

Live Like ‘Alī and Die Like Ḥusain: The Sufis of Sind from Manṣūr al-Hallāġ to Syed Waqār Ḥusain Ṣāh Laṭīfī

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Abstract

From Manṣūr al-Hallāġ (244/858-309/922) to Pīr Hajī Syed Khwāja Ḥasan Sākhī Sulṭān Mangho Pīr in the 13th century to Abdul Wahhāb Fārūqī Saḥal Sarmast Āškār in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1152/1739–1242/1826) to the sixth Pīr Pagara, Ṣahīd Sibġatullah Ṣāh Raṣīdī II (1327/1910-1361/1943), to the mild-mannered Syed Waqār Ḥusain Ṣāh Laṭīfī, *sajjāda nashīn* of the *dargāh* of the *dargāh* of Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhiṭā’ī in Bhiṭ Shāh, Sindh, the *pīrs* of Sind have shown time and again what it means ‘to die before death’ and to ‘to live like Ali and die like Husain’. Their messages of love both human and divine live in the hearts of humanity far beyond the life-giving waters of the Indus and the life-taking bloodbaths of Karachi. In this paper we trace the sublime threads of ‘*iṣq* (divine love) in Sind from Hallāġ to Bina Shah (b. 1972).

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I.
Invocation

Verses Dedicated to the People of Sindh
by
Herbert Tower Sorley (1892–1963), D. Litt., CIE, ICS

O friendly folk with whom I've lived
 And felt the beat of violent sun,
 And heard sharp argument and seen
 How Indus waters errant run.
 No chronicle of kings and wars
 Your lowly hamlet bard unfolds.
 The wonder of his melodies
 Enthralled a rustic people holds.
 Gone are the days when tempered blade
 And matchlocks' fire laid waste your fields.
 The drums of peacefulness are struck.
 Your land a full abundance yields.
 So now to contemplative mind
 Is Sayid-lore a nobler key
 For opening wide the door of God
 That leads to God's great mystery.
 No might is here of Rumi's verse.
 No Jami's soul-wrapt music swings.
 No high-tuned note of Hafiz' wit
 Within your humble minstrel rings.
 And yet! – strange paradox it be,
 That not less searching is the calm,
 The simple magic of his lays
 Than wise, deep utterance of Islam.¹

[Forsan et] haec olim meminisse iuvabit

[‘And perhaps] it will please us one day to have remembered these things’.

(Virgil, *Aeneis*, I.203)

[Hyderabad, Sindh,] March 31st, 1938.²

¹ Sorley, Herbert Tower, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit: His Poetry, Life and Times. A Study of Literary, Social and Economic Conditions in Eighteenth Century Sind*, London [Oxford University Press] 1940, p. v. The above verses were written in iambic tetrameter in quatrains with the rhyme scheme ABXB, a ballad stanza.

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II.

The ‘Perfect Man’ and the Martyrs of ‘*išq*’³

Devotion to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH!), characterizes the practice of Islam in South Asia more than any other doctrine or institution. Nowhere in the Muslim world is the birthday of the Prophet (PBUH!) more fervently celebrated than in South Asia where it is considered the third *eid*, the *Eid-e-Milād un-Nabī*. Wherever the twelfth of Rabi ul Awwāl falls in a given year that day is a national holiday for the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (PBUH).

Intimately linked with emotional devotion to the Prophet (PBUH!) is the belief that Muhammad (PBUH!) is the Perfect Man, *al-insān al-kāmil*, the emulation of whose conduct is the duty of every pious Muslim. The doctrine of the Perfect Man was the core teaching of the mystical orders that formed soon after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) to strive to obtain the inner or hidden meaning of the *Holy Qur’ān*, the *‘ilm-i bāṭin*, and become a Perfect Man. In the course of time, these mystical orders came to be known as “Sūfīs”.

