

The Socialist Sufi of Sindh: Social Justice and Radical Democracy in 17th Century Sindh

Abstract: My paper takes issue with the central theme of the conference by arguing that a case needs to be made, not for 'Islamic open markets' or 'Islamic capitalism' but for Islamic socialism, and a return to the concept of welfare in Islam, as exemplified three hundred years ago by Sufi Shah Inayat Shaheed (1655-1718) and his movement; which symbolized social justice, civil liberties, equality and radical democracy at a crucial time in the Indian subcontinent, when the Mughal Empire was crumbling and such values were non-existent, in that the majority of the Sufis of Sindh had abandoned the preaching and practice of social justice and had become purely worldly landlords. However Shah Inayat was neither one of the traditional Sufis who rather than changing the conditions preach patience and contentment; nor was he amongst those religious scholars according to whom the equal distribution of wealth was the foundation of 'Muhammadan equality'. His slogan was 'Jeko Khere So Khaye' (He Who Tills has the Right to Eat) i.e. his firm belief was that the fundamental demand of 'Muhammadan equality' is that farming should be done on collective principles, everyone should participate equally in the productive process and distribute the product amongst each other according to their need. Thus a full 100 years before the birth of Karl Marx; 150 years before the advent of the Paris Commune; 200 years before the advent of the Sindh Hari Tehreek; and 250 years before the advent of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shah Inayat and his movement symbolized the principles of radical democracy, economic equality and social justice in practice which became a threat to the ruling Kalhora rulers in Sindh when it successfully set up an agricultural commune in Jhok, and began to spread among many districts of Lower Sindh. Despite the fact that Shah Inayat had tried to make collective farming i.e. socialist method of production and distribution a custom in the era of feudalism, which was far ahead of its time, the experiment ended in defeat. Based on original research and original translations of Persian and Sindhi accounts of the period, the paper explores the singular achievements of Shah Inayat and his movement in fostering a successful example of social justice, equality and radical democracy and evaluates the causes of its success and failure, as well as its astonishing relevance in the 21st century, where talk of the sanctity of private property and free markets is rife. Given that 2018 marks the 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Shah Inayat and that our history textbooks usually talkad nauseam about the invasions of Muhammad ibn Qasim, Mahmud Ghaznavi and Ahmad Shah Abdali, this is a timely endeavor to resuscitate and re-emphasize the legacy of Shah Inayat, a son of the soil, with regards to social justice, economic equality and radical democracy for our new generation in the 21st century.

Introduction

'Be it Mansur or Sarmad, sweetheart, or Shamsul Haq Tabrizi

In your lane O beloved, everyone was beheaded'

(Sachal Sarmast)

The Indus Valley is the guardian of our past and the glad tidings of our future. This area too is the birthplace and the resting place of the oldest civilization of the subcontinent, which has seen many a great rise and fall in the history of the last three to four thousand years; and has been the arena for countless nations and religions. The Dravidians bound by their cult of *Shakti*-worship, the Aryans who followed the Vedic faith, the Iranians who followed the sage Zoroaster, the Greeks who worshipped Zeus and Apollo, the Buddhist Huns and Kushans, and the Arab, Iranian, Turk and Afghan adherents of Islam have all inscribed their marks here one after the other. Sindhi culture is actually described by the beautiful mixture of all these civilizations.

But a time also came when the society lost the abilities to move forward by sinking in the quicksand of the past and then 230-245 years passed that a true warrior of the faith showed us the way forward by establishing the manner of collective mode of economy. He dreamed about the "yet uncreated garden" in this autumn-scarred land and in return for the realization of his premature golden dream attained martyrdom. The name of this well-intentioned sage was Shah Inayatullah. In the town of Jhok, which is located 35 miles from the city of Thatta, his tomb is even today the site of pilgrimage for the high and low and people come from afar to

shower flowers of devotion at his grave; but very few people know the reasons and dynamics behind the martyrdom of Shah Inayat.

The year of birth of Shah Inayat is unknown but this much can be said with certainty that he was born in a God-fearing family of Thatta in the 17th century during the period of Emperor Aurangzaib Alamgir. His great grandfather Makhdoom Sadho Langah was a resident of *moza* (village) Nasriya *pargana* (subdivision) Bathora, Thatta District. He had not migrated from Iran or Turan, but had emerged from this very soil and belonged to the Langah nation.

