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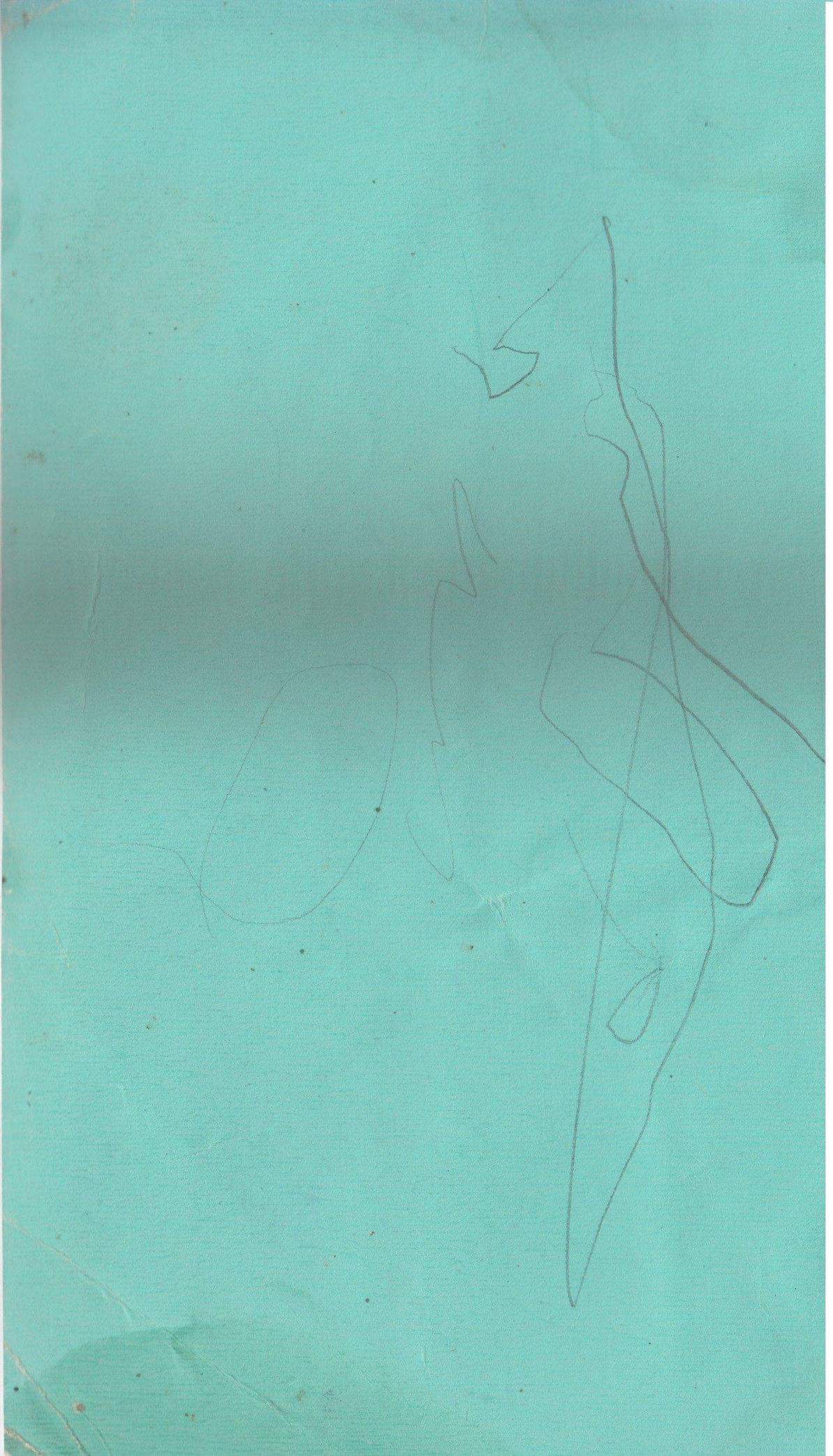
AULS

OF

ANGLADESH



R. ANWARUL KARIM



The Bauls of Bangladesh

(A Study of an Obscure Religious Cult)

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&
DIRECTOR : LALAN ACADEMY, KUSHTIA
BANGLADESH.

ফোন—৩৪২০
সংবাদ বিতরণী
কুষ্টিয়া

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Baul Kavi Lalon Shah 1st Edition 1963,
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Lalon Geeti 1966

Bangla Shahityea Muslim Kavi-o-Shahityik 1969

Baul Shahitya-o-Baul Gaan 1971

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To

Professor M. Mansuruddin

কুষ্টিয়া

Sadhu (Persian) husband life partner
Baul — Husband,
Boula - Rhyme

Jalal

~~An introduction~~
An Intermediate
Persian Dictionary
by
Dr. Mohammad Moin
Vol. I, A - X (KH)
Amir Kabir Publishing
~~House~~ Corporation
Tehran 1965

Apologetically speaking

Bangladesh has number of obscure religious cults developed under the ferment of different major religions. Their practices are often kept secret because of their belief and hence their obscurity. These obscure religious cults serve as a positive source to the understanding of the total culture of the people. The Bauls of Bangladesh form the most dominant aspect in the socio-religious activities of the country. And as such I considered their study as important to me.

My present work is much revised and studied in detail from what I had made earlier in my dessertation for which I had been awarded a Ph. D. by the University of Dacca in 1977.

The Bauls of Bangladesh is a study of a group of people who, although numerically, may not be strong but their way of life does leave its deep inpact on the life of the people belonging to different religion and creed. The infra-structure of the cultural pattern of the country thus is rooted at the micro level and hence their study is important for an understanding of the macro-culture of the country. Islam is often misunderstood when viewed in the context of a Baul culture or Sufism as practised by a certain class of Faquirs in Bangladesh. My approach is analytical and it is based on scientific investigation formulated on the principles of cultural anthroplogy.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Mrs. Neelima Ibrahim, Professor, Deptt. of Bengali, University of Dacca who acted as my promoter for all her co-operation and guidance. I am grateful to the learned scholars of home and abroad, particularly Professor Joseph T. O. Connel of St. Michael College, Toronto University, Mr. H. C. Capwell of Harvard University, Professor Joseph Kuckertz of Cologne University for their help and assistance.

Professor Connel took pains to send me some very good articles published in foreign Journals. Mr. Charles Capwell who was then a Post graduate student in Western Musicology at Harvard University published a research report on 'The Esoteric Belief of the Bauls of Bengal' in the Journal of the Asian Studies, 1974 and held discussions through correspondence with me afterwards on some points. I am extremely grateful to Prof. Kuckertz for his paper in IFMC Journal on 'Origin and Construction of the melodies in Baul songs of Bengal'. We differed on points, particularly for his consideration of Baul song as 'Bhatiali' or 'Bhawaiya'. Professor Kuckertz in course of a letter addressed to me suggested that the melodies of the Bhatialis serve as a model for melodies of Baul songs. But this is not true so far the songs of the Bauls in Bangladesh are concerned.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Morteza Sharaff, visiting Professor of Persian language in the University of Dacca and his wife Mrs. Sharaff who is also a Professor of Persian language and literature in the Teheran University for their valuable suggestion.

I am also grateful to Professor Asutosh Bhattacharyya of Calcutta University for all his affection and good wishes. My colleagues here in Bangladesh also helped me greatly. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge services of my good friend Mr. Golam Moinuddin, Dy. Director, Bangla Academy and Mr. Mahbubul Karim, Secretary, Lalon Academy for all their co-operation. I owe an apology to my readers for all lapses either in proof reading or otherwise, The printing, in fact, is totally inadequate.

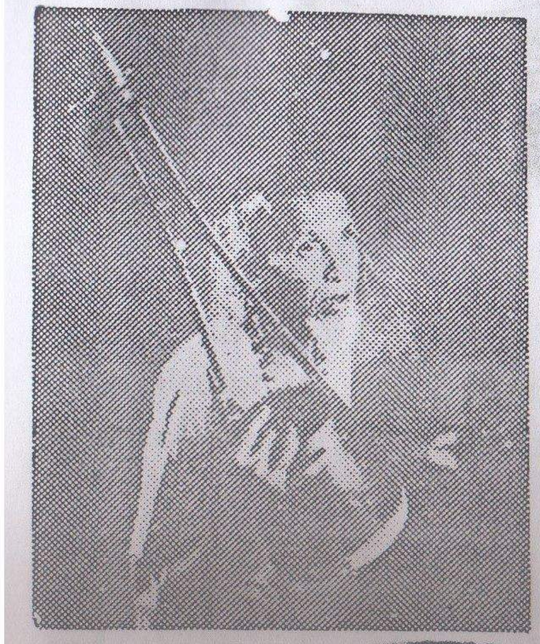
I am grateful to Lalon Academy for the publication of the book in English for the understanding of the International scholars interested in our cultural heritage. I am grateful to my loving parents and my wife, Professor Syeda Amena Karim, Head of the Deptt. of Bengali, Kushtia Govt. Girls' College for all co-operation and assistance.

I offer my prayer to my Allah for giving me this opportunity to complete this work of mine.

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Anwarul Karim

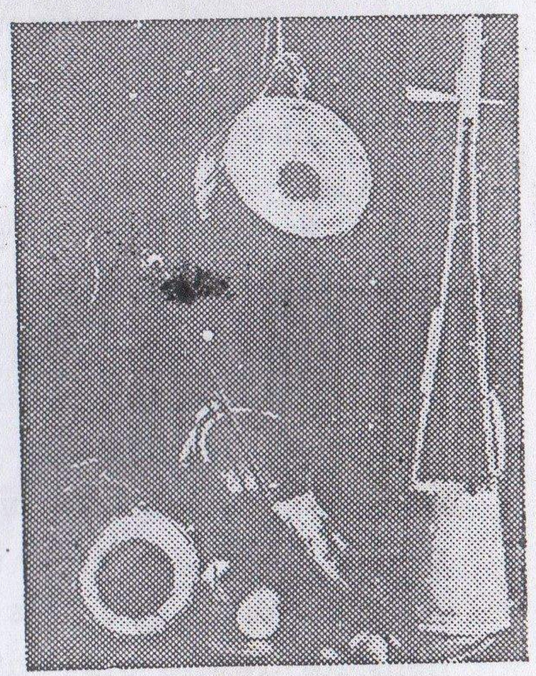
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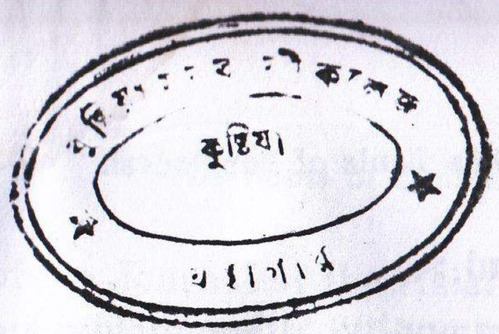


কুষ্টিয়া





THE BAULS & THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.