Though the most important quest of the Sūfī is an inward struggle, the *ḡihād al-akbar*, Sūfīs roamed far and wide in the medieval world as religious mendicants, encountering and living among diverse peoples and societies, and as the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) was known to have treated members of other religious communities kindly and generously, they too, in emulation of their Holy Prophet’s (PBUH) conduct, treated others kindly and generously. Thus, it came to pass that profoundly moving testimonies of good will to one’s fellow man were attributed to famous Sūfīs, accurately or, occasionally, spuriously.⁴

Inner dialogues of longing for the Divine Beloved and outward dialogues of love for one's fellow man are one and the same, both are aspects of *‘išq*, the longing of the soul for union with the Divine Beloved, and both dialogues have been undersigned in blood by the Sūfīs time and again over centuries in the words *anāl haqq!* (I am the absolute truth!). In the words of the doyenne of Orientalists, Annemarie Schimmel (1922–2003):

The history of Islam knows many names of mystics whose lives were fulfilled in their love for and their ‘unity’ with Allah [s.w.t.] and in love for their fellow man. The greatest of these is Abu'l-Muḡīt al-Ḥusain bin Maṣūf al-Hallāḡ [‘the Cotton Carder’], (858–922 a. D./244–309 A.H.) who, because of his spiritual utterances and his political activity, was cruelly executed in Baghdad in 922 a. D./ 309 A.H.

² Op. cit., p. viii.

³ I am grateful to Leslie Wearne Duncan and Ian Richard Duncan (Ibiza) for proofreading, without which this article would have remained untidy and less effective.

⁴ The foregoing lines were first published in my retrospective anthology *Well Articulated Better Paths. Sufi Saints as Links between Religious Communities*, Islamabad/Berlin [Friedrich Naumann Foundation] 2014, p. xi.

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Up to the present day, Hallāğ remains a symbolic figure all over the Muslim world, hated by the orthodox, admired by those who see in him the embodiment of pure love for Allah [s.w.t.]. It was his parable of the moth that plunges into the flame to find new life there that inspired Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to write his poem “Sacred Longing” (*Heilige Sehnsucht*).

The apotheosis of the “Martyr of the Love of God” whose name is invoked again and again in the poetry of Islamic nations occurs in the scene in Sir Allamah Muhammad Iqbal's Persian epic *Javidname* (1932) [in the “Sphere of Jupiter”, lines 2281f.], in which Hallāğ warns Iqbal [’s *alter ego* Zinda Rūd, the ‘Living Stream’]:

What I have done you too have done; beware!
 You have sought to resurrect the dead; beware!⁵

That is, resurrection from an encrusted world of legalism, not by the denial of human responsibility but by the fulfillment of the true role of man, concerning which it is said in the *Holy Qur’ān* that Allah [s.w.t.] has honored him (*sūra* 17.72) and entrusted him with a precious possession (*sūra* 33.72).⁶

III.

292 A.H. /905 A.D.: The Martyrs of ‘išq Reach Sindh

Hallāğ came early to Sindh, seventeen years before his martyrdom in Baghdad in 309 A.H. /922 A.D., and brought with him one of the everlasting statements of Sufism:

Only suffering and death can bring man closer to Allah (s.w.t.).

More than a thousand years later it was that same core statement of ‘išq that Annemarie Schimmel heard in a song in the village of Garhiyasin in Upper Sind in 1961:

Ask the condition of love from the lovers.
 If you do not believe me, ask from those like Manşūr.⁷

⁵ Arberry, Arthur J., *Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Javid-Nama. Translated from the Persian with introduction and notes*, London [George Allen & Unwin], 1966, p. 96.

⁶ The foregoing lines (excepting Arberry’s translation from the *Javid Nama* noted above) were translated from the German by the present author. They are an excerpt from Professor Schimmel’s acceptance address on the occasion of the conferment of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main on 15th October 1995. The original text of Professor Schimmel’s address was published by the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels (Verlag der Buchhändler-Vereinigung), Frankfurt am Main, 1995, under the title: *Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels 1995. Annemarie Schimmel*, pp. 35-46.