Makhdoom Fazalullah, the father of Shah Inayat was an “unpretentious ascetic”. Mir Ali Sher Qaane is silent about the early education of Shah Inayat, but writes, *‘The pir who knows the truth, whose foundation is the sharia, the teacher of teachers, the vali of the age, the one who is popular in the assembly of God, Shah Inayatullah sufi initially toured and travelled a great deal in search of truth and after a long time met Shah Abdul Malik in the Deccan.’* After benefitting from his company, Shah Inayat turned to Delhi and obtained the revealed knowledge from a sage named Shah Ghulam Muhammad. But the teacher was so influenced by the personality of the student that he came to Thatta alongwith Shah Inayat. Shah Ghulam Muhammad preferred the path of *tariqat* (the path of sufis) over *shariat* (religious law) *‘therefore the ulema of Thatta presented him for penalization in the shariat court because the people of God have always been harassed by the ulema .’* Shah Inayat advised Shah Ghulam Muhammad to return to Delhi so the latter went back to Delhi and Shah Inayat settled in Jhok.

When Shah Inayat came of age, the sun of the Mughal Empire was setting swiftly. Aurangzaib passed away in 1707 in Aurangabad in the Deccan in a state of great disappointment. After him,

civil war for the royal throne initiated and the chaos which spread in the country is known to every student of history. In 1713 Farrukhsiyar ascended the throne after murdering his paternal uncle; in the short space of six years, six claimants to the throne were killed and just one died naturally. This tumultuous period is also the period of Sufi Shah Inayat. He was also martyred during the reign of Farrukhsiyar.

The Movement of Sufi Shah Inayat

At the time when Sufi Shah Inayat began educating and preaching in Jhok, most of the mystics, Sufis and *syeds* of Sindh had become purely worldly landlords, forgetting their professional obligations. When the light of Sufi Shah Inayat's knowledge and wisdom, piety, empathy and selfless service to humanity, followers began to flock around him. But Sufi Shah Inayat was not one of those traditional Sufis who exhort patience and contentment rather than changing the circumstances and teach people to accumulate the wherewithal of the Hereafter by saying that worldly life is of limited duration. He also was not one of those religious scholars for whom only an equitable distribution of wealth is the foundation of Muhammadan equality. Although if the resources for producing wealth for example land, factories, workshops and banks, etc. are the personal property of a few individuals, how is equitable distribution of wealth possible? Sufi Shah Inayat had decoded this secret of the law of economics that the real thing is the productive process and real equality is that which is established during the productive process rather than the distribution, otherwise a band of thieves and looters too consume by mutual sharing. The reality is that fair distribution of wealth in the productive process is not even possible without equitable participation, so Sufi Shah Inayat emphasized equitable participation

in the productive process. It was his firm belief that the fundamental demand of Muhammadan equality is that farming be done on collective principles, everyone should participate equally in the productive process and should distribute the produce according to their need. The *fakir* devotees of Sufi Shah Inayat happily accepted this proposal and got busy in collective farming.

Collective farming was not the human invention of Sufi Shah Inayat but much before him, the custom of collective farming was prevalent too in the era of the tribal system. It is possible that during the period of the Sufi this method could be prevalent among some Kohistani nations especially the Baloch, and he might have felt its benefit. It is also not beyond speculation that he might have been influenced by the Mahdavi Movement of Syed Muhammad Jaunpuri (1443-1505) because the latter lived in Thatta for one and a half to two years during the period of the Samma ruler Jam Nanda, and many people including Mian Adam Shah Kalhora became his adherents. Syed Muhammad who had claimed to be the promised Mahdi was a very learned sage. He had named his Mahdavi brotherhood as a *daira* (circle), which is a symbol of complete equality and eternity. There was no distinction between high and low, rich and poor in his circle. The devotees would live collectively in the circle and would equally divide basic necessities.