INTRODUCTION

Culture is a totality. It has its contradictions and inconsistencies. Although it shares group experience, it is not always perfectly integrated. It has its quirks and dark spots. It is, in a word, a complex one. Bangladesh presents a mixed cultural heritage. She has been the meeting place of many conflicting races and their civilisation. ~~Hey~~s is a unity in diversity. There are various heterogeneous elements which make up her culture. They have their different religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. They present a conflicting approach to each other. These conflicting religions have strived for supremacy. But these struggles have occasionally ended in a synthesis. The Bauls of Bangladesh although have a Muslim sufi bias, ~~they~~ have assimilated thoughts from different religious and cultural groups, more particularly in matters of certain practices which they follow unconcernedly. My interest in the Bauls of Bangladesh has been chiefly grown because I understand that the infra-structure of the cultural pattern of a country does form its basis in micro level and as such their study is important to have a clear idea of the macro culture of the country. The Bauls of Bangladesh are a group of singing religious mendicants or Faquirs who are known for their humanism, disregard of social stratification and caste system. They are loved for their mystic music and iconoclastic approach to life.

Tagore and the Baul :

This Baul community although loved and patronised by the folk people of Bangladesh they were unknown to the sophisticated circles till Rabindranath Tagore brought them to the lime light by publishing twenty songs which he collected during his stay in Shelaidah six miles from Lalan Academy and Kushtia in the monthly Prabashi, Calcutta. Rabindranath had a business concern at Kushtia town and occasionally he lived here. There are reports that he met Lalan Shah at Shelaidah in his youth. His elder brother Jatirindranath Tagore drew up a pencil sketch of Lalan Faquir on the Padma boat while cruising over the Padma along with other members of his family. It was fifth May, 1889. The original sketch has been kept preserved in the museum of Rabindra Bharati Society, Calcutta. In fact, Jatirindranath and Rabindranath were among the first to recognise the poetic genius of Lalan Shah Rabindranath Tagore on number of occasions admitted the influence which the Bauls of Bangladesh exerted on his literary and spiritual activity.

Contributions to the study of Baul cult :

Abdul Wali, a former Sub-Registrar of Sailkupa under Jhenidah subdivision of Jessore district, published a detail account of the life and activities of the Bauls in the Journal of the Anthropological society of Bombay, 1900, Vol. V No. IV under the title, 'On curious tenets and practies of a certain class of Faquirs in Bengal'. This article includes a note on Lalan Faquir. Abdul Wali, in fact, wrote a number of articles on the obscure religious cults and Faquirs in different

issues of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. These are : Note on the Hari-Allah sect (1898) JASB 1898, LXVII (3) : 112. Note on the Chitliya Faquirs JASB, 1898. Note on the Faquirs of Baliya-Dighi in Dinajpur (1903) JASB 1903, LXXII. Khan Shahib Abdul Wali was possibly one of the earliest who made a significant contributions to the works of the Bauls and Muslim Faquirs of Bangladesh. Of course before Abdul Wali, an editorial was published on the death of Lalan Faquir in one of the 1890 issues (1297 Bengali year) of the Fortnightly Hitakari, printed from Kumarkhali Mathuranath Printing Works, Kushtia by Sree Devnath Biswas In this issue of the Hitakari an obituary report was published on Lalan Faquir but it did not give any account of his life. It mentioned that Lalan Faquir lived and died in Seuria near Kushtia town and he was very famous. He was a humanist and followed both Islam and Vaishnavism. The editorial writer could not conclude of the Faquir's faith and belief as the Faquir did not follow any particular creed. He was a Baul and lived with his wife. He died on October 17, 1890.

Since Abdul Wali and Tagore's days quite a good number of scholars published various works on the Bauls. The prominent among them include Sree Basanta Kumar Paul (Mahatma Lalan Faquir, Prabashi : Sravan 1232 & Baisakh 1335 Bengali year, Calcutta.) Professor M. Mansuruddin (Haramani : Vol. VII, Bangla Academy, Dacca 1371 Bengali year), Akshoy Kumar Dutt, Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday (Followers of Indian Religious cults), Acharya Kshitmohon Sen – Banglar Baul (Bauls of Bengal), Dr. Motilal Das and Pijush

Kanti Mahapatra, Lalan Geetika (Songs of Lalan Shah). Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya—Banglar Baul : Baul Gaan (Bauls of Bengal and Baul Song). Dr. Shasibhusan Dasgupta : Obscure Religious Cults. Dr. E. C. Dimock—The Place of Hidden Moon, Deben Bhattacharya—The Mirror of the Sky, Lila Roy—The Bauls of Bengal, Dr. Ahmad Sharif—Baul Tatva (Baul cults), Prof. Abu Talib—Lalan Shah O Lalan Geetika, Dr S. M. Lutfor Rahman—Lalan Shah (unpublished Ph. D. thesis). Dr. Mahmud Shah Qureshi—Poems Mystiques Bengalis : Chants Bauls. Charles H. Capwell—The Esoteric Belief of the Bauls of Bengal Article published in the Journal of the Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, Feb. 1974), Josef Kuckertz—Origin and Construction of the Melodies in Baul Songs of Bengal (Article published in IFMC Journal Vol. 7, 1975.)

Dr. Enamul Haq, Dr. Ashraf Siddiqui, Dr. Mazharul Islam, Dr. Ashutosh Bhattacharya, Dr. Tushar Chatterji, Annada Sankar Roy, Khandker Reazul Haq, Sharif Hussain, Abul Ahsan Choudhury and M. Maniruzzaman also contributed to Baulism and Lalan Shah. Of these scholars Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya and Dr. Shasibhusan Dasgupta deserve special mention because of their most significant contribution to the study of the Bauls. Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya made a detail account of the Baul activities in his book. In his learned discourse he pointed out that Vaishnavism had greatly influenced the Bauls of Bengal. He also gave an account of certain erotic practices of the Bauls.

Dr. S. B. Dasgupta while explaining religious cults devoted few chapters to the Bauls. According to him, although the influence of Sufism of Islam is quite great

on the Bauls it is Sahajiya who, in fact, shaped the Baul cult.

Meanwhile literature condemning the Bauls and their activities was also produced by a host of contemporary Puritan Muslims who considered the Baul activities as most nefarious one for their erotic and sexual practices as a method to explore the body mystery. These books were also helpful to the understanding of the Baul cult. These include : Mohd. Osman Khan—Hedayetul Fasequin (Counsel for the Fake believers). Kazi Keramatulla and Munshi Golam Kibriya—Uchit Katha (Just words). Maulana Fazlur Rahman—Bhando Faquir (Fake Faquirs). Maulana Reazuddin Ahmad—Baul Dhangsha Fotwa (Social injunction against the Baul cult). Munshi Imdad Ali—Raddey Nara (Measures against the Fake Faquirs, unpublished work). Maulana Akram Khan—Moslem Banger Samajik Itihash (Social History of Muslim Bengal). A. H. M. Imamuddin—Baul Matobad O Islam (Baul ways and Islam).

In my dessertation on Baul cult for which I was awarded a Ph. D. by the University of Dacca for the first time on the subject, I have made it clear that there is always a fusion of Sahajiya Buddhism, Vaishnava Sahajiya and Indo-Persian sufism. It is Indo-Persian sufism which formed the basis of the Baul cult. My study on this cult thus leads me to conclude that Bauls might belong to a degenerated Muslim Sufi sect.

Bauls of Bangladesh :

The Bauls of Bangladesh faced lot of criticism and condemnation by the conservative Muslim society for

their esoteric sexual rites and practices. I understand that the Muslim Sufi sect who came to Bangladesh and converted the locals to their ideals failed to guide them properly and as a result many Indian mystic elements were afterwards incorporated with the cult because of improper understandiug of the Baulism which was preached by the Persian Sufi sect

Today, the Bauls of Bangladesh enjoy a wide popularity because of their mystic songs. People of this age suffer from a crisis. Although they enjoy more or less the blessings of material prosperity they, in fact, do not experience the joy of life. There is thus a frustration, a hopelessness. The Bauls do satisfy them by their songs. At least for a time they forget themselves. Their songs are now broadcast through Radio and Television. Tens of thousands attend their festival in rural areas either at Seuria where Lalan once lived and died and over whose grave a beautiful mausoleum is built up or in Harishpur, a village under Jhenidah subdivision of Jessore district, the one time home of Lalan Shah and Panju Shah. The mystic Bauls very much impressed the modern mind. In the twentieth century there is no record of any other cult or system which has penetrated so deeply into human hearts both in the East and the West. People are drawn towards it for its humanism, unconventional approach to life and revolutionary faith. This has to some extent taken the role of Shamanistic cult, a philosophy or a religion. This has become a secret society of a group of outcastes who do not divulge anything of their society to non-initiated. The Baul dance whirling or turning has taken everybody by storm. In the West the people become Hippies. They are fed up with the society

they lived in. The Persian Sufism of which the Bauls are also a part might have influenced them. Yet Hippies and the Bauls are pole's apart. Hippies are of modern origin but Bauls are not. They have a past as well as a glorious future. They are the mainspring of the whole range of literature, poetry and music. They go mystic, occasionally they are misunderstood and there they gain. Many of them do not move as nomads from place to place, singing songs to the village folk. They have abandoned wandering and settled down. In many parts of Kushtia district there are Baul villages. Here the Bauls are quite rich. They have made fortunes. Many have taken recourse to different kinds of business. There are again others who make fortune by selling ganja to an outsider or participating in Radio or Television programme. With all these the Bauls are Bauls. They have some magical knowledge—an occult training, self mystery, hidden secrets about body mystery and the rest. Theirs are the short cut way to an attainment of a knowledge of God.

The Bauls of Bangladesh generally live in Akhras or Asrams male and female together. The female counterpart was known as associate and they introduce themselves as man and wife. These Bauls with the exception of few always take Ganja (canabisindica) before they go for anything. The usual practice is this, the male counterpart will take it first and then he will pass it to his female counterpart and afterwards this is passed on to others. As regards their dress this may be said that the male Baul wears a Kapni something like underwear and the whole body is covered up by a long loose cloak. They keep beard and

their hair is long and is generally spread over their neck. They put on Tasbi and beads around their neck. They also do not use comb or oil. The women folk put on white dress and they do not use any ornament. The male Baul carries a bag around the shoulder and a stick very much curved, with them. They used to keep food in a pot or a tray prepared out of a dried fruit cell. They are mostly vegetarians but during festival they take fish and curd. Earlier the Hindu Bauls used to bury their dead but the practice is gradually being changed now to a cremation. To speak of their practice this can be said that the Bauls will never disclose their Mantra to non Bauls. Guru or the spiritual guide occupies a very important place. They consider Guru as a 'Light' to show them the correct path. This Guru, however, takes different shape in the process of spiritual attainment. Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Sm) and Krishna appear to be ultimate guide in their communion with God. The name of Caitanya as spiritual guide also appear in their mystic order. The Bauls held the Prophet in high esteem. They believe that the power of God is fully represented in the Prophet. God has created man in His own image and He is present in every man in the form of a life force. The Bauls consider female associate as a media for their spiritual attainment and for this all the Bauls keep a woman by their side.

