CHAPTER XII

RESUME AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding pages the history of the Shattāri silsila has been traced from the middle of the 15th to the close of the 18th century. Biographies of all its important saints have been carefully constructed in the light of the reliable contemporary records. The teachings of the silsila have also been analysed in the light of the Ḥulūl, Ḥawād, epistolary collections and other compilations of the Shattāri saints. The extent of the Shattāri influence has been traced in Bihār, Gujarāt, Deccan and other places. Two questions have now to be answered:

(i) What is the place of the Shattāri silsila in the history of the Indo-Muslim mysticism?

(ii) What contribution did the silsila make to Indian culture and civilisation?

The Shattāri silsila was established in India after the Chishti and before the Naqshbandi order and as a matter of fact its contribution to Indo-Muslim mysticism can be assessed only with reference to these two silsilas. It supplements the Chishti and contradicts the Naqshbandi order.

1. Vide Chapters I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII.
Broadly speaking there have been two categories of Muslim religious movements in India: Movements which laid greater emphasis on the spirit rather than the letter of the law and interpreted mysticism in terms of human service and emphasised the essential unity of all religions. The other type of movements emphasised the letter of the law and interpreted higher religion in terms of theological and orthodox controversies. The first type of movement drew inspiration from Ibn-i-Arabi and others of his school of thought; the later derived their inspiration from Ibn-i-Taimiya and his followers.

The Shattāris were believers in pantheistic philosophy. Their predecessors—the Chishtis and the Suhrwardis—were also believers in pantheism. But the Shattāris played a more significant role in the exposition of the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud than the Chishtis or the Suhrwardis. The Naqshbandi opposition to the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud was, in certain respects, a reaction to the Shattāri emphasis on it.

1. Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ali Muhī-u'-d-dīn was born on the 17th Ramadan 660 A.H./28th July 1165 at Mureia. He visited Seville, Ceuta, Tunis, Mecca, Baghādād, Aleppo, Masul, Asia Minor and ultimately settled in Damascus where he died in Rabi II 638 A.H./Octo. 1240 A.D. He has propounded the ideas of pantheistic monism in his works Fusus-ul-Hikam and Futuhat al-Makkiya. These books have been popular studies of medieval Muslim mystics.


2. He was born on Monday 10th Rabi I 661/22 January 1263 at Haran, but his father later migrated to Damascus where he studied Islam sciences with the renowned local theologians, Zain al-Dīn Ahmad and Najm al-Dīn. Though he was considered an authority of Hanbali Law, he rejected taqlīd and even ijtima (consensus). He was a bitter critic of sufism and all the institutions and practices of the medieval sufis. Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp. 151, 152.
The Shattāris stood for a catholic, liberal and cosmopolitan interpretation of religion. They believed in synthesizing the elements of various cults and creeds. The way in which the Shattāri saints assimilated and adapted the Tantric practices to Indo-Muslim mystic thought is a very significant contribution to Indian religious history. Dārā Shikoh was a product of the mental climate which had been created by Shaikh Muhammad Ghaouth. The Bahr-ul-Hayāt is a precursor of the Majma-ul-Bahrain.

The Naqshbandi silsilah checked the development of those tendencies which had been released by the Shattāri saints. It is no doubt true that the thaumaturgical elements introduced by the Shattāri saints could not possibly stand the criticism of

1. See Chapter IX.

2. Majma-ul-Bahrain (the Mingling of the two oceans) was compiled by Dārā Shikoh in 1066 A.H./1654 A.D.

The work deals with Elements ('Anasir), senses (Hawass), Devotional Exercises (Asāghal), Attributes of God (Sifat-i-Allah Ta'āla), Soul (Ruh), Air (Bad) Four worlds ('Awālim-i-Arabā'ā), Sound (Awaz), Light (Nur), Vision of God (Ruyat), the Names of God (Asmai Allah) Apostleship and saintship (Nubuwat wa Wilāyat), Barhmand, Directions (Jihāt), Skies (Asmanha) Earth (Zamin), Divisions of the Earth (Kismat-i-Zamin), World of Barzakh (Interval between the Death of a Man and the Resurrection), Resurrection (Qiyāmat), Mukt (Salvation), Day and Night (Ruz wa shab), infinity of the cycles. Like Shaikh Muhammad Ghaouth, the author of this work Dārā Shikoh too was deeply under the influence of the Hindu Yogis. The Siyār-ul-Mutasūkhkhīrin on p. 403 says that this work irritated the Mullahs who passed fatwa of Kufr against him. The work has been Edited and Translated by Mahfuz-ul-Haqq and Printed in the Baptist Mission Press in 1929 A.D. at Calcutta.
the orthodox school but the synthesis which the Shattari silsilah sought to bring about between the Hindu and the Muslim mystic practices is a notable contribution of the Shattari's to Indian religious history.\footnote{See Chapter IX.}