⁷ Schimmel, Annemarie, *Pearls from the Indus. Studies in Sindhi Culture*, Jamshoro/Hyderabad [Sindhi Adabi Board] 1407 A.H./1986 A.D., pp. 3 and 96.

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Three centuries after Hallāḡ a verse in Farsī by ‘Uthmān Marwandī (567-568/1177–672-673/1274), better known as Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, reflects the deep impression made by widespread popular accounts of Hallāḡ dancing onto the gallows :

I am ‘Uthmān Marwandī, the friend of Master Maṣūūr.
 People blame me⁸, and I dance upon the gallows.⁹

تو آن قاتل کہ از بہر تماشا خون من ریزی
 من آن بسمل کہ زیر خنجر خونخوار می رقصم
 (عثمان مروندی، عرف لال شہباز قلندر)

تو وہ قاتل ہے جو تماشا کرنے کے لیے میرا خون بہاتا ہے:
 میں وہ بسمل ہوں جو خونخوار خنجر کے نیچے بھی رقص کرتا ہے

You are the killer. You spill
 blood just for the spectacle.

I am the wounded. And yet,
 under your blood-drenched
 knife, I dance in ecstasy.

The above mentioned couplet was said by Lal Shahbaz Qalandar referring to the circumstances he underwent during his life (1177-1275).

لعل میری، پت رکھیو بھلا، جھولے لالہ
 سندھڑی دا، سہون دا، سخی شہباز قلندر

O young man, protect my
 honor, Jhulelal,

Friend of the Sindhis, and of
 Sehwan, O generous Shahbaz
 Qalandar

The above mentioned couplet
 is from the poem initially written
 by Amir Khusrow and further
 modified by Bulleh Shah

Following the suicide bomb attack by the so-called Islamic State (IS) at the *dargāh* of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar at Sehwan Sharif on 16th February 2017, the above verse was uploaded on the internet to testify that the threat of death will not deter true lovers of Allah (s.w.t.) on the path of *tassawuf*. The pain willingly suffered for the Divine Beloved is the heart blood of Sufism. This suffering is the Blessing of Allah (s.w.t.) that draws His lover closer to Him.

⁸ A reference to the Sūfis *malāmātiyya*, ‘the Blameworthy’, who cultivated public scorn and ostracism in order to isolate themselves from distraction and increase spiritual progress.

⁹ Schimmel 1986, op. cit., pp. 103f.

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In fine English of the first half of the twentieth century arguably the greatest foreign lover of Sindhi language and culture, the former Collector of Hyderabad (and even more noted as collector of some twenty-thousand butterflies of Sindh¹⁰), Herbert Tower Sorley, gave appropriate dignity to the core statement of Sufism in his rendering of the Sindhi verses of Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf (1689 A. D. / 1102 A.H. [?] – 1752 A. D. / 1165 A.H.) from the *Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Maizūrī*:

By dying live that thou mayst feel
 The beauty of Beloved... Thou
 Wilt surely do the righteous thing,
 If thou wilt follow this advice.
 Die, that thou prosper... Sit not down,
 O woman, live and after death
 Thou wilt unto thy Punhūn come.
 They who so died before their death
 By death were not in death subdued.
 Assuredly they live who lived
 Before their life of living was.
 Who lived before their living was
 From age to age will live for aye.
 They will not die again who died
 Before dying came to them.¹¹

To exemplify the paradox of the necessity of the suffering and death of Allah’s (s.w.t.) “selected ones” Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf chose the martyrdom of Ḥusain ibn ‘Alī (R.) and his loyal companions at Kerbala (61 A.H./680 A. D.). Annemarie Schimmel attributed the beginning of the writing and singing of *martiyas* (dirges mourning the martyrs of Kerbala) to the influence of Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf’s moving *Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Kedāro*.¹²

Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Kedāro

1. Muharram begins, the true *Imāms* are restless,
 Allah (s.w.t.) ordains as He pleases and knows the reason why.
2. Muharram returns but not the *Imāms*,
 May I see Medina’s leaders by the Will of Allah (s.w.t.)!
3. The princes who left Medina have not come back,
 O brother Dyer! Dye my clothes black,

¹⁰ <https://panhwar.com/Article53.htm>.