Sufi Shah Inayat's experiment was very successful. The *fakirs* living in Jhok did not have to give their share of the produce, not do forced labour or be part of the "partnership in tyranny" (*sitam-shariki*) ritual payment to the *patvaari kanungo* (district officer). So the fame of Sufi Shah Inayat soon spread far and wide and news of his new experiment was everywhere. In addition, the fakirs of Saadaat Bulri who had been devotees of their landlords until now began

to enter the devotional circle of Shah Inayat. So it is narrated in *Tohfa-tul-Kiraam* that: *'The derveshes who were initially attached with the Bulri family upon seeing the growth of the order of Sufi Shah Inayat abandoned the saadaat to become a member of this new order.'*

So *'the party of fakirs began to rankle like a thorn in the eyes of the hereditary pirs of Sindh.'*

The popularity of this movement did not only lead to the reduction in the number of devotees of the family of Saadaat family, but the peasants of Babu Paleja and the surrounding areas were also affected. *'The fakirs of Sufi Inayat were also mischief-making in their lands, meaning they were preaching collective farming.'* The result was that the peasants of the landlords began to demand that the method of Sufi Shah Inayat should also be practiced in our lands. But the landlords were not at all prepared to accept the principle of equitable participation in production. They had felt that unless this revolutionary mischief was not dealt with immediately, the feudal and landed system in Sindh would fall in danger. So in order to stem the danger, the landlords, among whom Syed Abdul Vasay, the heir to Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri; Sheikh Sirajuddin, the heir of Sheikh Zakariya Bahauddin; Noor Muhammad bin Manba Palijo and Hamal bin Laakha Jaat, landlords of Palejani were in the forefront, pleaded with Mir Lutf Ali Khan the *subedar* of Thatta to prevent Sufi Shah Inayat from collective farming; but Sufi's land had been forgiven by the state (these were a special category of land which was granted to schools and madrasas for their expenditure or to ulema, scholars and the family of saadaat for their subsistence as forgiveness). The *subedar* had no authority over it. So he did not find it suitable to intervene from the side of the government, but gave the landlords permission to deal with the Sufi and his fakirs as they wished. At the cue of the *subedar*, the

landlords suddenly attacked the town of Jhok but were defeated disgracefully, although many fakirs were killed and people suffered from financial losses. The heirs of the martyrs filed a suit in the royal court against this lawlessness of the landlords; the court ordained that, *'The criminals should give an account of the blood of innocents in the presence of the king. Because they violated the royal decree, therefore in lieu of blood money according to the royal constitutional act, their lands were given to the heirs of the slain.'*

The spirits of the peasants on all sides rose with this legal victory of the fakirs and the terror of official authorities and landlords also no longer remained as of old, in fact

'Most of the poor and the rest of these districts began to live peacefully in the protective refuge of this man of God (Sufi Shah Inayat) after their deliverance from the oppression of the landlords.'

This tells us that the peasant movement of Sufi Shah Inayat had spread to many districts in Lower Sindh and because of the support of the Sufi, the people had become so powerful that the landlords could not dare to touch them. Meanwhile *'the number of fakirs distressed by the oppression of the time also began to increase day by day and calls of Hama Uust (God is Everything) began to rise from every nook and corner, dome and monastery.'*

Perhaps Farrukhsiyar thinking that Mir Lutf Ali Khan was treating the fakirs leniently replaced him in 1716 with Nawab Azam Khan as the *subedar* of Thatta. The landlords took advantage of this change and began to poison the ears of Azam Khan by backbiting. Maybe the Nawab had personal ill-will against Sufi Shah Inayat as well. It is said that once when Azam Khan went to meet Sufi Shah Inayat, the fakirs stopped him saying that the former is busy in chanting and

reading some special verses from the Holy Quran. When he met the Sufi Azam Khan said that, *'It does not behoove an ascetic to have guards at his door.'* The Sufi unhesitatingly replied that, *'It is appropriate so that a worldly dog may not enter.'* This matter became the cause of a personal grudge for Azam Khan.

This tradition maybe right or wrong, but Nawab Azam decided to crush the movement for collective farming and began stoking the flames. He demanded dues from Sufi Shah Inayat which had been "forbidden by the sovereign". The Sufi responded by saying what right of collection do you have when these dues have been forgiven from the king. The nawab was agitated with this answer. He wrote a complaint to the king after consulting his deputies and executive officials that Sufi Shah Inayat and his fakirs were claimants to the throne and refusing to follow the orders of the caliph of Allah. Farrukhsiyar, without investigating this incidental matter ordered the rebels to be forced to obey at the point of the sword.