The Bauls further believe that man takes the image of God and so they held every man irrespective of caste and class in high esteem. They glorify both the body and the soul. But they believe that the body will

perish after death and the soul is indestructible. Since the Bauls are the offshoots of Sufism, like Sufis they also consider God as immanent and transcendent. In certain cases where Hindu yogism gets the upper hand this conception differs on points. In this case God is taken as something immanent and not transcendent. This is undoubtedly a narrow interpretation of God. But in Baul faith the conception of God is not limited within one's 'self'. It goes beyond the 'self'—it is transcendental.

These Bauls who form a class by themselves come from a lower rank of both Hindu and Muslim community living in villages. The bulk of the Baul population belongs to the world of weavers. Besides them there are others also. They include farmers, fishermen, cobblers, wood-cutters, oilman and many others. The female Bauls also come from the ordinary stock and they are mostly forsaken or divorced. Many of them are widows. At present young group is seen joining the band of the Baul singers but they are frustrated and disgruntled youth and drawn towards Baul cult for its mysterious approach to life. These youth either belong to the poor, ordinary class or lower middle class who do not get pleasure in working and prefer an easy life in Baul society. Songs of the Bauls have also attracted some young men who come from the upper middle class society. All these youth take Ganja and lead a carefree life. Religious persecution, social injustice and economic deprivation are some of the causes responsible to the growth and development of the Baul cult. Among the Hindus the lower section always experienced the bitterness of caste system. The

Muslims although stand for humanism and equality among all, there also exists, because of local influence, a sort of social stratification and persons belonging to lower class do not always get the privilege as enjoyed by the people of upper class. Ignorance also played a great part in their joining of the Baul community. These Bauls are mostly seen in Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Pabna, Rajshahi, Faridpur and Dacca districts, They observe religious festivals on the date of birth and death of their spiritual guide. On these occasions hundreds of Bauls throng at the Akhra of their spiritual guide or at the residence of a well to do Baul who arrange such festivals with the help of others and follow number of religious practices. These include, song recital throughout the day and night, meditation and thanks giving.

Difficulties in understanding Baul songs :

The Bauls of Bangladesh are a mystic group. In order to understand them one should be well conversant with their way of life and practices. Bauls contend that their ideas although being available in the songs these are very difficult to understand for a person who knows nothing of their cult. They maintain that these ideas are personally communicated by means of an interaction between the teacher and the learner. They have expressed in course of a series of discussion with me that the scholars have misinterpreted their cult due to ignorance or depending too much on the songs as available to them. The Baul songs have number of unconventional symbols and imagery. These symbols bear magical knowledge. The songs of the Bauls present riddles and it requires a special kind of

knowledge to solve the same. I know many scholars both in the East as well as in the West who, in course of their study of the Baul cult, have familiarized themselves with the academic resources available to them and thereby caused unnecessary difficulties to the understanding of the subject.

In order to avoid this difficulty I had to live with the Bauls for over two decades. And my study has been carried out by direct observation of their behaviour. There were, however, occasions when I had to depend on informants who themselves were Bauls. This happened with regard to their sexual behaviour and the moments when they were initiated. I applied this information to other cases and got things confirmed.

Sufi Faquirs and the Bauls of Bangladesh :

Although the Bauls of Bangladesh are the offshoots of the Sufis from Persia they differ widely in matters of certain rites and rituals. This should be quite clear that the Bauls are not the real Sufis. The Bauls of Bangladesh because of their ignorance have failed to grasp the Sufi ideas and thus incorporated many things uncommon with Sufi idea and practices. The Sufis when they came to Bangladesh met the local converts who posed to be would-be Sufis. These local Dervishes or would-be Sufis traditionally collected together and studied remnants of this Sufi teaching but they missed the main points of their teachings because of ignorance and lack of proper education. However, they developed it as 'a mystical system designed to produce ecstasy and based on theological concepts'.

Objectives of the study :

The objective of my study is to analyse the cultural trend and pattern of behaviour of the Bauls in the context of the socio-economic and religious conditions of the country. The Bauls are at the root of our cultural heritage. The problem of investigation and the purpose of my study is that of finding the p int of entrance of this group in the total culture of the country for 'culture have organisation as well as content'. These Bauls although belong to a singing minstrel community they have faith, as I already said, in a religious cult—obscure and hidden for their erotic approach to life. My purpose is also to point out in course of discussion that religion largely shapes our culture, more to say, it is the main-spring of our cultural heritage. Religion, this way or that, is the Alpha and Omega in the life of the folk and Bauls are no exception since they also belong to the same group. Although the majority of the groups whom I interviewed are Muslims and Islam does not approve of social discrimination in terms of birth or other things social stratification does prevail among them. The villages I lived in during my study suggest social differentiation and the whole village has been divided into so many groups in terms of their affiliation to different sects formed on the basis of their religious belief. These are again divided into 'Shara' and 'Be-Shara'. Shara means those who strictly follow codes of conduct as laid down in the Quran and the Sunna and Be-Shara is just the reverse. The Be-Shara have number of groups of which Baul is one. These people have their own ceremonies and customs. The 'Shara' people although may have different sub sections

they may occasionally join each other's ceremony. But the Be-Shara have no access to the 'Shara' and maintains an isolated life. These people neither go to the mosque or say Eid prayer nor they believe in any religious rites of the other groups. But quite interestingly these Be-Shara persons known as Faquirs, Sadhus or Bauls are called for treatment of different kinds of diseases because they are believed to have possessed some kind of magical knowledge or alchemy. Among the Bauls there are many Kaviraj or folk-medicoes. Bauls as a part of this Be-Shara group have again their own norms which differ from other Be-Shara group because of incorporation of Sahajiya element. It may be mentioned here that many non-Muslims also form an integral part of the Baul community. But quite astonishingly Muslim and non-Muslim Bauls follow their own religious practice in respect of certain customs and then supplement it by a common practice. In all these cases they have to perform these things themselves as other groups will not participate or lead anything. But it is seen that when any Baul mela or festival of any Be-Shara group takes place everybody irrespective of faith and caste join. This interaction help grow an unified cultural pattern in national ideology.

Methodology :

I followed the method of intensive field work in my study which involved direct participation and observation, as mentioned earlier, in the field which covered Kushtia and part of Jessore. I have lived with the Bauls and learnt their secrets which they do not reveal to an outsider. Anybody among the Baul community

is found disclosing these secrets to a non member is punished. Kushtia being the nerve centre of the Baul activities because of Lalan Academy and Lalan Mausoleum it provided me sufficient scope to come in contact with hundreds of the Bauls, men and women during festival time of the Baul community at the Academy premises. For three days these Bauls used to stay at the Academy premises and pay glowing tributes to their spiritual leader, Lalan Shah who lived and died here at the village Seuria near Kushtia Mohini Mills. Over ten thousand Bauls, many of whom are also non-Bau's join the Baul mela. This mela is held twice annually. I served Lalan Academy in various capacities since its inception and now has been working as its honorary Director for several years. This helped greatly, more over they felt that I was initiated and as a result I had easy excess to their community. My familiarity with the Bauls also help gather various information through interviews. I talked to these Bauls in various situations. The female Bauls also did not feel hesitant to talk to me.

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* Dr. H. C. Paul, Dr. M. A. Rahim, Professor Abu Rushd and Dr. Ashit Kr. Banerji also made contribution to the study of Bauls and Lalan Shah.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF INDO-BANGLADESH.

Pre-Aryan religion in Indo-Bangladesh :

In India as well as in Bangladesh the early settlers were Non-Aryan people. Recent research shows that these Non-Aryans were highly civilised and they did believe in certain religion. Historical relics of the Indus valley civilisation bear ample testimony to this truth. Although history of mankind right from the period of the begining of man, Adam is very much unknown, save those available in the religious books passed through generations the research of Anthropologists and Archaeologists in modern time have been able to make certain discoveries but their comments on the primitive past are mostly a matter of conjecture since no definite proof of the history of mankind is available. Religious books which contain the activities of different Prophets in different time and age suggest that there were people who took up idolatory as a basis of worship, Religion, in fact, did exist but in different form and shape. There are Anthropologists who agree that man first became religious when thought or imagined that there were unseen powers or spirits at work in the world of nature. This belief in the spirits of nature is as old as the world itself and it is inherent in man and discernible even in persons who do not outwardly pose to be religious. In fact there is always a tendency in man to personify inanimate objects. But

this we cannot say that spiritism or animism continued as the original form of religion. There may be some other form preceding spiritism.

Now a question arises what form of religion did the early settlers possess in the Pre-Aryan India and Bangladesh. The recent archaeological discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjodaro although suggest very clearly that religion did exist but as regards its form we have no way out than to be speculative since our idea has to be formed from material remains without literary documents. Experts on religion suggest that religions in Pre-Aryan India and Bangladesh were in many ways similar to the religion of Sumeria in the Tigris, Euphrates valley and that of the Minoan-Mycenean civilisation in Greece and Crete. My visit to Iraqi Museum and other historical places in Iraq led me to think that there might have existed a very close contact between India and Tigris-Euphrates valley in the Pre-Aryan India. In Iraqi Museum I found the relics of great Mother Goddess who represent agricultural cult similar to those available in Indus-valley civilisation. In Pre-Aryan Indo-Bangladesh the worship of people included other than Mother Goddess, worship of a male God, worship of trees, animals, rivers and mountains. The Non-Aryans living in the Indus valley in the Pre-Aryan India also came from outside. The available remains of the Indus valley civilisation suggest most striking similarities with the people of Sumer in the Tigris and Euphrates valley and it is most likely that those Non-Aryan might come from Tigris-Euphrates valley. This Tigris-Euphrates valley was also known as Masopotemia (present Iraq). Sumerian, Assyrian, Accadian & Babylonian civilisation flourisded

in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. As I visited different historical places including Hatra, Samarra, Nineveh, Nimrod, Mosul, Ctesiphon, Babylon and other places including Iraqi Museum, Mosul Museum, Folk Museum of Bagdad, I marked a point of similarity with those of the relics of Harappa and Mohenjodaro of the Indus-valley civilisation. Folk people of many Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi villages still possess certain religio-cultural traits which indicate striking similarities with the people of Tigris-Euphrates valley. Anthropologists and Historians all alike agree to this point that although the Non-Aryans faced defeat in the hands of the Aryans they were much more civilised. But the cause of their defeat at the hands of the Aryans is gererally attributed to their failure as warriors. It is very often said that the Non-Aryans were by nature a pacifist and as such they were weak in temperament. On the other hand the Aryans were aggressive and in warfare superior to Non-Aryans. And this aggressive character and superiority in the art of warfare gave the Aryans the victory over the Non-Aryans. But how far this hypothesis is correct is a matter of research. There is no doubt that the Aryans were better equipped. In the Indus valley civilisation there exists evidence of flood. Now a question arises whether this flood was a natural calamity as happened during Noa's time or initiated by the invader who damaged the irrigation dam constructed by the Non-Aryans over the Indus. This is also a matter of conjecture. It is further imagined that the Non-Aryans who lived in Pre-Aryan India were not totally disappearcd. They were possibly made slaves and those who escaped took shelter in the

hills and mountains and afterwards got mixed up with the Aryan community. It is thus not true that with the complete annihilation of the Indus valley civilisation the whole Non-Aryans were also disappeared Now a question arises, who are these Non Aryans ? Did they all come from outside India in a group or in fragment ? It is most likely that there had been some early settlers who came to India in fragments and afterwards came the people of Sumer who built up the great Indus valley civilisation with the help of others. They were much more civilised than the early settlers and could engage them in different works. The structure of the houses built in Mohenjodaro and Harappa indicates that there had been two types of houses—one for the higher circle and the other for the lower. In fact, some sort of social stratification was there as it generally happens with the conquerers and the conquered except on special grounds. It is now believed that in and around the Indus valley there might have existed some early settlers who developed in them 'Hill village culture' and they were afterwards defeated by those outsiders who made the Indus valley civilisation. These original settlers possibly lived in groups and did not possess any superior quality of the invaders. These outsider who had a military bias in the beginning after they got mixed up with the locals did not possibly retain the same in the later phases and took recourse to agricultural production by setting up an irrigation Dam over the Indus and thus built up a great civilisation which was known as the Indus valley civilisation. Anthropological research indicated that the builders of the Indus valley civilisation might include people from Sumer,