¹¹ Sorley, op. cit., p. 379.

¹² Schimmel, Annemarie, *Sindhi Literature*, published in: Jan Gonda (series editor), *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. IX.1 (previously: Vol. VIII), Wiesbaden [Otto Harassowitz], 1974, p. 17.

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I mourn those who never returned.

4. The tribulations of martyrs are Allah's (s.w.t.) raindrops of mercy.
 Yazid was not aware of such Divine Grace.
 Sacrificing themselves was from the beginning the *Imāms'* eternal fate.

5. The tribulations of martyrdom are Allah's (s.w.t.) Grace,
 only the wise can fathom Karbala's tragic deaths.

Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Kedāro

Canto II

5. Allah (s.w.t.) lets His dear ones and friends be sacrificed,
 trials and tribulations are for the selected ones,

6. Eternal and absolute is Allah (s.w.t.), He does what He wills,
 A deep secret lies hidden in this.¹³

Of equal importance to verses of poetry in the formation of the Sūfī culture of Sindh was the conduct of the Sūfīs who *embodied* the doctrine of dying before death and taught it to others through their heroic deeds. To use a popular idiom of recent origin: They not only talked the talk, they also walked the walk, showing by their heroism what it means "to die before death", what it means "to live like Ali and die like Husain".

Up to this day the *mutavālli* (guardians) of the *dargāh* of Pīr Hajī Syed Khwāja Ḥasan Sākhī Sulṭān Mangho Pīr (13th c. A. D.), on the outskirts of Karachi maintain the tradition of their *muršīd* (spiritual mentor) and walk calmly, apparently indifferent to death, among the scores of crocodiles kept in the pond at Mangho Pīr's *dargāh*.

In this connection we should also remember the syncretistic Sūfī Sa'id Sarmad Kāšānī (998-999/1590-1072/1661), an Iranian-born jeweler and Jewish convert to Islam, who became the bosom-friend of the ill-fated Mughal prince Dārā Šikoh (1615-1659) and cheerfully paid for that friendship with his head when, in the aftermath of Dārā's execution, Aurangzeb (1616-1707; ruled from 1658) purged many of Dārā's friends from public life and liquidated many others.

At his execution Sarmad renewed the tradition of Manšūr al-Hallāġ by reciting love poetry to his executioner, calling him the "Beloved in Disguise", until his head was cut off:

O, come, come!
 I'll recognize Thou in all the appearances you'll come;
 Put on every sort of garment you want,

¹³ Downloaded from http://www.shiatv.net/view_video.php?viewkey=204087db8f566beb01d5&flag=1 on 15 March 2018.

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I'll recognize you by the character of your walk.¹⁴

It is ages since the tale of Mansur has become dated.

I'll give a new shine to gallows and rope.¹⁵

Ultimately, Sarmad acquired the *nisba* “The Second Ḥallāj” (*Ḥallāj-i Thānī*) and the manner of his execution gave rise to an abundance of poetry in Sindhi containing the new trope “sword and rope” (*tīghu rasan*)¹⁶ in addition to the well-known trope “gallows and rope”.

Like Hallāḡ and Sarmad and other noble dervishes of Sindh before him, Abdul Wahhāb Fārūqī Sačal (< Skt. *sat* = ‘the Truth’) Sarmast (‘the Intoxicated’), Āškār (‘the Open’) (1152/1739–1242/1826) was also sentenced to death by decapitation by the *mullahs* of the *‘ulemā* for his enraptured claims of the unity of the Lover and the Divine Beloved. Unlike his illustrious predecessors, however, the death sentence was never carried out because the Talpur rulers of Sindh themselves often sat in the front rows of the audiences listening to Sačal’s songs of *hama ūst* (‘Everything is He’, the Unity of Being).