The Shattari contribution to Indian culture cannot be over emphasised. The Shattari silsilah appeared on the Indian social scene at a very significant moment of Indian history. At a time when the Bhakti saints and philosophers, like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitaniya, Namadeva, Pipa, Sen and others, were propagating ideas of human love, devotion to God, rejection of caste and ecclesiastical formalism, the Shattari saints also threw their weight in this direction and accelerated the pace of syncretic movements.

In the purely social sphere the contribution of the Shattaris was very important. Two very significant directions in which they made some contribution were their efforts to abolish and to improve the lot of women. The Jami-ul-Fiqah of Pir Muhammad Shattari is a very significant work from this point of view. He has trenchantly criticised the practice of marrying with slave girls and has defined at length the rights of women and has protested against giving women subservient position to men.\footnote{Jami-ul-Fiqah, (MS.), ff. 23, 24.} The Shattari saints protested against slave trade also.\footnote{Jami-ul-Fiqah, (MS.), ff. 22, 23, 24.} They considered it inhuman and believed in the
equality of all men. Shaikh Burhān looked down upon distinctions
based on birth. "Nobility is not by birth but by piety," he
used to say.  

Another very significant aspect of the Shattārī contribution to Indian culture was their anxiety to eradicate illiteracy. It may be pointed out that no mystic order in India took such keen interest in education and made it an integral part of their discipline as the Shattāris did. Every important Shattāri saint had a madrasah attached with his khanqah. 

The Shattāris did not generally encourage dependence on ḥaṣthin (unasked for charity) "Work is Worship" they used to say and preferred to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow rather than live on public charity.

Most of the Shattāri saints did not believe in the Day of Judgement and in heaven and hell. They considered hell and heaven to be merely states of spiritual experience which a man experienced after his death. But they showed the utmost regard to the Prophet Muhammad and taught his traditions to their adherents with a view to improving their morals.

1. Mawlūzat, (MS.), by 'Ilmullah Kamal.
2. e.g. Shaikh Manjhan, Shaikh Wajih-ud-din Alavi, Shaikh Abdullah, Shaikh Kamal Muhammad Abbasi, Mir Sayyid Latifullah, Shaikh Yusuf Bengali, Shaikh Muhammad Faqirullah, Qadi Jalal-ud-din Multani, Shaikh Isā, Shaikh Muhammad Rashid, Shaikh Arshad.
Since the Shattaris came into contact with all sorts of people, some medium for the exchange of ideas had to be evolved. Their contribution towards the evolution of local dialects is, therefore, very great. We find large number of Hindivi sentences in the Shattari mystic records. Thus the contribution of the Shattaris towards the liquidation of ideological, linguistic and social barriers between the various culture —— groups and religious communities in India is their most significant contribution to Indian culture.

Another unique feature of the Shattari silsilah is that it was probably the only silsilah which spread to other Muslim lands from India. The Naqshbandi silsilah also went out, but then it had come from out side and was not of Indian origin. The Shattari silsilah was Indian in origin, —— its pre-Indian history is not known, obviously because it had none —— and it went to other Muslim countries from India. Shaikh Haji Hamid, Qadi Jalaluddin Multani, Shaikh Babghatullah, and Shaikh Abdullah Sufi Shattari lived in Arabia for many years and introduced the silsilah in Hejaz. Shaikh Ibrahim Nuri perpetrated it in the Middle East.

Besides, the silsilah had a number of followers in Turkey and Indonesia.

2. See pp. 86-88.
3. See pp. 82-85.
4. The Encyclopaedia of Islam on p.339 says that the Shattariyah silsilah was included in the long list of 161 silsilahs prepared by the Imperial Board of Dervishes at Constantinople and furnished to S.Anderson.