Dravidian and the original settlers who developed Hilli village around the Indus valley. But the majority of the Mohenjodaro-Harappa people were Sumerian. Some seals of Mohenjodaro represented a standing human figure with outstretched hands catching two tigers by the throats and this figure was similar to the God Gilgamesh identified in Sumer. Another human figure with the feet and tail of a bull is depicted struggling with the horned tiger. This 'bull man' is also a close imitation of the Sumerian God, Enkidu. Worship of Mother Goddess was very common and this was also Sumerian in spirit. Worship of animal, tree and river very much in vogue there. The most important worship of animal was Naga (snake), Lingya or Phallic worship was also very common. These and many others form the basis of religion that existed among the Pre-Aryan people and the Aryans after their conquest incorporated many of the religious practices of the Non-Aryans and some of those practices are still prevalent among the Hindus.

Non-Aryan civilisation in Bangladesh :

That the Non-Aryans had a very rich cultural heritage, has been proved beyond doubt by the archaeologists when they discovered relics of civilisation as old as Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the Gangetic belt of West Bengal. The discovery suggests that a civilisation contemporareous with Harappa lies buried at Farakka splashed by the gentle flowing Ganga. The Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal[1] during inter-

1. Civilisation as old as Harappa found buried at Farakka, The Bangladesh Observe, Dacca June 18, 1976.

mittent explorations in 1975 has noticed a succession of occupations intervened by breaks of unconformity within an average depth of about ten metres. It has even found relics of habitation about eight metres below surface and above the natural level representing the present water table.

The Archaeologists after a year long analysis of the antiquities ranging between ochreous pottery and fascinating terracotta have ascribed the entire occupational strata to several periods beginning from earliest phase of habitation to the Mughol period. It is believed that these Non-Aryans had an agricultural bias and possibly they used to take recourse to hunting and other occupation It is felt that they had almost same sort of religion as it was understood in the Indus valley civilisation. The Non Aryans who settled in Bangladesh and West Bengal had possibly no major points of difference so far their religion is concerned. They believed in the ghosts of their fore-fathers, river spirits, animal and forest spirits. They had tremendous faith in mountain gods and a mighty host of unseen spirits dominated their life and living conditions. This belief of the Non-Aryans in the Nature spirit leads us to think that they might have also believed in magic. The same is discernible among the tribal people even now. This magic was possibly exploited by them for their own protection from the evil effect of nature gods. And it is also not very improbable that they have also employed magical power for gaining superiority over others. This tendency is still prevalent among the tribal people as well as he folk people of Bangladesh. It was a part of their religion since they invoked power

from their respective house hold gods to exert influence on others. And that the Non-Aryans believed in magic is clearly understood by the material documents available in the Indus-valley civilisation.

The presence of Mother goddess in the Indus-valley civilisation suggests that the Non-Aryans believed in fertility rituals and it sounds quite effective since agriculture 'played the most decisive part in the origin of civilisation'. This Mother goddess was afterwards developed into Sakti cult. The Mother goddess had number of Gramadevatas, the village goddess and they held a very important position among the national deities of the Non-Aryans. The Brahmanas did not incorporate them into their religion when they took over and these are still prevalent among the low castes. This is also true that some of the Pre-Aryan tribes possibly did not come within the fold of Brahmanism. And those who forced to accept the faith of the Brahmanas maintained their individuality in certain respects. The vast masses of Indo-Bangladesh peasantry who do not live in tribal society worship the Gramadevatas or the representatives of the Mother goddess. They also worship male deities but these deities occupy only a secondary position. Magic occupies a very important position among the folk living in the sub-continent. It is because that the majority of the folk are agriculturists and their tribal belief leads them to think, some sort of magical power is necessary for agricultural operation than the manual labour. This magical power is a sort of invocation to the Gramadevatas or unseen deities. This magical or religious rites are performed to secure the fertility of the fields and this is in all cases

performed by the women folk. Among the tribal people of Bangladesh this practice is very much in vogue. Anthropologists believe that agriculture was the discovery of women and the ancient religion originated from agricultural magic. Agricultural magic which is believed to be an important religious rite among the Non-Aryans might have given rise to Tantrism because as in agricultural magic Tantrism also had some ritual practices which were originally initiated and performed by the women. But with the passage of time the male folk gradually were inducted into the cult. This Tantrism was also known as Vamacara which stood for the ritual practices of women and of sex. In the Vedic literature there had been many references to ritual practices of sexual nature. But Vamacara was one of many forms of the Tantrism developed during Vedic period. But whatever its nature was, Tantrism possibly was a Non-Aryan practice. Had it been generally practised by all as a religious rite there would have been no question of any secrecy. In Tantrism secrecy was a catch word and it was strictly maintained. A Tantrik would not readily impart it to the uninitiated. Vedic people were highly patriarchal and their religious practice did not leave any exalted place for women. They held their male and female children in different degrees of estimation, the male always enjoyed a most privileged position. But Tantrism lays greater emphasis on the female. This we have seen as to the worship of Mother goddess by the Non-Aryans. The male God although worshipped but he occupied a secondary position. But this we must admit that although the Non-Aryans

could go with their religious practice, may be secretly, there might have certain assmilation of the Aryan element and vice versa. Possibly this was responsible for the introduction of a male deity who afterwards dominated the religion of both the Aryans and the Non-Aryans.

Social stratification & caste system in Indo-Bangladesh under the Aryans :

With the influence of Brahmanism and Buddhism the Non-Aryans outlook was changed greatly. Although the Non-Aryans reacted sharply against social stratification and religious persecution they accepted Buddhism on points. They humanised the religion and took Buddha as their deity. But what led them to consider Buddha as the deity is a mystery. This may be a Vedic influence. And this trend is very much prevalent among the mystics or the Sahajiyas who consider the preachers of religion as deities. Krishna, Buddha, Caitanya all figure out prominently in different mystic and Sahajiya cult. These mystics and Sahajiyas approach these deities from thier own unconventional, mystical way and this is also very much erotic in nature. This eroticism is very much Non-Aryan since it formed a basis of fertility cult in agricultural production. With the Buddhist mystics the sex-rituals degenerated into a pure materialistic conception wherein *Deha-vada* was the be all and the end all. Whatever be the theme of the Buddhist mystics it could not look beyond the *Deha-vada*. Pleasure principle leading to the development of *Nihilism* was the key note of the Buddhist mystics. Extinction of passions and desires was necessary for the attainment of *Nirvana*. And the Buddhist

mystics did it in their own way. In *Caryapad* or the Buddhist Mystic songs we get a picture of this practice by the Buddhist mystics who were grouped lowest in the caste system.

The Buddhist Mystic songs were a sort of a challenge to the Buddhistic India. The songs although reflected their peculiar religious belief were very much critical about social injustice, economic deprivation and religious persecution. The history of religions in India suggest that although the Non-Aryans had a religion of their own they had no written record as those of the Aryans. In fact the most ancient documents connected with the religions of India are the collections of writing known as *Vedas* or knowledge and to this day the Hindus believe that the doctrine of their religion is based upon the Vedas. The Aryans after destroying the Non-Aryans took recourse to recorganising the whole society. Economically the land flourished but socially it suffered badly because of depressing circumstances due to existence of social stratification fixed by caste system and the low position of women. Although there had been many subdivisions, the social structure was very much stratified into four main castes. These are the Brahmanas or priests, the Rajanyas better known as Kshatriyas or warriors, the Vaisyas or traders and the Sudras or slaves. There was no doubt that the first three castes were in origin the Aryans in all their purity and the Sudras were the Non-Aryans or the conquered people. Besides the Sudras, there are others who were held as Antyaja. They include traders, artisans, musicians, beggars. The lowest people were Hadi, Dom, Candal etc. They were

treated as outcasts and lived outside village or towns. This society which was based on caste principle as mentioned, had certain discrimination regarding birth, sex and status. This first two of the caste system were the most privileged so much so that their actions were hardly challenge. They were exempted from capital punishment. The other gloomy aspect of this society is the position of woman. Women were very much looked down upon. Marriage was considered a necessity and if a girl did not marry for sometime she became a Sudra. Widow marriage was forbidden and divorce was not permitted. Marriage was allowed within the caste but a man belonging to higher caste was not allowed to marry a woman of lower caste. As regards wives a Brahmin could take four, Kshattriya—three, a Vaishya—two and a Sudra—one. The law of adultery made discrimination on grounds of caste. Brahmin and Kshattriya did not pay anything for their adultery with the women of lower caste. Only a bit of penance could free them from the charges. But if a Sudra made intercourse with a woman of twice born caste (varna) he could lose everything even his life. In case of other guilts the higher caste were not made to suffer much. But the punishment of the Sudra is terrible. This pattern of behaviour made the social structure invertebrate and weak.

The Non-Aryans who afterwards formed the aboriginal cults although accepted the supremacy of the Brahmanas continued with their nature worship in a clandestine way. It happened because they were deprived of basic human requirements as enjoyed by the first three castes. These Brahmanas for their own

convenience developed certain magical formulae are regulations for the conduct of religious rites. Many of them left their homes and lived as hermits in the forests and practiced asceticism. These priests who lived as hermits preached *Ahimsa* and had many Sudras as their followers. The Sudras worshipped them as human gods.[2] These ascetics were, no doubt, the predecessors of both the Hindus and the Buddhists. These ascetics, it is believed, might have given birth to the monistic religio-philosophy enshrined in the books known as the Upanishads. The word Upanishad comes from a Sanskrit root meaning 'to sit near', and it indicates that the ascetics might have learnt many things from the Non-Aryans and this secret knowledge was later incorporated into the Upanishads. There is a point of difference between the Brahmanas pure and the Brahmanas ascetics. The Hindu mythology teaches that the ultimate reality is the impersonal one or absolute, known as Brahman. He commands absolute supremacy over others and the religious books, the Brahmanas were also considered as the absolute and written in an uninteresting prose literature. The philosophy of the Upanishads are known as *Vedanta* and it is highly poetic, noble and profound. Although in the *Vedas* there are traces of nature worship it was not pantheistic in pure form. Pantheism was devioped in the Vedanta wherein the material world and human personality were considered as unreal and the only abiding reality was the Brahman.