Even the great Orientalist and uncontested authority on Sindhi, the late Annemarie Schimmel, who was certainly no friend of monistic influences or debts to Advaita-Vedānta in Sufism, grudgingly admitted the mesmerizing power of Sačal’s melodies of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (‘the Unity of Being’):

The beauty of Sačal’s melodic verses can enrapture even those who may disagree with the contents of his poetry, i.e. with the bold assertion of the essential Unity of Being.¹⁷

Talking about mangos without eating them can never convey adequate knowledge of the sweetness of the fruit. Thus, I have chosen two famous dithyrambs of Sačal Sarmast in the hope that their *rasa* (‘taste’) might also be enjoyed in English:

Welcome! Welcome you are! – to which place will you bring me?
 You will again cut a head!
 Giving a kick to Sarmad, you killed him;
 You brought Maṣūr to the gallows;
 You cut off Šaiḥ ‘Aṭṭar’s head – now you are taking the way here!
 You split Zakarīyā with a saw,
 You threw Joseph into a well,

¹⁴ Prigarina, Natalia, “Sarmad: Life and Death of a Sufi” in: Eshots, Yanis (ed.), *Ishraq*. Islamic Philosophy Yearbook, No. 3 (2012), Moscow [Vostochnaya Literature Publishers], 2012, p. 319.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 320: “If to [sic] take into consideration the situation when these lines were said, one may only be certain that the poet understood the consequences of his proximity to Dara in Aurangzeb’s time.” Inasmuch as she had been a child in the years of Stalin’s liquidations of millions of Russians he perceived as his enemies or opponents together with their families and even casual friends often only on the basis of guilt by association, Prigarina’s (b. 1934) comment tells us as much about her own as about Sarmad’s historical situation.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 314.

¹⁷ Schimmel 1986, op. cit., p. 112.

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You had Šams [ud-Dīn Tabrīzī¹⁸] killed
 At the hands of the *mullahs*;
 You are used to afflicting the lover...¹⁹

In a seemingly endless litany of contrasts Sačal ponders the *jamālī* (benign) and *jalālī* (terrifying) attributes of Allah (s.w.t.), corresponding to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinatum* (frightening and fascinating characteristics) of God in Christianity, by reciting a colourful catalogue of beings, sentient and non-sentient, all prefaced with the ‘perhaps’ of uncertainty only to end profoundly by saying “... perhaps I am not at all...”

I do not know, O sisters, what I really am...
 Perhaps I am a puppet on a string, perhaps the string on which it hangs,
 Perhaps a ball in the hand of the Beloved,
 Perhaps a yoke with heavy burden,
 Perhaps a castle where the king sits and thinks
 And talks about many things for getting new information.
 Perhaps I am a horse which some rider guides,
 Perhaps a wave of the ocean which drowns the outward being,
 Perhaps a henna-flower with red colouring,
 Perhaps a rose, the head full of scent,
 Perhaps I am a fountain, filled by a cloud,
 In which the sun is reflected and the moon as well.
 Perhaps I am God’s mirror from pre-eternity
 Which is beyond all worlds –
 ...perhaps I am not at all...²⁰

IV.

‘išq and insāniyat in the ġihād al akbar²¹ of tassawuf

(‘Love of Allah [s.w.t.] and Love of Man in the ‘Greater War’ of Sufism’)

Al-Qur’ān:

O people! Behold!
We have created you from a male and a female
and have made you into nations and tribes
so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the
noblest of you in the sight of Allah (s.w.t.) is the one
who is most deeply conscious of Him.
Behold! Allah (s.w.t.) is all-knowing, all-aware. (al-Qur’ān, 49:13)

¹⁸ The *muršīd* (mentor) of Maulānā Ġalāluddīn Rūmī (d. 1273).

¹⁹ Schimmel 1974, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The *ġihād al akbar* or ‘Greater War’ against the ‘six enemies’ of mankind (Sanskrit: *ṣaḍ rīpa*): greed (*lobha*), confusion (*moha*), lust (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), drunkenness (*mada*) and arrogance (*matsa*).