Immediately after getting permission from the Centre, Nawab Azam Khan began preparing for an assault on Jhok. He sent orders to virtually all the nobles of Sindh to assist him with their soldiers.

'(Azam Khan) had secured orders of assistance to Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhora, all the landlords and all the people of this region who had old enmity with the fakirs. So he attacked the fakirs by assembling such an army the likes of which could not be counted and was even greater than ants and locusts and had been gathered from Sibi, Dhadar and the area upto the sea.'

Sufi Shah Inayat was a peace-loving sage. When he heard about the opposition of the landlords and the military preparations of Azam Khan, he became sorrowful that, *'I had not brought this trade in the bazaar of love for all this and neither did I want that such uproar be created so as to prepare a field of conflict.'* When the armies of the enemy moved towards Jhok, the fakirs presented a proposal that why don't we attack them on their way so that the royal army does not have an opportunity to arrange its ranks and Jhok be spared from siege but 'the God-conscious Shah did not allow forestalling.'

Jhok was a peaceful settlement of fakirs, not a military cantonment. Apart from their "paper" swords which had wooden handles, any arms which they had were a small wooden cannon, whereas the enemy were armed with "iron cannons used to kill elephants". But from the letters of Mian Yar Muhammad (the ruler of Bukkur Khudayar Khan Kalhora) and Meeran Singh Khatri Multani which had been written from the battlefield, it seems that as per the ancient tradition, strong ramparts of raw earth were present around Jhok and a deep ditch was also dug which was filled with water.

The letter which Mian Yar Muhammad had written in Farsi to his son Mian Noor Muhammad during the siege informs that the royal army reached Jhok by departing from the Uthal River on October 12, 1717 or a few days before; and settled at a distance of one mile from the settlement, although the number of invaders and fakirs could not be known. It is known from the letter of Meeran Singh Khatri Multani that 'the party of Nawab Azam Khan was small' and fighting actually took place between the huge army of Khuda Yar Khan and the fakirs. He writes that the "fortress of mischief" was besieged on one side by Khuda Yar Khan "guns which threw

lightning and islands (?) which made thunder-like confounding noise began to punish the enemy” and on the other side Nawab Azam Khan set up a fortification and “raised an uproar of war with arrows.” Meeran Singh has clarified the military superiority of his benefactor Mian Khuda Yar Khan and the inferiority of the royal army with great prudence. He narrates the party of fakirs to be 10,000 riders which is totally inaccurate. What to talk of horses, they even did not have so many men. Mian Yar Muhammad has written in his letter while narrating the night-attack by the fakirs that the latter were 1700 afoot in number that “in reality the spirit of all the mischief-makers existed.” One can speculate from this that the total number of fakirs was no greater than 2000-2500 and they did not possess firearms at all.

The incident of the night-attack took place on October 12, 1717 on the same night as the day the royal army besieged Jhok. Mian Yar Muhammad writes that,

‘It was Sunday night. Our army had laid siege. Still three hours of night remained that 1700 of the mischief-makers somehow reached the army on foot with the intention of a night-attack and advanced into the army at many places and began to attack without fear or hesitation, so many men of the army fell in battle although our braves bent over backwards to prove themselves and only a handful of mischief-makers were able to escape with their lives.’

‘In this night-attack most of the Panhwar among Qasim son of Gohram and Syed Bola, lawyer of Thatta, and Ahmed Bobkani and our brothers of the Odhija nation and other landlords as well were killed.’

When this attack took place, the soldiers who were appointed for guarding near the tent of Mian Yar Muhammad ‘went here and there’ (perhaps deliberately) but it was all well that the

two sons of Mian Yar Muhammad, Mian Dawood and Mian Ghulam Hussain , and his brother Mir Muhammad ibn Mian Naseer Muhammad were present at the scene of the incident. In the ensuing battle, Mian Ghulam Hussain was injured.