2. Satapatha Brahmans II, See D. W. Gundry, Religions, London 1958, page-89.

'The soul (Atman) which pervades all things
This is Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine.[3]

The Upanishads speak of the Atman or the human soul to be absorbed or lost completely into Brahman. In the *Vedanta* there is a doctrine of re birth which suggests that the human soul which is a fragment or part of the universal soul is passed through a constant process of birth and re-birth. This re-birth may be in the shape of an animal or into some lower form of life. When a man is virtuous he may be reborn as a holy man. And when he becomes a good ascetic he is not reborn again rather after his death he is absorbed into Brahman. The Vedanta takes the world as something unreal, imparmanent and a hindrance to salvation.

The Vedanta teaches the rule of Ahimsa or harmlessness both to the human being as well as to others including the meanest insect. It speaks of a mystic approach to life. But how this mystic approach got into the Brahmanism is a matter of conjecture. The Vedanta is not a religion. It embodies the experiences of the ascetics. This is no doubt mystical. In fact the Vedanta is a product of a contact between the Aryans and Non-Aryans. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan suggests, 'In all true contact there is an interchange of elements, though the foreign elements are given new significance by those who accept them'. The emotional attitude attached to the old forms are transferred to the new which is fitted into the backgrcund of the old. Many tribes and races had mystic animals which followed them were made vehicles and companions of gods.

3. Svetas Vatava Upanishad 1, 16
See D. W. Gundry, Op. cit page-89.

One of them is mounted on the pea-cock, another on the swan, a third is carried by the bull, and a fourth by the goat. The enlistment of Hanuman in the service of Rama signifies the meeting point of early nature worship and later theism. The dancing of Krishna on Katiya's head represents the subordination, if not displacement, of serpent worship. Rama's breaking of the bow signifies the conflict between the Vedic ideal and the cult of Siva, who soon became the God of the south (Dakshinamurti). There are other stories in the epic literature indicating the reconciliation of the Vedic and the Non-Vedic faith..... It need not be thought that the Aryan was always the superior force. There are occasions when the Aryan yielded to the Non-Aryan and rightly too. The epics relate the manner in which the different Non-Aryan gods asserted their supremacy over the Aryan ones. Krishna's struggle with Indra, the prince of the Vedic gods, is one instance. The rise of the cult of Siva is another.[4] Radhakrishnan further suggests that Hinduism absorbs everything that enters into it, magic or animism, and rises it to a higher level. According to him, 'differences in name became immaterial for the Hindu since he considers that every name conotes the same metaphysical and moral perfections. Brahma, Visnu, Siva, Kali, Buddha and other historical names are used indiscriminately for the Absolute Reality'.[5] Thus Hari is worshipped by the Saivities as Siva, by the Vedantins as Brahman, by the Buddhists as Buddha and so on.

4. S. Radhakrishnan, D. Litt, The Hindu view of life, London (fourth impression 1936) p. 39-40.
5. S. Radhakrishan, Op. cit page 46.

I have already mentioned that social stratification formed the basis of Hindu religion. The four primary castes although had the same religion to profess they had no intimate dealings with each other. In course of time the injustice and disorder grew among the four castes yet some children were termed as 'Burno sunker' corrupt blood, incidentally this happened chiefly to the lower castes. The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas were chiefly responsible for such immoral activities. Measures were taken to remodel the society as the number of the 'Burno sunker' grew. The structure of the caste system was extended and the *Burno sunker* was brought within social jurisdiction. Following is a list of thirty-four castes and fixed profession enjoined them. These are : 1. Brahmin, priest ; 2 Acharya, astrologers ; 3. Boidtho, physician ; 4. Kaisth, clerks ; 5. Satgoap, farmers ; 6. Goap, dairymen ; 7. Napith, barber ; 8. Nundi, dealer in salt ; 9. Talee, common store-keeper ; 10. Karmokar, blacksmith ; 11. Sornokar, goldsmith ; 12 Tanti, weaver ; 13. Koi-borth ; 14. Moduck, confectioner ; 15. Rojock, washer ; 16. Sootrodhar, carpentar ; 17. Coomer, idol-maker, potter ; 18. Poto, painter ; 19. Mala, fisherman, on the river ; 20. Jeley, fishermen in ponds as well as in the river ; 21. Doola, bearer ; 22. Bagthee, fish seller ; 23. Joogy, weaver and priest of common place idols whom the Brahmanas are forbidden to attend to ; 24. Barooe, pan leaf cultivator ; 25. Chundal, publican ; 26. Moochee, shoe-maker ; 27. Kaora, hog-keeper ; 28. Badia, fowler ; 29. Moortheronas, funeral place cleaner ; 30. Harie, who do the business of nurses to the infants till twenty one days from the birth ; 31. Dome, basket-maker ; 32. Nag,

snake-charmer ; 33. Bana, banker ; 34. Soore, wine seller.[6] Besides these there are several others also whose names have not been included because of space. When a Brahmana marries a low caste woman he loses his caste.

This Hindu religion which was earlier known as Brahmanism or the religion of Brahmanas had many esoteric practices. Infant almost all ancient religious literature was esoteric. Mr. A. Barth suggests that the Veda had many esoteric elements and it was more or less so by right, since it could be transmitted only by oral instruction from which women and the menial class were strictly excluded, and which in the end was addressed only to the Brahmanas. The books connected with it were so in point of fact.[7] The esoteric doctrine was openly professed by the Brahmanas themselves. There is a clear reference of the same in Nirukta, ii 3, 4, and Samhitopanishad, 62, iii. These books either pre-suppose a knowledge of the Veda or else their form is such that only the initiated could understand them. Mr. Barth further states that no profane person would have been able to read a Sudra. 'The art of writing having become general, and regard being had, perhaps, to the practice common among the sects, attempts were made, without trespassing on the

6. Jogath Chunder Gangooly (Baptized Philip), Life and Religion of the Hindus. London 1860 (Edward 1. Whitfield, 178 Strand) page 3-4.
7. A. Barth, The Religions of India, Authorised Translation by Rev J. Wood Fourth Edition London Kegan Paul I. I. & Co. Ltd. Dryden House, Genard Street, W. 1906, pp. 90-91.

sacred domain of the Veda, to reproduce under a more accessible from such doctrines as were of more general interest than others. We think we must instance the majority of the Upanishads as the first attempt that was made in this direction, particularly the small ones, which are of a character specially adapted to the common intelligence.'[8] ..... 'Through their eclectic and monotheistic tendency these books contributed to the formation of a certain orthodoxy in the bosom of Brahmanism. On the one hand, the Veda was accepted more than ever as an absolute authority, which was the less to be challenged in theory that it was so slightly troublesome in practice ; on the other hand, the recognition of a personal God and a divine providence, with which the Brahmanas and the Upanishads at times dispense so easily became by degrees a settled dogma: Under whatever name he might be worshipped, and whatever metaphysical explanation might be given of his nature, it was necessary to confess an Icvara, a lord, and humble one's self before him. The Sankya which denied this notion was pronounced guilty of impiety ..... The Vedanta alone, by that perspective right which the idealistic systems have always enjoyed, of reconciling a particular system of devotion with a mataphysical system which seems to require its exclusion evaded at times the necessity of recognising in term of a God who was self conscious and distinct from the world.[9]

Commenting on the social condition of the Vedic

8. A. Barth, Ibid.
9. A. Barth, Op. cit page-94.

India Mr. Pramathanath Bose[10] maintained that ladies then enjoyed considerable amount of freedom. They did not lead a secluded life and were not married early. They danced and sang and took part in public assemblies. Widows if they chose, could marry again. But this freedom appears to have been co-existent with a laxity of sexual morals. One of the Rigvedic Rishis (R. V. IX, 67, 10) solomnly prays to Pushan to protect him on his journey and provide him with a supply of fair damsels. Vyasa and many of the heroes of the Mahabharata including Dhritarashtra, Pandu, Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakhula, Sahadave, Karna, Drona and others are represented as not having been born in wodlock. The traditions regarding them and such legends as those of Dirgatamas and his mother Mamata and of Svetaketu, son of Uddanaka and his mother when divested of their poetical and supernatural elements testify to a looseness of sexual morals quite unknown in later times. The memory of a time when the Indo-Aryans were not particularly restrained by principles of sexual morality such as began to prevail in the Hindu society from the later Vedic period is abundantly preserved in the Mahabharata. There is a reference in the Mahabharata wherein Pandu gravely teaches his wife Kunti that the wives may do as they like except at certain times. (Mahabharata, Adiparva, Ch. 122)[11]

10. Pramathanath Bose, B Sc (London). F.G.S.M.R.A.S, A History of Hindu Civilisation during British Rule Vol. 1, Kegan Paul I. I. & Co. London (1894) pp XXXIX-XL.
11. Pramathanath Bose, A History of Hindu Civilisation during British Rule, Ibid.