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Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf’ s most often expressed consciousness of Allah (s.w.t.) is His *rahīmat* (divine mercy) the universal expression of which is rain. The importance of rain becomes unmistakably clear when one looks out over the dust-laden fields of Sindh before the onset of the monsoon. Sindh, even today, relies heavily on the coming of the rains for the survival of man, beast and crop. That was no different in the days of Šāh:

*Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Sārang*²²

Warm preparations are again in progress everywhere;
 Again the lightnings have begun to leap with arduous flare;
 Some towards Stambul do dive, some to the West repair;
 Some over Cathay do glitter; some of Samarkand take care;
 Some wander to Rūm²³, Kābul, some to Kandahār fare;
 Some lie over Delhi, some boom over the Deccan,
 Some reach Girnār, thundering there
 And greens on Bikanīr pour those that jump from Jaisalmīr
 Some Bhuj have soaked, others descend on Dhat with gentle air...
 Those crossing Umārkoṭ have made the fields fertile and fair...
 O Allah (s.w.t.), may ever You on Sindh bestow abundance rare;
 O Beloved! All the world let share Thy grace,
 let fruitful be Thy rainy deeds!²⁴

The second thread on the spinning wheel of Sūfī poetry in Sindhi is of equal importance to dying before death: unconditional love for mankind. Perhaps its most prominent proponent, Sūfī Dalpatrāī (1769–1849), lived in the late pre-modern period. Born into the influential Amil family of Sehwan Sharif nearby the *dargāh* of Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar, the boy who was later to become Divān Dalpatrāī in the service of the Talpur *rājās*, Bhāī Dalpatrāī as the disciple of Bhāī Asardās and Sūfī Dalpatrāī in his own right, achieved mastery of literary Sindhi, Hindustani and Farsi. However, whatever language he chose, his poetic message was always the Unity of Being, expressed in Sūfī and/or Advaitic terms, and the equality of man:

If Allah (s.w.t.) is to be found in the Peepul tree,
 Can it really be another Allah (s.w.t.)

²² The following translation of the *Šāh jo Risālo, Sūr Sārang* is by the late Elsa Gertrude Kazi, née Lösch (1884-1967), one of two German women who are widely known as “Mothers of Sindhi”, the other being the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel. This translation was downloaded on 19 March 2018 and modified to improve understanding. <https://sindhiproverbs.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/shah-jo-risalo3.pdf>.

²³ The Byzantine empire ceased to exist in 1453, some three centuries before Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf’ (1689-1752). But “Rūm” = Rome, the name given the Eastern Roman empire by the Muslims when Byzantium first encountered Muslim expansion in the time of the Prophet’s (PBUH) grandson, Imām Ḥusain ibn Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (R.) (4 A.H. – 61 A.H./625-680 A.D.), who himself took part in the first Muslim attacks on Constantinople under the caliphate of al Mu’āwiya bin Abī Sufyān (18 B.H. – 60 A.H./603-680 A.D.), was still current in Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf’ s time as the name of eastern Turkey and western Central Asia.

²⁴ As literature or oral tradition Šāh ‘Abdul Laṭīf’ s paeon to the clouds as messengers of Allah’s (s.w.t.) *rahīmat* travelling over the world and showering abundance belongs to the widespread tradition of *dūta-kāvya*, ‘messenger poetry’, that began with Kālidāsa’s Sanskrit *Meghadūta* (‘Cloud Messenger’) in the late fourth century A.D.

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Who is found in the Babul tree?
 If the *Ka'ba* is the House of Allah (s.w.t.),
 Where is the defect in the church?²⁵
 There is only one light of enlightenment
 Whether in the *mandir* or the *masjid*.
 O Dalpat! How have these quarrels
 Come among the people?²⁶

Sūfī Dalpatrāī teaches that one's ear should be the *Ka'aba*, one's mouth should be the *masjid*, and one's mind should be the faith (*kān Ka'aba, mukh masit, man imān*).²⁷

The late Assandas Jethanand Uttamchandani (1923–2005), alias A. J. Uttam, pointed to the peace-promoting effect of the Sindhi poetry of Sūfī Dalpatrāī in the time before the partition of British India. On the foregoing poem A. J. Uttam once wrote:

I remember clearly that before Partition in Sindh this poem and other such poems were recited even in public gatherings to promote peace between religious communities, and it is because of the synthesis of Sufism and Vedanta in them that Hindus and Muslims by and large *lived together in peace*.²⁸

V.

