	xxx	44	50	xxx

	44	41	xxx	xxx	38	44	xxx
	45	43	xxx	xxx	40	46	xxx
	46	44	xxx	xxx	41	47	xxx
	47	32	xxx	xxx	33	35	xxx
	48	31	31	xxx	32	34	xxx
	49	48	xxx	xxx	45	51	xxx
	50	49	xxx	xxx	46	52	xxx
	51	10	12	xxx	10	12	xxx
	52	42	xxx	xxx	39	45	xxx
	53	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	54	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	55	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx

**TABLE VI**  
**QUESTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT F**  
**AS COMPARED TO OTHER MANUSCRIPTS**

	F	A	B	C	D	E	R
	01	01	02	xxx	01	01	xxx
	02	50	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	03	37	xxx	xxx	xxx	40	xxx
	04	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	41	xxx
	05	02	04	xxx	02	02	xxx
	06	03	05	xxx	03	03	xxx
	07	04	06	xxx	04	04	xxx
	08	05	07	xxx	05	05	xxx
	09	06	08	21	06	06	xxx
	10	07	09	14	07	07	xxx
	11	08	10	22	08	08,09	xxx
	12	10	xxx	xxx	45	51	xxx
	13	11	13	xxx	11	16	xxx
	14	12	14	01	12	25	xxx
	15	13	15	02	13	17	xxx
	16	14	16	03	14	18	xxx
	17	15	16	04	15	19	xxx
	18	17?	xxx	xxx	16	20	xxx
	19	18?	18	xxx	17	21	xxx

	20	19?	19	xxx	18	22	xxx
	21	xxx	20	xxx	19	23	xxx
	22	20?	22	xxx	21	24	xxx
	23	21	23?	xxx	22?	10	xxx
	24	22?	23?	16	22?	11	xxx
	25	23?	24	17	23	12	xxx
	26	24?	25	xxx	25	13	xxx
	27	25?	15	xxx	13	14	xxx
	28	26?	14	xxx	12	15	xxx
	29	26?	27	25	28	26	xxx
	30	27?	28	xxx	29	27	xxx
	31	28?	xxx	xxx	36	28	xxx
	32	29?	xxx	xxx	xxx	29	xxx
	33	30?	xxx	xxx	40	32	xxx
	34	31?	xxx	xxx	xxx	48	xxx
	35	32?	xxx	xxx	33	47	xxx
	36	33?	xxx	xxx	xxx	33	xxx
	37	34?	xxx	xxx	xxx	35	xxx
	38	35?	xxx	xxx	xxx	36	xxx
	39	36	Xxx	xxx	xxx	37	xxx
	40	xxx	Xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
	41	45?	29	xxx	30	30	xxx
	42	39?	Xxx	xxx	xxx	34	xxx
	43	47?	xxx	xxx	43	31	xxx

	44	46?	xxx	xxx	38	44	xxx
	45	42?	xxx	xxx	37	52	xxx
	46	43	xxx	xxx	39	45	xxx
	47	44?	xxx	xxx	xxx	46	xxx
	48	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	42	xxx
	49	45	xxx	xxx	45	41?	xxx
	50	31	31	xxx	32	47?	xxx
	51	48	xxx	xxx	44	49	xxx
	52	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	50	xxx