CHAPTER X

TEACHING AND PRACTICES OF THE SHAṬṬĀRĪ SILSILAḤ

The teachings of the Shaṭṭārī silsilaḥ may be considered under the following heads:

1. Metaphysical,
2. Spiritual, and

Metaphysical:

The basic metaphysical concept of the shaṭṭāris was their faith in the theory of Wahdat-ul-Wujud, unity of the phenomenal and the noumenal world. The chishtiis were, no doubt, the pioneers so far as the exposition of this theory in India was concerned. The shaṭṭāris followed in their footsteps in this respect but with one basic difference. The early Chishti saints did not write any book in order to elucidate their ideas on this problem. The only Chishti work of the early period which deals with pantheistic monism is the Mir‘āt-ul-‘Arifīn¹ of Mas‘ūd Bak.² The shaṭṭārī saints,

1. Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith of Delhi has given extracts from this work in his Akhbar-ul-Akhbār (pp. 163-64). It is divided into fourteen chapters dealing with such topics as — Reality of Existence, Tawḥīd, Sayḥ, Suḥr, gnosis. It was published in 1892 A.D. He also left a collection of poems known as Nur-ul-‘Ain (MS. in British Museum).

2. Masud Bak was a relation of Firuz Shāh Tughlaq. He severed his relations with the ruling family and took to mysticism. According to the author of Matlub-ul-Talibin (MS.) the ulama had given a fatwā for his execution on account of his pantheistic views. For brief biographical notices, see Akhbar-ul-Akhbār pp. 164-167; Ma‘arif-ul-Malāyat (MS.) Vol. II, p. 822.
on the contrary, produced large number of booklets and brochures dealing with this topic. It is the recurring theme of the various compositions of the Shaṭṭārī saints. It is, however, to be noted that these discussions, though frequent, did not crystallise into any consistent and consolidated exposition of the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud. They derived their inspiration from the classical work on pantheistic philosophy — the Fusus-ul-Hikam of Shaikh Muḥi-u’d-din ibn Arabi. Shaikh Abdullah Sufi Shaṭṭārī, Shaikh-i-Lashkar Muhammad Arif, Shaikh Isā, Shaikh Muhammad Rashid used to consult the works of Ibn-i-Arabi very frequently and they also recommended them to their students.

The Shaṭṭāris maintained that Allah alone exists; all else is His manifestation. They cite the Islamic formula

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1. For instance, Risālah-i-Shaikh Hamid (MS.); Risālah-i-Wajib-u’d-din (MS.); Risalat-i-Magla-iat-ul-Takfīr (MS.); Risalat-i-Shāṭṭārīyāh, (MS.); Sharah-i-Nuzhat-ul-Arwah, (MS.) by Shaikh Wali Muhammad, Sharah-i-Nuzhat-ul-Arwah (MS.) by Shaikh Shab Ali; Sharah-i-Rubaiyat-i-Iṣrar-ul-Wāḥi, (MS.); Basar-Nawm, (MS.); Ain-ul-Mauli, (MS.); Risalat-i-Shaikh Iṣā, (MS.) Khwajah-ul-Hayat va Muh Nām, (MS.).

of faith — (Nothing exists except Allah) in support of their view. They trenchantly criticised the view which represented Allah and the universe as two separate entities. They even considered ِذات ( and ِصفات) to be identical.

Shaikh Muhammad Ala Qadin writes:

"So except the existence of Allah, there is no other existence and there is no possibility of there being anything except Allah. He is one and has no sharer is revealed at this stage. The adherents of Wahdat-ul-Wujud declare that who does not exist himself has no existence and who exists is Allah."

Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth used to quote the following tradition of the Prophet in support of his pantheistic views:

مَثَّلَ الْإٰدَمُ عَلَى صَرْف

1. ِلَاجْيِلَّ-ِغَشَبْيَّةَ، (م.س.) f. 10a; ِجَاهِيرَ-ِكُحَمْسَةَ، (م.س.) f. 267; ِمَنْسَبَتْ-ِعَشَّارَ، (م.س.) f. 81a.
2. ِمَسْدِينُ-ِعَل-ِاَسْتَرَ، (م.س.) f. 107b, ِمَكْتُوبَةَ-ِعَل-ِاَسْتَرَ (م.س.) f. 3.
3. ِمَسْدِينُ-ِعَل-ِاَسْتَرَ، (م.س.) f. 108a.
4. ِجَاهِيرَ-ِكُحَمْسَةَ (م.س.) f. 1.
Shaikh Allah Bakhsh frequently quotes the following hadith to substantiate his views about *wahdat-ul-wujud*:

\[ \text{(I am his companion who remembers me.)} \]

\[ \text{(I discovered you in the heart, talking with me.)} \]

\[ \text{(Friend of my heart is a companion in my heart.)} \]