Two months passed during the siege but the royal army despite being armed with cannon and gun dared not capture Jhok. Meanwhile Sahibzada Syed Hussain Khan and several landlords reached Jhok with the reinforcements as per the order of Nawab Azam; but perhaps at the same time a flood came and “there was such an abundance of water around the ‘fort’ of Sufi Inayat that no trace of land could be seen for four or five miles.” Nevertheless the Sahibzada’s army crossed the water somehow and set up a fortification near the ramparts of Jhok. Mian Yar Muhammad, while singing odes to this unparalleled achievement of his able son scatters pearls in such a way as if the hero had emerged victorious in the seven labours of (ancient Persian hero) Rustom. He writes that

‘The army of the king is victorious and

The heart of the enemy is burning with sorrow

The army of the king is smiling and

The enemy has thrown its turban from the head like a bud

The heart of the army of the king is very happy and

The enemy is lying like owls in the wilderness

The army of the king is glad and successful

The enemy and its army is unhappy and stricken

The army of the king is very satisfied and

The enemy is surrounded with grief at every moment

The face of the army of the king is blooming with joy

The enemy is humble and unfulfilled

The army of the king is majestic and

The enemy is after its own life

The army of the king strikes terror in hearts and

The lips of the enemy are silent like the dead

The asset of the army of the king is victory

It is raised like an arrow which pierces the chest of the enemy'

In the end he writes that the Sahibzada of exalted fortune will soon murder or arrest "he who is the ill-willed accursed." (Sufi Shah Inayat)

Two months passed since this matter but neither the force of resistance of the fakirs diminished and neither could the royal army subdue them. Then it happened that one morning "the awesome khan and nawab of exalted place" riding on elephants came near the ramparts of Jhok "like lions and braves" and addressed the "braves of your battle and warlike courage" that "first you blow these ramparts in the air with cannon and gun like a cleaner of cotton and

then we will burn the harvest of life of the fakirs to dust with the fire of swords.” But some spy of the Sufi was present there by coincidence. He alerted the fakirs about this plan of the enemy therefore this plan did not succeed.

The siege continued for four months. The fakirs did not have cannons and guns therefore they had no other resort except a night-attack. This method proved so effective that according to Mir Ali Sher Qaane *“The attackers had reached the brink of destruction. Sufi Inayat had directed the fakirs to conduct the night-attack in utmost silence, but one night some fakir inadvertently chanted the Ism-e-Zaat (Allah) and others also joined in, thus revealing friends and enemies in the army and most of the fakirs were consumed by the sword.”*

Due to the presence of spies in the royal army and the narrative that the “friends and enemies were revealed” in the army because of the chants, one gets the impression that a few fakirs had secretly joined the army of the enemy and kept trying to make the ordinary soldiers their sympathizers. Since the royal soldiers were soldiers on hire and had no personal opposition to Jhok, neither any personal interest attached with it, therefore to turn their allegiance from the nawab and the landlords was not so difficult. This speculation is further strengthened by the length and failure of the siege.

The defeat of the night-attack did damage the fakirs but their spirits did not decline and they kept fighting the enemy as before. Eventually when there was no prospect of gaining victory over the fakirs, the enemy resorted to deceit and fraud, and on January 1, 1718 a proposal of peace was presented before Sufi Shah Inayat. “Muhammad Khan, son of Mian Khuda Yar Khan Kalhora and Shahdad Baloch, military commanders, etc. placing the Koran in between promised

that the lives and property of the fakirs would not be harmed." Some comrades of Sufi Shah Inayat tried to reason with him a lot that these oaths and terms and conditions are tricks of the enemy. Do not buy into their deceit and continue with the fighting but how could the pious Sufi doubt an oath over the Koran, so he accepted the peace proposal. The entrance to Jhok was opened and the royal army captured the town without any resistance or bloodshed. Afterwards Sufi Shah Inayat was brought with great respect in the tent of Nawab Azam Khan on the pretext of signing the peace deed but immediately after reaching there, he was arrested and put in handcuffs and chains.