This laxity of sexual morals might have given rise to Vedanta Darsana which considers the world as Maya and looks for a change in the attitude of life. Gautama Buddha initiated a very drastic change in the religious attitude of man. He says, 'The householders who delight in the law should not indulge in introxicating drinks, should not cause others to drink, should not sanction the acts of those who drink, knowing that it results in isnanity.'[12] Law givers like Manu placed the drinking of liquors as the most heinous and prescribed most awful penances for those who indulged in drinking wine Dancing and singing were also badly condemned Meat eating was very much discouraged. Attempts were made to put the movement of the ladies under restrain. The liberty of the individual was curtailed. But these restrictions exceeded the bounds within which they should be limited. Initially people accepted it and Gautam Buddha made a success in bringing about a change in the religious life of man. Buddhism though revolted against Brahmanism in the sixth century B. C. is 'a Hindu phenomenon a natural product, so to speak, of the age and social circle that witnessed its birth'. Though developed in the train of Brahmanism and Upanishads Buddhism asserts itself from the very beginning as an independent religion, 'in which a new spirit breaths, and on which the mighty personality of its founder has left an indelible impress'. According to Barth, "the two characteristics which strike us at once in primitive Buddhism, and which certainly belong to the teaching of the Master, are the absence of every theological element and a conspicuous

12. Pramathnath Bose, Op. cit page-XLII.

aversion to pure speculation. Buddha does not deny the existence of certain beings called Indra, Agni, Varuna ; but he thinks that he owes nothing to them, and that his business does not lie with them.[13] Barth further maintains that Buddha, in fact rejected the Vedas and introduced new approach to life and religion of man. He did not believe in heavenly or celestial powers by ritual observances. His doctrine was purely atheistic and his metaphysics were pre-eminently negative. He expounded four noble truths. These are : (1) the existance of pain : to exist is to suffer. (2) the cause of pain : this cause is to be found in desire, which increases with the gratification. (3) the cessation of pain : this cessation is possible ; it is obtained by the suppression of desire. (4) the way which leads to this suppression .... the end of this is Nirvana, extinction, the cessation of existence.[14] We understand the Buddhism preached materialism but this idea was also not original. In the Ramayana there are references of materialistic faith advocated by different Brahmanas including Jabali. T. W. Rhys Davids also maintains, 'We hear also of Lokayatas or materialists, who must have preceded Buddhism, as they are mentioned in the oldest Buddhist books.'[15] But this may be said with certainty that Buddhism held materialism in high esteem. It ignored the whole theory of the soul and held all discussion as to the ultimate problem of the soul with which the Vedanta and other philosophies were chiefly

13. A. Barth, Op. cit page 109-110.
14. A. Barth, Ibid.
15. T. W. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, Third Edition; Revised G. P. Putnam's Sons, London 1896, p. 23.

concerned as not only childish and useless, but as actually inimical to the life of man. In this connection it may be said that there are scholars who are of this opinion that 'it is with the Sankhya that the doctrine of Cakyamuni has prima facie most resemblance.'[16] Mr Barth maintains that the two system have grown up side by side and have borrowed mutually from one another. In fact Sankhya stands half way between the Vedanta and Buddhism and it was a stepping stone to the Buddhist thought. Buddhism is more or less based on the Sankhya which developed much before the rise of Buddhism and was a rival both to the Vedas and the Vedanta. Buddhism afterwards got a state patronage and it flourished under Asoka and others. We know the Aryans gave rise to the Brahmanism and tried to keep up the spirit of supremacy all through but they were challenged time and again by persons belonging to other castes. The Non-Aryans were also active. This was seen with regard to Mauryas which arose by a reaction against the Macedoniam aggression and it was the work of a soldier of fortune of humble birth, a Sudra in the opinion of the Brahmans. As the Buddhism rose against Brahmanism there was a sort of natural affinity between Maurya dysnasty and Buddhism. With the decline of the Maurya dynasty India passed for several centuries under the sway of foreign princes, Greeks, Parthiana and Turanians. Brahmanism was still very hostile, on the other hand foreigners received a ready welcome from the uncivilised hoards who were outcastes in the society. The Brahmanism was not at all democratic and as such the outcastes did not get

16. A. Barth, Op. cit page-116.

any chance to come near the Brahmins except those who initiated themselves to the Vedanta and that too with certain restrictions.

The Buddhist Sanghas were essentially democratic and the community consisted of recruits from all castes. The Brahmins, the kings; the low castes and the prostitutes all joined the community. This democratic attitude of the Buddhism was possibly formed because of the existence of the innumerable heretical sects. The Buddhist and Jain literature speak of numerous ascetic orders, teaching of different doctrines & practices. Giving details Mr.K.M. Panikkar[17] says, the Ajivikes were said to be Sudra Sanyasis whose leader was Makkhali Gossla. Born a slave himself, Makkhali was a radical teacher who denied even the basic doctrine of all Hindu thought the theory of Karma Another radical sect was that of Ajita Kesakambala who taught that everything ended with death, a precurser of the Sunyavadins. Purana Kassapo was a Brahmin teacher whose main doctrine was that, action was neither of merit nor of demerit. He was a very popular teacher. Numerous others are mentioned by name. We know very little of their teaching beyond what is given in the literature of their opponents. What is important, however is that at the time of the ministry of the Buddha, the number of heretical sects was very large Besides these there are large number of other-wandering teachers also who taught their own doctrines without forming any definite sect.

17. K. M. Panikkar, A Survey of India History, Asia Publishing House, Bombay-1, 1971 page 25-26.

History records that the Buddhism did not break away from the Aryan or the Brahmanical tradition. The popular mythology was not discarded and the Brahmana gods figure in the Buddhist stories. The kings and the mercantile classes became powerful. The Brahmins, however, occupied the same privileged position as they did in the past. people were drawn towards Buddhism because of the doctrines of salvation effected by the elite intellectual group of the Brahmanical society. Max Weber writes, 'Buddhism's influence beyond the circle of the educated was due to the tremendous prestige traditionally enjoyed by the Sharmana i.e. ascetics, who possessed magical traits of anthropolatry. As soon as Buddhism became a missionizing popular religion, it duly transformed itself into a saviour religion based on Karma compensation, with hopes for the world beyond, guaranteed by devotional techniques, cultic and sacramental grace, and deeds of mercy. Naturally Buddhism also tended to welcome purely magical notions. In India itself, Buddhism met competition among the upper classes from a renascent philosophy of salvation based on the Vedas; and met competition among the mases from Hinduistic salvation religions, especially the various forms of Vishunism, from Tantristic magic, and from orgiastic mystery religions, notably the Bhakti piety (love of God)'.[18] According to Weber Buddhism, Taoism and Lamaism which were considered popular religions of Asia left undisturbed both philosophical and the conventional

18. Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, Translated by Eprahim Fischaff, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London 1966, pp. 268-269.

class-oriented life patterns of privileged groups. Weber further suggests that capitalism existed among all these religions.[19]

Buddhism, although, became a popular religion and attracted large number of followers, it suffered a set back afterwards and gradually almost disappeared. Introduction of different sectarian outlook caused a major damage to the religion. Arahatship was condemned and in its place Bodhisatship was held up in high esteem. As the Bodhisat theory made a sway over the Arahatship the Buddhists naturally turned their mind to the Bodhisat of the past, the present and the future. And they did not take note of the Arahats whose names were recorded in the sacred books. This change in the attitude created confusion in the mind of other followers who evolved vehicles or *yana* of their choice. This difference among the followers of Buddha gave rise to esoteric practices. T. W. Rhys Davids writes, 'The original Buddhism was the very contrary of esoteric. Gotama was accustomed, throughout his long career, to speak quite openly to every one of the whole of the view of life which he had to propound. No doubt there were a certain number of questions to which it was his habit to refuse to reply. These were questions the discussion of which, in his opinion, was apt to, lead the mind astray, and so far from being conducive to the growth of insight, would be a hindrance to the only thing which was supremely worth aiming at the perfect life in A*rahatship*. The reason for his reticence was not at all that he had formulated any doctrine upon them which he wished

19. Max Weber, Ibid.

to conceal from same people, and reveal only to other more intimate disciples.'[20] Rhys Davids maintained that it is quite impossible for any one who reads the Pali books to avoid seeing that everything which the Master himself, and his early disciples, regarded as important, is not only set out with a lavish exposition which seeks above all to make the whole matter clear to everybody, but is even explained with a length of detail which those, not interested in the system, find tedious in the extreme. There is not the slightest hint throughout the whole of the *pitakas* of any esoteric teaching. He adds further that it is only when the *Mahayana* books, written many centuries after the time of Gotama, wished to father on the Buddha, opinions different from those which he actually promulgated, that we find the allegation, in Buddhist books of esoteric teaching. It was the only way in which the writers of these books could at the same time call themselves Buddhists followers of Gotama and yet put forward the new ideas, contrary to those of Gotama, which they were anxious to propagate. Rhys Davids however admitted that this esoteric practices were quite common in all the Indian schools and in India magic and Tantric charms greatly influenced the mind of the people and later Buddhists were no exception to this practice.[21] In fact this esoteric practice was not at all unknown to Indian mind. I have already mentioned of such practice even during the Brahmanas of the Vedic India.

20. T. W. Rhys Davids, Buddhism, Op. cit page-210.

21. T. W. Rhys Davids, Op. cit page 211-213.

When such is the state of affairs the Vishnuite and Civaite took the upper hand. Mr. A. Barth maintains that during these periods the National dynasties, so far as appeared by inscriptions, were much more Vishnuite or Civaite than Buddhists. But Buddhism was fairly treated by them and shared in their acts of liberality. It is clear however, that its best days are now past. It has no longer to do with the ancient Brahmanism, but with rivals that were formidable in a very different way—the religions of Siva and Vishnu and in this new struggle the advantages are on the side of the adversary.[22] And possibly during these phases of decay Buddhism incorporated in it erotic practices which later on gave rise to *Sahayana* or Buddhist Sahajiya cult. *Vajrayana* is also a product of this under current. This phase of Buddhism was known in the history as the age of the Guhya Samaja—the secret congregation which is claimed to be one of the most sacred books of the Buddhist Tantrics. Mr. K. M. Panikkar writes, 'In this amazing book the Buddha is represented in act of continuous debauchery with angels. The discipline of the *Vinaya* was deliberately set at nought in this book which is held to be canonical by the practitioners of Tantra. Everything was permitted in this worship ; flesh, fish, wine and women. Even human sacrifice was allowed. One passage would seem even to indicate that human flesh was also used in worship and consumed as Mahaprasada. Blood of men along with wine was also used [23]

22. A. Barth, Op. cit page 131-132.
23. K. M. Panikkar, A Survey of Indian History, Op. cit page 118-119.

The reformation of Sankara brought about Sannyasi order in the society. The objects of his reforms were excellent but as the number of Sannyasis increased they became corrupt ; and they 'concealed their preference for an indolent life under ochre-coloured robes'. This resulted in the growth of Devadasi system[24] which, in turn, led to temple prostitution. 'Samaya-Matrika' by Kshemendra and 'Kuttini Matam' by Damodara-Gupta gave a detail picture of temple prostitution of this time. Tantric literature of the time as well as of the sculptures in many temples also present the same tale. Ibn Batuta also remarked that prostitution was not held in discredit in India. In Caryapad which is a collection of Buddhist Mystic songs by a group of pseudo or degenerated Buddhists there is enough material for the study of eroticism in religious life of India. D. R. Sastri maintains, 'some of the sects of the degenarted Buddhists, in which laxity in sexual morals was one of the features, became gradually affiliated to the Lokayata school. One of the sects was the Kapalika sect. The Kapalikas are a very ancient sect. They drink wine, offer human sacrifices and enjoy women. They strive to attain their religious goal with the help of human corpses, wine and women ..... As *Kama* or the enjoyment of sensual pleasure was the goal of this sect, it came gradually to be affiliated to Nastika form of the Lokayata school according to which summum bonum of the human life is.....the enjoyment of

24. K. M. Panikkar, A Survey of Indian History, Op. cit page 120.

gross sensual pleasure.[25] D. R. Sastri further maintained, 'Eroticism prevailed all over the country. The Brahmin and the Candala the king and the beggar took part with equal enthusiasm in Madonotsave in which Madana or Kama was worshipped ..... After the great Brahmanic renaissance the Lokayata sect took shelter under different forms in different parts of India. In Bengal an old sect of the Buddhist Mahayana school chiefly concerned with sexual romance gave up its independent existence and like the Svabhavavadins and Kapalikas became at one with the Nastika Lokayatikas and the Lokayatikas on their part incorporated themselves with that community. The old element of sensualism of the festival Madonotsava of the Nastikas, a sanction for the gratification of grosser pleasures is still found to linger in this sect. The name of this sect is the Sahajia sect.'[26]