Shaikh Burhan has remarked in his *Wasiyat Namaah*:

\[ \text{"One should be seen, one should be known, one should be talked about, one should be searched and all that is visible should be regarded as His manifestation and all that is known is known due to Him: He is the first He is the last, He is the phenomena and He is the noumena."} \]

Spiritual

1. Development of cosmic Emotion

The key and kernel of the teachings of the Shattari silsilah was the cultivation of cosmic emotion (عِجْرَة). All Shattari works emphasise this again and again as the supreme ideal of a mystic's life. The founder of the Tariqah-i-Ishqiah, Shaikh Bayazid Bistami, who was looked upon by the Shattaris as their greatest saint and from whom they received inspiration in almost every sphere of their spiritual discipline, believed that a life of spiritual intoxication (sukr), arising out of cosmic emotion, was superior to a life of spiritual sobriety (صَمْر). The Shattari saints of India generally believed in the supremacy of the life of ecstasy, but when scholars like Shaikh Wajih-ud-din Alavi and Shaikh Burhan joined the Shattari fold, greater restraint was placed on the life of unchecked spiritual ecstasy. We have referred in the preceding pages to the treatment meted out by Shaikh

1. Lataif-i-Saba'iyah, (MS.) f.13; Nasidin-ul-Ashrār (MS.) f. 48; Maktabat-i-Qadin Shattar (MS.) f.2; Avred-i-Qadin Shattar (MS.) f.4.

2. Lataif-i-Saba'iyah, (MS.) f.13; Nasidin-ul-Ashrār, (MS.) f. 48.

Burrān to some of his disciples, who raised the slogan Burrān-
Allah-o-Akbar⁠¹.

2. The Eight fold path:

The Shattāris recommended the following eight fold path to those who joined their discipline:

(i) Reducing diet
(ii) Reducing sleep
(iii) Reducing conversation
(iv) Reducing contact with worldly people
(v) Frequent fasts
(vi) Piety in thought and action
(vii) Constant dhikr (meditation).
(viii) Constant remembrance of spiritual teacher.⁠²

No body could attain mātrifat (gnosis) unless he had firmly followed this path.

3. Dhikr (景德):

The Shattāris considered dhikr as one of the most important and effective method of spiritual discipline.⁠³ Every

3. Akrād-i-qadīn Shattār, (MS.); Javāhar-i-Xamsah, (MS.); Akrād-i-Sūriyā, (MS.); Risālah-i-Nānī-i-Hāroof, (MS.); Mūnis-ul-dhakirin Sharah-i-Risālah-i-King-ul-Jamā’-ṭi-īb-Ashraf-i-Shattār (MS.); Adab-ul-dhikr, (MS.); Akrād-i-Ashraf-i-Shattāriyāh (MS.); Nāmuh-i-Shirājat, (MS.)
Mūnis-ul-Fugara, (MS.); Ashraf-i-Shattariyāh, (MS.); Akrād-i-Imām-ul-dīn, (MS.).
new entrant to the Shattāri fold was asked to practise dhikr\(^1\). Next to the Mehdavīs, the Shattāris laid great emphasis on the spiritual value of continuous dhikr.

Of the various types of dhikr, the Nafis athbat was the most popular amongst the Shattāris\(^2\). While performing it, they sat crossed legged, with their face towards gibalāh, and their eyes wide open. One of the arteries, which they called ٍ، was pressed with thumbs and their feet fingers. Slowly they raised their heads towards sky and uttered: ٍ (There is nothing) and drew their breath inwards. Then they turned their heads to the right and uttered ٌ (Except) and then released their breath. Then they lowered their heads towards their hearts and recited ٌ (God) drawing their breath inwards.

In almost every Shattāri Kānaqah this dhikr was performed day and night.

1. *Lataif-i-Ghaibiyah*, (MS.) f.16; *Maadin-ul-Aṣrār*, (MS.) f.32; *Maktubat-i-Qadīn Shattar*, (MS.) f.4; *Ayrad-i-Qadīn Shattar*, (MS.) f.2; *Jawāhir-i-Khamsah*, (MS.) f.21; *Aṣnad-i-Ashghal-i-Shattāriyān*, (MS.) f.2; *Ashghal-i-Shattāriyān*, (MS.) f.3; *Thaqarat-ul-Hayat*, (MS.) f.26; *Halfuzat-i-Rukn-u'd-dīn Shattāri*, (MS.) f.11; *Manṣūhi-us-Shattār*, (MS.) f.23; *Ayrad-i-Imām-u'd-dīn*, (MS.) f.2.