Then the fire of royal vengeance reached Jhok and a general massacre of the fakirs began. Their homes were burnt. Their assets were looted and the ramparts of the town were razed. The collective farming of Jhok drowned in blood. Neither the sowers of the seed survived nor the reapers of the crop. On the betrayal of Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhora, Shah Inayat said the following verse: *'The oppressor had promised (by touching his beard), it [the beard] was just like the tail of a dog.'*

After destroying Jhok, Nawab Azam Khan returned to Thatta and Sufi Shah Inayat was summoned in the court. Mir Ali Sher Qaane narrates that the questions and answers between the *subedar* and the sufi is a "lengthy story." In short whatever the questions put by the nawab, Sufi Shah Inayat answered them in the language of Khwaja Hafiz Shirazi.

Nawab Azam Khan (NAK): *'Tell why you created this disturbance?'*

Sufi Shah Inayat (SSI): *'The day God ordered the sky to revolve*

And embellished the planet Mercury with the assembly of seven small stars

Such was my fate assigned from the court of God

Why am I to blame, this was written in my fate'

The poet Sheikh Muhammad Raza who was sitting next to Azam Khan said:

'Friend wake up from the state of dreaming

Refrain from frivolous talk, this is your time of reckoning'

SSI: *'I was not allowed entry into an alley of good repute*

If you do not like, then change the Divine order'

NAK: *'Then get ready for a calamity.'*

SSI: *'The scourge of allegiance is like the flame of gold.'*

NAK: *'Why did you defame yourself and become a victim of misfortune.'*

SSI: *'If a lover does not bear the burden of reproach, what else can he do*

No hero possesses a shield for the arrow of death'

NAK: *'Now that you are about to be killed, what is the use of beating about the bush.'*

SSI: *'The person whose heart is alive with love never dies*

The stamp of my eternity is affixed to the register of the universe'

NAK: *'Why did you abandon the obedience of the ruler of the day?'*

SSI: *'How can we disciples turn our faces towards the Kaaba*

When our pir's face is turned towards the tavern'

NAK: *'Now why do you mourn the failure of your desires.'*

SSI: *'When I abluted at the spring of love*

At the same time I saluted every article of existence seven times'

When Azam Khan saw that this person is neither afraid of him nor repentant over his actions, and does not plead for a pardon of his life, he ordered for the insolent sufi to be put in prison.

While walking away, Shah Inayat recited this verse:

'O cupbearer get up, take ten cups

Bring dust over the sad days'

On January 7, 1718, the 15th of Safar 1130 A.H. Sufi Shah Inayat was beheaded by the order of *subedar* Azam Khan. In his last moments, he was reciting the following verse:

'You have released me from the chains of existence

May Allah bless you now and hereafter'

Sufi Shah Inayat was martyred. Innumerable fakirs were put to the sword and the town of Jhok was destroyed but such was the state of fear and despair of the ruling elite that they trembled at the very name of the fakirs; therefore Azam Khan had a proclamation made that if anyone let out the word "Allah (the *Ism-e-Takbeer* (God is Great) of the fakirs) out loud, he would be

beheaded.” Analyzing this order, Mir Ali Sher Qaane writes that, “Praise be to Allah! What Divinity, that heads would roll at taking His Own Name, but such is the route of lovers.”

We cannot say that the story of the dialogue between Azam Khan and Sufi Shah Inayat is based on reliable evidence or the creation of the imaginative flight of some good-humoured admirer of Sufi Shaheed; but there is no doubt that Sufi Shah Inayat kept firm on his principle of life. Not even for a moment was there a stumble in his steadiness of feet.

According to the description of *Tuhfa-tul-Kiraam*, Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhora was awarded the villages of Lakri, Danda, Hajam, Dornak, Rajab, Pasar, Pachata, Thore and Daya Sain Dana from the area of Shamadati and Chachkaan as a prize. That is how the first experiment of collective farming and equal distribution of wealth in the Indus Valley came to an end.

