

THE songs of Lalon Shah brought in a sort of reaction against the orthodox cult of Muslim and Hindu faith. It proclaimed monism and preached ardent personal devotion to Krishna, Mohammad (SM) and Caitanya. Lalon, whose mystic experience was shaped by Shirai Shah, the person who saved his life and became his spiritual guide afterwards, was greatly influenced by the great Persian mystics, Jalauddin Rumi Hafiz and Sadi. He infact, wanted to bring about a reconciliation between Muslim and Hindu mysticism. He condemned religious exclusivism and sought to initiate men into a new idea. Item commonly Krisna as Baul cult. He developed a most in-

him. But with all these the Sufi imageries became diminutive. The Achin Pakhi or the Elusive bird of Lalon represents the Nightingale singing in the Shiradi Gurden of the great sufi poet Hafiz. This

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In this case a reference is made to Sufi 'Anqa' or the fabulous bird which does not exist in reality (Muhammad, Iqbal, the Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Lahore 1959 page 86-88) The Man of the Heart is on occasion compared to Achin Pakhi or the elusive birth, Adhar Manush or the Man who does not exist in reality.

Lalon discovers that life has a fine harmony and deep melody. And this in fact made him a musical mystic. According to him the creation itself is full of music. The Ektara or the one string musical instrument suggests that every man is the Ektara on which the cosmic man, the source of all music may. Lalon realised it and this laid stress on both song and Sadhana. The songs of Lalon Shah parent certain images of fish tree, flower moon, Bird Stream, Rain water, Earth, Lotus, House, Boat, Mirror etc. His songs are erotic in nature. It is because the life of the common people is closely associated with sex since they have no major source of recreation the connection between eroticism and mysticism is also very much intimate with them. History suggests that sex or the pleasure principle formed a part of the religious life of the primitive races. This idea is retained by the common and lower section and their

## LALAN SHAH

# The Great Baul-III

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timate and personal realisation of God expressed in religious symbols drawn from both Hindu and Muslim faith. He was neither a Sufi nor a Vaisnavite

very much present in his songs. But of the two, the influence of Sufism as it was prevalent in the sub-continent, was great in him.

He was a musician as well as a poet. His songs, full of rapturous lyrics concerning man on the other, bear testimony to the skill as an orientalist. His iconoclastic attitude towards all institute and religious made him a heretic and he was subjected to considerable persecution by orthodox people.

The songs of Lalon Shah may be grouped as follows :

1. Devotional songs concerning God.

2. Songs concerning concerning God.

2 Songs concerning Murshid including Prophethood of Muhammad (SM), Krishna and Caitanya.

3. Songs relating to Body  
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4. Songs concerning soul or the Man of the Heart.

The songs of Lalon Shah although fall within the classification of Baul song they are typically his own and as such are known as Lalon Geeti. Broadly speaking they are technically of two types (Danya or submission, Probarta—Enquiry. In probarta Guru and disciple figure prominently.

Lalon Shah belongs to that Group of mystics among whom Kadir, Dadu, Rajab are perhaps prominent. Lalon has considered God as Shain or the Lord of his life. He is the supreme object of Love. He is both personal and impersonal, finite and infinite and infinite. He is 'All pervading' and omnipresent reality. He is the Baul of the soul, the Man of the Heart. He is transcendent and immanent. He is limited and limitless.

There is no doubt that Lalon was greatly influenced by Sufism of Islam but he escaped their excessive emotionalism. He built his ideas on whatever is realistic and logical. Lalon understands that the whole of creation is a play or a game of the eternal Lever and this is discussed in relation to human beings. But this he expressed through metaphors and symbols. The songs of Lalon bears ample testimony to Hindu cult. This happens because of his long association with the vaisnavite Sahajya many of whom became his followers afterwards. This resulted in the production of many songs which include Lila or Sports of the eternal lover the hundred petalled Lotus and the forms is very much discernible in the Tantik element

This 'Achin Pakhi' also bears semblance with the Sufi 'Anqa' or the fabulous bird. Lalon Shah like other Bauls speaks of Maner Manush or the Man of the Heart as the Cosmic Man. He is not an individual but a type—a reflection of God. This cosmic Man pulsates through everybody. He is a spark of the divinity. This idea of cosmic Man or the Man of heart is possibly derived from the Sufis, particularly

those who belong to Persian Sufism Hazrath Rabiva was the first among the sufis who considered God not as the great task master but as the soul of Beauty who can be approached only through love. In fact, Hers was a burning love all absorbing and self



effacing ! This mystic experience is however, by the Hindu and the Christian alike professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee writes, we may specially note one little rarer in the way in which this Sufi form of Pantheism expressed itself. In the Arabic formula 'I am the truth i. e. God (anol Haqq) which came to such prominence in Sufism as a sort of echo or equivalent of an analogous sanskrit expression from the Upanishads of Pre-Buddhist times (namely whom brahma asmi) = I am the supreme spirit) particularly in the Sufi world of Iran the ward al-Haqq the truth has been especially employed to mean the Divinity. This great formula which was uttered with a vehement conviction by the Sufi saint and martyr Husyn bin Mansur al-Hallai and was the immediate cause of his condemnation to death as blasphemer, came to acquire a certain amount of preeminence as the profound creed of esoteric Sufism (Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Islamic Mysticism Iron and India Reprinted from the Indo-Iranica Vol-1, No. II October 1946 Page 11-12).

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This idea was afterwards incorporated by the Bauls of Bangladesh including Lalon Shah.

The cosmic Man or the Man of the Heart is the joining link between God on the one hand and the man on the other. In fact, the area of the cosmic Man cannot be understood. It may be felt. No words can express it for it is beyond all relation and knowledge.