4. Position of the Pir

The Shaikh or the pir occupied a pivotal position in the mystic discipline of the middle ages. The Adab-ul-Muridin of Shaikh Najib-u'd-din Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi, and the Avrifi-ul-Ma'arif of his nephew, Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi, describe in detail the principles of relationship between the Shaikh and his disciple. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya used to say that a disciple should be in the same position with reference to his Pir in which a dead body is with reference to the person who washes it. The Shattaris believed that mere implicit obedience to the commands of the Shaikh was not enough. A murid should, remarks shaikh Abdullah in his Latif-i-Shaibiyah, annihilate his individuality in the person of the Shaikh. He writes:

مرد صادق را باید که فنادی شیخ حاصل کند جن فناء فی ایشخ حاصل کرده باشد از پرکان فناء فی الہ میں حاصل ہوئے دی دی جعل احوال و احوال و احوال زیادا و باطن اور زیادا اندازی کرکے ابتلا اشیخ بنکد گر جمین و سوامی در خاطر ملاحم دهد کہ این قبول یا این فصل شیخ بر طبیعہ دیہ نست نیست ناول کِئے

"A sincere disciple should annihilate his personality in the person of the Shaikh. When this is achieved, through its blessings annihilation in Allah is also attained. In all circumstances and in all deeds,

1. Latif-i-Shaibiyah, (M.S.) ff.8,9. It has been followed by the following works. Nusain-ul-Afarar, (M.S.) f.65; Makhzan-ud-Dayat, (M.S.) ff. 247, 248; Risalah-i-Tazawwut (M.S.) p.89; Asad-i-Ashghal-i-Shattariyah (M.S.) f.5.
and overt and covert acts; one should abstain externally and internally from criticism of the Shaikh. If anything creates doubt in his mind that some word or deed of the Shaikh does not conform to the Shariat he should find some excuse and explanation for it.

This concept of َفانا ڤیل شاکِح was propounded by the Shaṭṭāri saints with such vehemence and so great emphasis that it became one of the cardinal principles of the Shaṭṭāri mystic discipline in India. The Naqshbandi concept of ُتَتَاشَوْرُر-الشَّاکِح (Visualizing the Shaikh in meditation) did not come up to the Shaṭṭāri ideals in this respect.

This concept of َفانا ڤیل-شاکِح considerably enhanced the position of the Shaṭṭāri pirs who were never tired of repeating such remark as: "A day in the company of a spiritual teacher is better than forty days of arduous penances."
"A teacher can make his disciple attain gnosis in a moment." The saying that "One who has no Shaikh to guide him, is guided by the devil," was rejected by Shaikh َنیزَم-ُعِد-الدین ُعَلیَا as a fabricated ِاهدیث but the Shaṭṭāris fondly circulated such fantastic concepts, as genuine traditions of the Prophet.

1. ِلَتَیف-ِی-شَابیْہ (MS.) f. 15.
2. ِفَوْقَید-ِوْل-ِیوْن (MS.) f. 175.
3. ِمانَعْیِ-ُع-ِشَابَّ (MS.) f. 76b.
Habiyat (Prophethood) and Walayat (Sainthood):

One of the most bitterly criticised concepts of the Shattarlis was their view that Habiyat (Prophethood) and Walayat (Sainthood) are identical. Shaikh Muhammad Chaouth has particularly elaborated this theme in his Nairaj Namah.

While recording his spiritual experiences, he has claimed to have passed through the same experience which the Prophet had in Nairaj. He says that when he was on his upward march he stayed at a place to perform ablutions. There he found the four caliphs, but did not speak to them. He then proceeded further and met the angels who had books in their hands. When he reached the 'Arab, he found the Prophet Muhammad waiting for him. While the Shattari saints accepted this version of Shaikh Muhammad Chaouth as a matter of faith, the Ulama subjected the silsilah to severe criticism on this account.

Khalafat:

Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shaker is reported to have remarked: "Khalifah should possess three things: Knowledge, Wisdom and Cosmic emotion." The Shattari saints fully tested

2. Life and Times of Farid-u'd-din Ganj-i-Shaker, p. 93.
a disciple's capabilities before they entrusted to him the responsibility of looking after the spiritual affairs of other people and enrolling disciples. They particularly emphasised learning as an essential qualification for the grant of khilafat.