Conclusion

Sufi Shah Inayat had tried to bring collective farming meaning socialist mode of production and mode of distribution in the era of feudalism. However much worthy of admiration and praise this step of his maybe, and worthy of respect the sacrifices of his comrades, but nobody has authority over the law of social evolution. However great a revolutionary any person is and how much he is intoxicated with the passion for social service, cannot take precedence over this law. The desire of Sufi Shah Inayat was very noble but destinies do not change by mere wishes. His dream was very fortunate but he was dreaming about it at least two centuries in advance, when to make this dream a reality neither material conditions were present, nor the objective conditions were suitable. Neither the productive forces had progressed so much that the end of feudalism became inevitable and nor a consciousness of their historic character was created

among the workers whose task it is to bring the socialist revolution (even now this consciousness is not there) The working class of the 18th century in Sindh could not even think that political power should be seized from the nawabs and landlords to achieve power for themselves (the people of Jhok did not even reflect on capturing Thatta, what to talk of Sindh). In this situation, the experiment of Sufi Shah Inayat necessarily had to fail, so it did, albeit due to the deceptions of external powers rather than internal weaknesses.

Sufi Shah Inayat had no perception of the historic significance of his experiment and neither could he guess how deadly the movement for collective farming could prove for the landlords. Seemingly, this movement was no more than the waves of a pebble in the closed water of some small pond, but the Sufi was unaware of the reality that the energy of stormy surges is hidden in these waves which have the ability to emerge and wash away the whole feudal system like sticks and sprigs. He also did not have the ability to lead an armed struggle of the people. For example, when the fakirs advised that the army of the nawab should be attacked on its way by going forward so that the enemy would not get an opportunity to line up and surround Jhok, Sufi Shah Inayat refused forestalling and made do with just defensive contest. That is how the fighting was decided even before fighting broke out because defensive war is generally the preamble of defeat. (The same mistake was also committed by the besieged army in Delhi in 1857 and provided the English the opportunity to take armies and supplies from Punjab and other areas to attack Delhi) By besieging themselves they gave a free hand to the enemy and broke their connection with the people of Sindh. This is the reason that the peasants of Sindh could not own the selfless struggle of the fakirs as their struggle. The result was that the fakirs of Jhok had to fight this war alone. No supporter or helper of theirs was created in Sindh; and

this war of the fakirs could not assume greater importance than a momentary and local accident.

Whatever this trial but is it any less of a historic feat that by undertaking the first successful experiment of collective farming he proved that if landowners and landlords do not intervene, farming can be done with more good style and feelings of affinity and mutual assistance rather than rivalry and enmity develop; and it is also clear that the oppressive power of the state until now has always supported the interest of the upper classes against the people. Alas that that the mention of the invasions of Muhammad ibn Qasim, Mahmud Ghaznavi and Ahmad Shah Abdali is made with great emphasis in history textbooks, but our new generation is not even aware of the name of Sufi Shah Inayat Shaheed.

This tradition of the sacrifice of the fakirs was further illuminated by Shahal Khan Kalhora, Naseer Muhammad Khan and Din Muhammad Khan, but woe to the expediencies of our historians who avoid the movement of the fakirs as if it is some ugly stain on the pages of history. (These people would plough and sow land collectively and utilize the produce according to their need) It is true that it was impossible for this socialist movement to succeed within the confines of feudalism, but who can deny the sincerity and good intentions of the Kalhora fakirs? Also, is it any less of a historic achievement that because of their sacrifices, an independent state emerged in Sindh after centuries; but alas that this independence was short-lived. First Nadir Shah came to loot, then Ahmad Shah Abdali subordinated northern Sindh, and when deliverance from Kabul was achieved, the East India Company came knocking.

And as Sajid Sarshaari says in his poetic tribute to Shah Inayat titled *Jhok Men* (At Jhok):

'The fragrance which has perfumed the whole of Sindh, "Sajid"

That fresh flower of the bouquet is to found at Jhok'

Note: Most of the quotations in this paper are from 'Maqalaat-us-Shuura' (1760) and Tuhfat-ul-Kiraam (1766), two books greatly detailing the conditions of Shah Inayat. These books are authored by Mir Ali Sher Qaane, who is an eminent historian, poet and biographical memoirist of Sindh, who wrote 42 books. Although he was a news-writer of the court of the Kalhoras, who were sworn enemies of Shah Inayat, but he always mentions Shah Inayat with great respect and deference and narrates his conditions with great impartiality. The most superlative account in Urdu is to be found in 'Sufi Shah Inayat Shaheed: Personality and Art' (2012) by Dr Manzoor Ali Veerio, published by the Pakistan Academy of Letters in its "Architects of Pakistani Literature" series.

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