In fact, if we analyse the basic trends of Indian religion we can safely conclude that the Arvans and the Non-Aryan element are dormant & of the two the Non-Aryan Tantric element figures out prominently with its supreme emphasis in female principle or Prakriti. Since the Non-Aryans had an agricultural bias and the women folk participating chiefly in agricultural activities it is believed that agricultural magic in its origin belonged exclusively to the province of women. And this resulted in the Tantric cult. In the Vedic period agricultural activities were transferred to men because of the patriarchal nature of the Aryans. But

25. D. R. Sastri, A Short History of Indian Materialism, Sensationalism and Hedonism; Calcutta, p. 35-36.
26. D. R. Sastri, Op. cit page 36-37.

the Aryans could not ignore the female in agricultural operations and they merely shaped themselves as priests. In Tantrism also women were considered as very important so much so that the whole cult was also known as Vamacara. Vama means women or the sexual urge (Kama) and Vamacara stands as 'the ritual practices of woman and of sex'. It may be mentioned here that although in the Tantrika practices, as we find them, there exists a dominance of the males over the females but this is equally true that males do not participate as males in their peculiar Tantric practices. This Tantrism is largely a matter of secret practices and the Tantrikas never disclose the secrets to the uninitiated. The religions of India had a sectarian outlook with the advent of Sankaracharya. He was a great Hindu apostle and the doctrine which he preached was a strictly unitarian one. According to him there is one Supreme Ruler of the whole Universe and this divine being is the one sole, first cause of everything. But this idea of the Sankaracharya was meant for the cultured few. To the common ordinary people he allowed the observance of the Vedic rites and rituals. This has given birth to different mystic cults, viz. Saivism, Saktism and Vaisnavism. Saivism takes Sankaracharya as an incarnation of Siva himself and claims him to be their special apostle. But it is doubtful whether Sankara has any preference for Saivism.[27] Besides Sankara the only other apostle, is Gorokhnath, the founder of the Kanphata Jogis because of their ears being bored and rings inserted in them at the time of their initiation. The Saktas are

27. Pramathnath Bose, Op. cit p. 30.

divided into two grougs—the Dakshinachari and the Vamachari. The Dakshinachari perform their worship publicly according to the Vedic and Puranic rituals. But the worship of the Vamachari being influenced by Tantrism is performed in secret

Vaishnavism is one of the dominant faith of the Hindu in the Puranic period. Pramathnath Bose writes, "As Siva has for his emblem the *Linga*, so is Vishnu usually represented by the Salagrama, an ammonite."[28] Vaishnavism have faith in the doctrine of Avataras and the most popular descents of Vishnu are Krishna and Rama. There are two distint stages in the worship of Krishna. The one is epic, the other is Puranic. The Mahabharata on which the Krishna epic is built represented Krishna as 'a great warrior, an astute politician and a wise moralist' but the Purana on which the Krishna cult is developed dwells particularly on 'the infantine freaks and youthful amours—lilas'. There is no trace of such Krishna cult in the Bhagavadgita. Pramathnath Bose writes, "The Bhagavadgita is the oldest, as it is certainly the sublimest, exposition of Krishna cult But no where in it do we find that form of erotic Vaishnavism which most popular at the present day."[29] Pramathnath Bose traced the origin of the erotic Krishna cult in the Puranic Vaishnavism particularly in the Vishnupurana, the Bhagavatpurana and the Brahmavaivortapurana. In fact, Puranic Vaishnavism is the religion of love. Ramanuja, Madhavacharya and Ramananda who were the great apostles of Vaishnavism made substantial contribution to Vaish-

28. Pramathnath Bose, Op. cit p 32.
29. Pramathnath Bose, Op. cit p. 34.

navism. Of the three, Ramananda was held in high esteem for his democratic attitude. He initiated Bhakti movement and made it the religion of the people and preached to the learned and the ignorant alike. Ramananda had a most celebrated disciple—Kabir who was a weaver and Muslim by faith. Both Ramananda and Kabir were greatly influenced by the Muslim Sufi mystics coming from outside India. The democratic attitude of the Vaishnavism was most probably, shaped by Islam. Kabir went much further than his master and condemned strongly the idolatrous worship and caste system of the Hindus But he owed allegiance both to Islam and Vaishnavism of Ramananda. He attaked Hindu and Muslim superstitions alike. The Kabir panthis include both Hindu and Muslim followers. These followers do not worship any Hindu deity or observe any Hindu rites and ceremonies. Kabir panthi considers life as the gift of God and humanity as a cardinal virtue. According to them the sheding of blood whether of man or of animal was considered a heinous crime. They are very much devoted to the Guru or the spiritual guide. The Kabir panthis belong mostly to Northern and Central India. Dadu, the founder of Dadu panthi borrowed much from Kabir and speaks against idolatry and enjoined the worship of one God in the name of Rama The Dadu panthis are most numerous in Rajputana.

Neo-Vaishnavism :

In the beginning of the 16th century Vaishnavism underwent a great change. According to Pramathnath Bose, this change was in the whole, must be pronounced for the worse. The Vaishnavism, as preached by

Ramanuja and Ramananda breaths a tone of pure morality and knows nothing of the loves of Krishna and Radha. In the system of Ramanuja, Radha is unknown, in the Bhagvatpurana, the great gospel of Vaisnavism, Radha is only once mentioned in a passage of great antiquity. The Krishna of Ramanuja, of the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, is closely identified with Vishnu. But in the Neo-Vaishnavism, Krishna became a supreme deity and Radha unknown in older Vaishnavism becomes his beloved. Caitanya and his followers including those who were known as Sahajiya-Vaisnava maintained strict secrecy in their rituals. The same practice was incorporated into Bauls and other minor religious cults including the Kartabhajas, Bhagabanis, Balaramis, Darveshis. Thus the minor religions are at once esoteric and erotic. The sufis who came from outside were esoteric & were occasionally erotic. Eroticism was practised by the native Sufis because of their long association with the minor religious cults as prevailed in the sub-continent. In all these cases the female genital organ plays a very significant part. This is closely associated with *Vagasadhana*. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya maintains, 'the essence of the Tantrika Vagasadhana consists in arousing and vitalising the female principle residing in her nethermost centre and then transmitting her to her highest centre, the seat of consciousness, after piercing all the intermidiary positions.

It is, thus nothing but an effort towards a total transformation of the personality into femininity. The Tantrikas naturally conceive that once the *Kulakundalini* Sakti reaches the *Sahasra-dala padma* she is

united with the masculinity that resides there along with the femininity and everything dissolves into a kind of Non-duality, because, evidently everything is lost into the pure, all-absorbing femininity which is aroused within.[30] The Buddhist Caryapada is essentially Tantric in nature. Dr. Shasibhusan Dasgupta says, 'In the Carya songs we find frequent references to this female force variously called as the Candali, Dombi, Savari, Yogini, Nairamani, Sahajasundari, etc. and we also find frequent mention of the union of the yogin the personified female deity.[31] The Carya songs are also esoteric and erotic. The language is considered as *Sandya bhasa* supposed to be understood only by the initiated. In this connection it may be mentioned here that all the Buddhist songs are not purely Buddhistic. The Buddhists are materialistic in their approach to life but there are songs which speak of spiritual attainment. *The Nathas* are Saivas and their songs reflect certain spiritual ideas. Possibly the Sahajiyas al hough had a Buddhist belief they had a Saivite understanding flowed secretly in the deep bosom of their heart and they might not be so much conscious of it. This idea is Non-Aryan and it found its way quite spontaneously. These Sahajiyas are also Tantrikas and they also believe in the transformation of man into woman because they consider that unless a man is transformed into woman it is not possible on his part to realise the experience of true love. The

30. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Lokayata, People's Publishing House. New Delhi, January 1968, pp. 282,
31. Dr. Shashibhusan Dasgupta, Obscure Religions Cults, Calcutta 1948, pp. 116.

Vaisnava Sahajiya has this attitude in them. But there is a marked difference between the Sakti school and the Sahajiyas. The Sakti school considers that God is a woman and it ought to be the aim of everybody to become a woman. According to Vaisnava Sahajiya God is the only male principle and all others are female. The Bauls of Bangladesh are no doubt a follower of Sahajiya practice but with a difference. They are not Tantrikas although there is influence of Tantrism in them. The influence of Sufism is very much great but they do not ignore certain Sahajiya practice especially their eroticism is closely connected with it. It is believed that Sakti cult which is also a Non Aryan practice had a strong resemblance with the Semitic conception of Astarte, the Egyptian conception of Isis, Phrygian conception of Cybele. And the society that formed under these conditions was matriarchal. In the Encyolopaedia of Religion and Ethics[32] it is observed, there is a large body of evidence to show that the Semites before their separation passed through a matriarchal stage of society. The tribe was a group of people inhabiting a particular oasis in the Arabian desert. It was made up of mothers and their brothers and children. The fathers were men of other tribes, dwelling in other oasis, who contracted only temporary unions with the mothers. Descent was traced through the mother and she was the head of the clan in peace and war. In such a society the chief deity of the tribe must have been conceievvd as a counterpart of the human matriarch. Male divinities might exist and be known

32. J. Hastings (ed) Incyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburgh 1908, Ch. ii, p. 115.

as 'maternal uncle' but they would not be called 'father' and would play so unimportant a part that they would survive only sporadically in later religion.[33] This view is confirmed by the fact that all those traits which are oldest and most permanent in the character of Ashtart-Ishtar are those which for other reasons we must predicate of the ancient Semitic tribal mother. 'That Saktism was a Non-Aryan cult is proved by the fact that the material remains of Mohenjodaro and Harappa clearly show a large number of female figures and these might have a possible relation to mother right of Saktism. Marshall writes, 'Now it is well known that female statues akin to those from the Indus valley and Baluchistan have been found in large numbers and over a wide range of countries between Persia and the Aegean, notably in Elam, Mesopotamia, Transcaspia, Asia minor, Syria, Palestine Cyprus, Crete, the Cyclades, the Balkhans and Egypt'.[34] Marshall adds further, 'The generally accepted view concerning them is that they represent the Great Mother or Nature Goddess, whose cult is believed to have originated in Anatolia (probably in Phrygia) and spread thence throughout most of Western Asia. The correspondence, however, between these figurines and those found on the banks of the Indus is such that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the latter also represented Mother or Nature Goddess and served the same purpose as their counterparts in the West, viz either as votive offerings

33. J. Hastings (ed), Encylopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburgh 1908, Ch ii, page 115
34. Marshall J.—Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilisation, London 1931, Ch. i, page 50.