The Makhsan-ud-Dawat says that there were two types of Khirqahs which the Shattari saints conferred on their disciples: Khirqa-i-Talibus and the Khirqa-i-Khilafat.

The Shattari mystics did not approve of the practice of placing minors on the sajjadah of saints. In this respect they differed from many of their contemporary saints who, guided by the desire to perpetuate succession in their only families, assigned important spiritual responsibilities to minors.

They further condemned those sons of the deceased Shaikhs who did not receive any spiritual training during the lifetime of their fathers but, instead of joining the dis-


2. No Shattari work has explained these terms. It is therefore difficult to say anything about their real connotation and significance.

3. Makhsan-ud-Dawat, (MS.) ff. 243, 244.
cipline of some, continued penances at the graves of their ancestors without the guidance of any living pir.1

Condemning such saints the author of Ganj-i-Arshadi says: "Had it been possible to attain anything without a living spiritual teacher, and learn the mystic path from the dead saints, all would have concentrated on the tomb of the Prophet."2

Method of Initiation to the Shattârî fold:

The medieval muslim mystics had developed particular methods of initiating or admitting people to their mystic fold. The author of Mibâh-ul-Hidayah has discussed in detail the generally accepted practices of the Muslim mystics in this respect. The Siyâr-ul-Auliâ gives details of the method of initiation followed by the early Chishti saints of India. The Shattârîs followed the same methods but with the following modifications and additions. Before admitting a person to their mystic fold the Shattârî saints usually recommended fasts for three days, technically known as the Tayy3 fasts. They had

1. Malfuzât-i-Shaikh Wajih-u'd-din, (MS.); Malfuzât-i-Shaikh Burhan, (MS.).


3. Literally Tayy (v.n of تَع) means fasting voluntarily. In mystic parlance it means fasting for three days in such a way that nothing is taken at the iftar time except three or four drops of water. Chiyath-ul-Lughat p. 277.
set apart three days in a week —— Wednesday, Thursday and Friday —— for this purpose. Immediately after initiation a disciple was expected to devote his time to dhikr (ذکر) and murâqaýbah (موقبہ). It was believed that through these methods a disciple's heart could be cleared off of all worldly desires and material distractions.¹

Uzlat (Seclusion) and Sunbat (Company):

The Sha’ttāri saints maintained a balance between seclusion and company, apparently two contradictory approaches towards an individual's spiritual education. They discouraged isolationistic tendencies and advised their disciples to live in human society and work amongst the people.² But the fact remains that every Sha’ttāri saint had spent some of his time in complete isolation from human company. Shaikh Muhammad Shauth himself spent more than a decade in the mountains of

1. Nasîdîn-ul-Ásrâr, (MS.) f.37; Mufîz-î-Shaikh Bûrân (MS.); Malfuz-î-Rukn-ud-dîn Shattàri, (MS.) p.19; Manâhi us-Shattàr (MS.) f.54.

2. Latîf-î-Shaitâyî, (MS.) f.9; Bisâlah-î-Shaikh Hamid (MS.) f.4; Mufîz-î-Shaikh Wajîh-ud-dîn (MS.) f.11; Nasir- ul-Hâaqiq, (MS.) f.7; Lubb-ud-Da’ayiq, (MS.) f.9; Mufîz-î-Shaikh Bûrân, (MS.) f.21; Mufîz-î-Rukn-ud-dîn Shattàri, (MS.) p.12.
Vindhyachal. In fact some of the important Shattari penances could be practiced in seclusion alone and so isolation for sometime at least was absolutely essential. Some later saints however realized that any encouragement to the tendency of seclusion was bound to destroy the organization of the silsilah. Therefore they saw to it that a disciple did not spend more time in seclusion than was absolutely necessary.

"Internal integration cannot be achieved by severing relations with the external world. God's pleasure cannot be in abandoning (worldly contacts)."

Itineracy:

The Shattari saints laid great emphasis on itineracy on account of its great educative value. An itinerant mystic came into contact with men of different temperaments and different backgrounds. This gave him an insight into human


2. Theqrat-ul-Hayat, (MS.) f.11.

3. Latif-i-Ghaibiyah, (MS.) f.3; Kasht-ul-Haqayiq; (MS.)f.7.
character. Besides it had a solitary effect in eliminating all worldly desires and ambitions from his heart. The possessive instinct of man, which the mystics considered to be the greatest hindrance in spiritual development, was controlled through extensive travels. The founder of the Shattāri silsilah in India established these traditions of extensive travels. His successors respected them and, though only a few had an opportunity to go out of the country, within the country itself they frequently roamed. Even Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth could not or did not settle down at one place like Shaikh Farid or Shaikh Nizām-u'd-din Auliya. It may, however, be noted that in later years the considerations which motivated frequent change of centres by the Shattāri saints were not purely mystical. Political, cultural and other considerations also played a part.