Dying before Death or Dying by Suicide Bombing

In an interview with the BBC published on 4 August 2014 the young, mild-mannered but unshaken Syed Waqar Shah Latifi, *sajjādā nashīn* of the *dargāh* of Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhiṭā'ī in Bhiṭ Shāh, Sindh, calmly reflected on the frequent attacks on Sūfī shrines by the Taliban and the so-called Islamic State, attacks provoked to no small degree by the unconditional love of Sūfīs toward their fellow man, regardless of religion, language, or ethnic descent, and concluded with unshakeable conviction:

There is no way that, at the end of the day,

²⁵ It is likely that Sūfī Dalpatrāī not only knew of the church house as a House of Allah (s.w.t.) but also knew some of the teachings taught in a Christian church that are similar to the teachings of Sufism, such as the Evangelists *Luke* 10.27, *Mark* 12.30 and *Matthew* 22:36-40: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

²⁶ The Encyclopedia of Indian Literature, p. 840;

https://books.google.de/books?redir_esc=y&hl=de&id=ObFCT5_taSgC&q=dalpatrai#v=snippet&q=dalpatrai&f=false. Retrieved on 9 March 2018.

²⁷ Uttamchandani, Assandas Jethanand, "Sufism and Communal Harmony in Sindhi Poetry", in: Engineer, Ali Asgar (ed.), *Sufism and Communal Harmony*, Jaipur [Rupa Books Pvt. Ltd.], 1991, p. 196.

²⁸ Uttamchandani, op. cit., p. 197. (Present author's italics).

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the Taliban will stand in front of the Sufis.²⁹

Dialogues with the traditions of Sufism in Sindh today can take forms as varied as folk songs, ecstatic dancing, shrine rituals, petitionary prayers, photographs of and commentaries on centuries-old sacred centres, and noteworthy internet blogs in which soulful visits to ancient shrines along the banks or on islands in the stream of the Indus are lovingly photographed, painstakingly annotated and uploaded³⁰ on the internet.

In a BBC interview of 4 August 2014 the Sindhi feminist writer Bina Shah (b. 1972) spoke clearly about the incompatibility of present-day *ġihādī* movements with the bedrock of Sufism that underlies Sindhi culture:

When you come from outside and come to a culture that is as accepting and as welcoming as Sindhi culture is, as Sufi culture is, and you start telling them that your way of life, your way of worshipping God, is not just wrong, it is sinful, and you should be punished not just in the next world but in this one by us, for practising your culture and your traditions, I see that as real psychological violence.³¹

In recounting the final days of the sixth Pīr Pāgāro, Šahīd Šibgatullāh Šāh Rāšidī II (1910–1943), in the chapter “The Game of Kings. Hyderabad, Sindh, 1943” of her recent novel *A Season for Martyrs*, Shah deftly portrays the Pīr Pāgāro as a

...man ... fearless in the face of death because he was supreme in the confidence that he could never die.³²

In other words, a man easily recognizable as an unbroken mental and spiritual successor in the chain (*silsila*) that began more than eleven centuries ago with the visit to Sindh in 293 A.H./905 A.D. of the great martyr of ‘iṣq, the Cotton Carder, Abu'l-Muġīt al-Ḥusain bin Maṣūr al-Hallāġ.³³

But it is to the late fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, Hugh Trevor Lambrick, ICS, CIE (1904–1982), who as colonial administrator oversaw British efforts to suppress the Hūr rebellion in eastern Sindh in the years 1941–1945, that we owe a considerable debt for striking accounts of the Sufi practice of dying before death among the *murīds* of the sixth Pīr Pāgāro, Šahīd Šibgatullāh Šāh Rāšidī II.

²⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-28635974/pakistan-s-sufis-under-attack-from-islamic-hard-liners>. (Retrieved on 7 March 2018.).

³⁰ For example: <https://www.news18.com/news/world/in-pictures-sufism-meets-hinduism-at-shrine-of-lal-shahbaz-qalandar-1350809.html>, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1184973> (“Finding Beauty and Happiness in Barren Sukkur”), <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/lal-shahbaz-qalandar-pakistan-pluralistic-history-170218112828742.html>. (The foregoing files were retrieved on 15 March 2018).

³¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-28635974/pakistan-s-sufis-under-attack-from-islamic-hard-liners>. (Retrieved on 7 March 2018).

³² Shah, Bina, *A Season for Martyrs*, New York [Platinum Books], 2016, <https://lesen.amazon.de/>, Kindle reader position 2457. (Retrieved on 15 March 2018).

³³ Shah, op. cit., <https://lesen.amazon.de/>, Kindle reader positions 2199 to 2486. (Retrieved on 15 March 2018.).

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In Lambrick's translation from the Sindhi of the incomplete memoirs of the Hūr guerilla fighter, Fakir Sainrakhio Bihan (the name is probably an alias), we first learn of the Pīr Pāgāro carrying out a funeral ritual for living disciples in which he transported them through death to a new life:

'A man, at the moment when he starts on an ordinary journey, will bid farewell to his wife and family. But for such a journey as you will soon be called to make, it is proper to renounce this world and its life. Are you ready to do this?' (...) Pir Saheb then ordered us all to lie down side by side, each man to spread his turban and shawl completely over himself, so that no part was visible. (...) Then his voice, in a different tone, began to declaim something in words I could not understand, though as I listened they seemed somehow familiar.³⁴ At length it ended, and Pir Saheb ordered us to arise, in his usual voice. He said: 'You have now passed through the shadow of death, and the life that you feel in you is a new life, dedicated to me, your Imam. Go in peace now, and remain prepared for my call.'³⁵

Later, in his account of the Hūr rebellion, Sainrakhio recalls the luckless fate of those Hūrs who were killed or taken captive during the abortive attack on the village of Pesumal:

Several were seized, and some Hūrs belonging to the hamlet arrested with them. They were sent to Hyderabad, and about a week later we were told that as many as ten of them were hanged in one morning. They went to the gallows one after the other, cheerfully, singing the praises of the All-Excellent Pir Saheb Pagaro.³⁶

The contrasting examples in the foregoing discussion (Sehwan Sharif 2017 and village Pesumal 1942) highlight an important characteristic of dying before death in Sufism: its ambivalence. Up to the present day the *murīds* of the Pīr Pāgāro who were hanged in 1942 were either martyrs (*šahīd*) or terrorists, depending on one's political point of view. The decisive question is not 'Right or wrong?' but 'Whose side are you on?' A profound example in this connection would be the role of the Hūrs as valued guerilla fighters against the Indian invaders of Sindh in the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965. The terrorist methods, guerilla tactics and frequent atrocities of the Hūrs remained the same as in the past. But the point of view of the government and people of Pakistan had changed. The Hūrs were now celebrated as holy warriors (*gāzī*) or martyrs (*šahīd*) who had fought against and killed the enemies of Pakistan.³⁷

³⁴ The Pīr Pāgāro had prayed the Islamic funeral prayer, the *namāz-i jināza*, in Arabic, over his *murīds*. Thus, Sainrakhio, whose mother tongue was Sindhi, could not understand the Arabic words of the prayer but nonetheless recognized the sounds he heard as a sacred utterance.

³⁵ Lambrick, Hugh Trevor (editor and translator), *The Terrorist*, London [Ernest Benn Limited], 1972, pp. 50f.

³⁶ Op. cit. p. 119.

³⁷ Op. cit., pp. 243f.

VI.

Appendix

Attacks on shrines since 2005 in Pakistan