Moral Teachings

Islamic mysticism, properly understood, was a movement for the moral culture of humanity. The Shattāri saints were very keen on creating a healthy moral atmosphere. Their malfuzāts are full of moral precepts and exhortations. They

1. Shaikh Abdullah Shattari, Shaikh Muhammad Ghauth, Shaikh Manjhan and Shaikh Lād Alias, Shaikh Wadud changed their centres on purely political grounds. For details see pp. 8, 50, 90, 101, 106.

2. Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Wajih-u'd-din, (MS.); Kashf-ul-Haqāiq, (MS.); Lubb-ud-Daqayiq (MS.); Thamrat-ut-Hayat, (MS.); Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Burhān (MS.); Malfuz-i-Rukn-ud-din Shattari, (MS.).
ceaselessly strove to create a society free from all dissen­sions and discriminations. Their cordial relations with the Hindus had a moral basis. They were opposed to any discri­mination on any basis in human society.

They divided wrongs into two categories:

A. Wrongs against God.
B. Wrongs against man.

Wrongs against God —— i.e. neglect in the perfor­mance of obligatory religious practices —— could be forgiven by God if man repented for them. But wrongs against man could not be forgiven by God. One had to satisfy and obtain pardon from the persons against whom some wrong was done.

Amongst their moral teachings the Shattāris laid the greatest emphasis on honest means of livelihood. Nothing was more injurious to one's moral and spiritual well-being than earning livelihood through doubtful or deceitful means. They recommended trade or cultivation as the best means of earning

1. Maktubat-i-Qadin Shattār (MS.) f.3; Makhzan-ud-dāvāt, (MS.) f.249; Manāhij-ush-Shattār, (MS.) f.39.
2. Maktubat-i-Qadin Shattār, (MS.) f.3; Makhzan-ud-dāvāt, (MS.) f.249.
3. Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Wajih-ud-dīn, (MS.) ff.6,9; Kashf-ul-Haqayiq, (MS.) f.7; Lubb-ud-Daqāiyiq, (MS.); Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Burkhān, (MS.) 9,11,17.
livelhood. Though the institution of futuh (unasked for charity) operated in the Shattari Khanqahs, parasitic tendencies were sternly checked by them. Those who did not earn their bread with the sweat of the brow were looked down upon. "One should live earn his bread and remember Allah," was their constant advice. Shaikh Burhan is reported to have remarked:

"تجاوزت وبيع أشياءنا ما هو ذكر حق نعه.
(Trade and transactions are no obstructions in remembering Allah.)"

Like the Chishtis the Shattaris also believed in non-violence and pacifism. They rejected revenge and retribution as laws of the animal world and asked their disciples kind even to those who did wrong to them. By returning wrong with good to be good and alone healthy conditions could be created in human society. Violence was condemned both in thought and action.

They had firm faith in the equality of all men. They received with cordial hospitality people belonging to different religions. They disliked looking down upon sinners even.

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2. Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Burhan, (MS.)
"Hate the sin and not the sinner" was their principle.

The Shattāri saints were zealous fighters against illiteracy. They used to say that education was necessary even for the purification of the innerself. It was on this account that many of the Shattāri saints had madrasahs attached with their Khānqahs.

Nobility, according to Shattāris, was not based on birth but on noble deeds. Children, they used to advise, should be brought up with the greatest care because early training determined their character.

Discussing the rights of parents over their grown up children they said that even if they abjured Islām one should obey their orders. "If one's father asks him to bring pork, he should obey him. If he is ordered to cook it, he should not hesitate to prepare a dish. If, however, he is asked to partake of it also, he would be justified in disobeying the orders of his parents."

The Shattāris talked frequently about the value of time and warned their disciples against idle talk or leisurely engagements.

1. Maadin-ul-Asrar, (MS.) f.39; Malfuzat-i-Shaikh Burhān, (MS.); Thehrat-ul-Hayāt, (MS.) f.8a,b.
They exhorted their disciples to pay zakāt to the needy people and distribute free food. "Giving food to one hungry person was better than observing a dozen fasts," they used to say.¹

The Shattāris did not encourage people to go on Hajj if they did not possess the means to undertake the journey.²