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or less probably, as cult images for household shrines ; and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the range of these figurines now extends practically without a break from the Indus to the Nile, over tracts that are not only geographically continuous but which in the Chal-colithic Age were united by common bonds of culture'.[35] Marshall believes that the idea of Mother Goddess of Western Asia might have originated in a matriarchal society and he concludes, 'This remarkable parallelism between these cults and Indian Saktism has long been recognised and commented on, and it has been assumed that in both cases it originated in the similar (i e. matriarchal) conditions of society which are though to have prevailed during the Pre-Aryan age in India as well as in the nearer East. What was not recognised and what has only been revealed by the discoveries at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. is that in the Chal-colithic Age India and Western Asia were closely united by common civilisation..... As a fact, there is some evidence of a tangible concrete connection between the religious of Indus valley and those of Mesopotamia.[36] The story of Mother Goddess does not, infact, end with Indus civilisation. The Sakti cult readily assimilated it and the same was again incorporated in several obscure and minor religious cults. Commenting on the importance of Mother Goddess, Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya says 'More significant is the fact that among the vast masses of the Indian peasantry that is, among those that are no

35. Marshall J. Op. cit page 50, 51, 58.
36. Also quote by Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya in Lokayata, Op. cit page 264.

longer living in the tribal society male deities have only secondary position: The deities that have any real grip on the lives of the masses are mostly females. The letter known names of these are Durga, Kali, Candi and others.'[37] But in the obscure religious cults although there exists a tremendous importance of female force the central figure is the male one. Krishna, Karim, Muhammad, Caitanya or Gour, Nitai from the bulk of the male deity. I do not know whether this was the outcome of a Sufi influence. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji is inclined to consider it a Sufi influence,".....in the long list of Panjabi and Sindhi Sufis, we find that it is God who is the Sahib, the Master, the Sai or Lord, the Pi (=Priya) or the Lover, Pritama or the most beloved Lover, and the Soul is always conceived and described as a woman. We find that in the oldest Muslim Sufi poet of the Panjab, Shaykh Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173-1265) as for instance in the two poems ascribed to him, which occur in the Sikh *Guru Granth* or *Adi Granth* (under Rag Asa and Rag Suhi), in Bullhe Shah (1680-1758) and in others, and in the greatest Sufi poet of Sindh, Shah Latif (eighteenth century).[38] In this connection it may be mentioned here that Dadu, Kabir, Rajab who are not avowed Sufis, have however, brought about a sort of synthesis between Bhakti, Yoga and Sahajiya on the one hand and Tasawwuf on the other and in all these cases the Muslim Sufi infuence is dominant. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji writes that in the Persian Sufi poetry God remains the great Lover and the figure of Krishna which too strongly fixed in the mind of Hindu India is very much touched by the Sufi figure of God, the sweet heart.

37. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Op. cit pp. 266.
38. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Op. cit page 27.

ISLAM IN INDO-BANGLADESH

Although Sind was the first that came under the territorial acquisition of the Muslims, there was both commercial and intellectual contacts between the Arabs and the Indians much before the Arab conquest of Sind in 712 A.D. and number of Arab colonies had sprung up on the Indian coast. Scholars[39] also of the opinion that a few Arab merchants had also settled in Chittagong area long before the conquest of Lakhnawabati (Nadia) by the great Turkoman General Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad Bin Bakhtiar Khilji in 1201 A.D. and there had been clear evidence of their settlement. Bengal, particularly Eastern part was very much under Muslim domination during the Pathan kings of Bengal between 1338-1539. Commenting on the influence of Islam in Bengal, G. A. Herklots writes, 'In this tract there was a vigorous and highly successful propaganda in the days of the Pathan kings of Bengal. The inhabitants had never been fully Hinduised, and at the time

39. Dr. A. H. Dani—Early Muslim contact with Bengal. Proceeding of the Pakistan Historical Conference, 1951, p. 195. Dr. Enamul Haq—Purba Pakistane Islam Prachar p. 19. K. N. Dikshit—Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India No. 55, Delhi 1938, p 87. F. A. Khan—Recent Archaeological Discoveries in East Pakistan, Karachi p. II. Tarachand—Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad 1946, p. 29-31.

of the first Muhammadan invasions most of them probably performed a debased form of Buddhism. They were spurned by the high class Hindus as unclean and so listened readily to the preaching of the Mullas, who proclaimed the doctrine that all men were equal in the sight of Allah[39] In fact, Islam although recognises the rich and the poor, it does not permit social stratification or anything like caste system both in theory and in practice. The idea of social oneness is deeply indebted to the religious thought of the Muslims. All people, rich or poor assemble at the same place and pray alike before the unseen Allah—a strange phenomenon for the Hindu masses of those days. They also dine together and do not believe in the idea of theological contamination. Islam completely and unreservedly rejects the idea of superior birth—'the bed rock on which the entire social structure of mediaeval Hindustan stood Islam does not recognise the idea that man was born either from the Sun or the Moon, or the head or foot of Brahma Piety was the only criterion of superiority. An ordained priesthood or a hereditary class of Brahmins is the very negation of the real spirit of Islam. Prof. K. A. Nizami writes, 'For the majority of the Indian people the change from the Rajput to the Turk meant removal of all these disabilities and discriminations under which they had long suffered. The political organisations which had strengthened the farbic of the caste system yielded place to a new order in which everyone acquired the same rights in law courts. All disparities in the penal code disappeared.

39. G. A. Harklots, Translation of Qunun-i-Islam (Islam in India) by Ja'far Sharif, New Delhi 1972, p. 1.

Trial by ordeal for the the discovery and punishment of crime was definitely suppressed. The new Government refused to recognise any caste distinctions or discriminations. All convictions were on the basis of evidence and grave suspicion concerning the character of the accused and his previous record. A Sudra became a free man. There were to be no gradations in punishments and the cases were not to be considered in any caste order. All persons guilty were punished in a uniform manner on the basis of state laws. The Islamic law did not exclude any one from appearing in the witness box. The individuality of women was recognised. The civil law made no discriminations on grounds of sex, birth or wealth.[40]

This study of the social order under the Muslim rule clearly suggests the tremendous influence of Islam on the population of India and their subsequent conversion to new order. Now the two cultural groups came very close to each other. In Bengal there had been continuous amalgamation of the foreign with the indigenous elements in the Muslim population. The majority of the Muslims in Bengal are from the Hindu or the Buddhist stock. The inter-mixture was affected by marriage and other course of events. Professor Nizami says, 'The earliest references to contacts between the Hindus and the Muslims that we find in the medieval records were about Khanqas of the Muslim saints. We hear about a Hindu being introduced to

40. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami : Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century, Delhi (Second Edition, 1974) p. 83.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya by a Muslim as "This Hindu is my brother." The use of large number of Hindustani words, phrases, idioms and similies in the contemporary literature shows the extent to which social contacts had developed.[41] And when these contacts further increased Hindu tastes and customs were also adopted by the Muslims. Indian music found its patrons at the royal court and the Khanqas.[42] Matrimonial relationship could not also have been avoided. A Muslim Sufi Hazrath Khaja Muinuddin Chisti is reportedly married the daughter of a Hindu Raja of Ajmeer.[43]

The earliest record suggests that the conversion of the large number of Hindu was done by the Muslim mystics and they were very much liberal to the new converts and these new converts were naturally more concerned with the mundane affairs than anything else. This has, although affected Islam, the Muslim Sufis or mystics of Islam adopted a policy of toleration and conciliation towards the new converts. This attitude of the Sufis or the mystics towards the Indian religions particularly the Hinduism and their followers was one of understanding and adjustment. These Sufis looked upon all religions as different roads leading to the same destination. They had free social contact with the Hindus and tried to understand their approach towards basic problems of religion and morality. These mystics believed that the Hindus could also attain the spiritual greatness in the same as it could be achieved

41: K. A. Nizami, p. 324.
42. K. A. Nizami, p. 223.
43. Ibid.

by the Muslims. They were believer in non-violence and they disliked injuring any living being, man or animal.[44] These Muslim mystics were vegetarians and this has brought them very close to the Hindus and the Buddhists. So much was the love of these mystics for the Hindu way of life that they declared, 'Whoever slaughters forty cows would be deemed (on the day of judgement, to have killed a man and whoever slaughters hundred goats would be likewise held guilty of massacring a man. One who slaughters an animal out of sheer pleasure is considered to have helped in the demolition of Ka'ba. And no animal should be thrown in fire. It is a great sin as if one committed incest with his mother'.[45]

This broad outlook of the Muslim mystics helped grow a very congenial atmosphere and many Hindus and the Buddhists adopted the life and living conditions of the Muslim mystics. On the other hand many un-Islamic activities found their way into Muslim society.[46] This was prevalent among the low classes of Muslims of non-privileged Hindu origin. These Muslim community joined the Durgapuja and other Hindu festivals. They were very careful about omens and dates for weddings and other rites were fixed after consulting the Hindu pandits. Hindu deities, like Sitala who

44. Fawa 'idu'l Fu'ad—Conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Compiled by Amir Hasan, Ala Sizi. (New Kishore Press, Lucknow, pp. 84-88, 228, 245. K. A. Nizami : p. 318.)
45. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 318-319,
46. G. A. Herklots, Op. cit p. 8.

controls small pox and Rakshya Kali who protects her votaries from Cholera were worshipped during epidemics.

Besides these, there are many Hindu rites and rituals which the Muslims also follow. In Bengal and as in other parts of India Islam has, in a large measure, failed to supersede the primitive animism. Here Islam, to many, is a misunderstood religion A muslim knows that there is the Quran but in the absence of knowledge of Arabic and of qualified teachers who could interpret and expound the meanigs, he is quite ignorant of its contents. His practice is mostly un-Islamic, although he says five time prayer, read the Quran and the Hadith in Arabic without knowing the meaning and keeps fast. His ignorance of the Quran and the prophetic injunction leads him to many un-Islamic actions. He knows that there is one God but he almost invariably prefers to worship saints or Pirs and tombs. These saints or pirs because of their magical powers have given the idea among his followers that they are invested with all the attributes of God or Allah. Herklots writes, It is the saint who can avert calamity, cure disease, procure children for the childless, bless the efforts of the hunter or even improve the circumstances of the dead. The underlying feeling seems to be that man is too sinful to approach god direct and therefore the intervention of some one more worthy must be sought. Anyone visiting a shrine will observe stones, carved pieces of woods, bunches of hair tied to trees, remnants of clothes, horns of wild animals, bells and various articles of trifling value. They are placed at the shrines by devotees in performance of vows. The mother who is blessed with a

child will bring it to the shrine where she will shave it and offer the hair and the baby's clothes in performance of vows made during the course of pregnancy. The object is that local saint may be induced to interest himself or herself for the saints are of both sexes—in the welfare of the little one. The hunter brings the horns of the deer which he has killed in the hope of further good sport, while those who are suffering from disease pass the stones or pieces of carved wood over the affected, trusting that by this means the ill from which they are suffering will be removed. [47]

The marriage and other festivals follow a Hindu custom. In Bangladesh the Hindu influence is too much. The majority of the Muslims in Bangladesh were local converts who had low origins. Most of them were non-Aryans and were beleiver in several nature gods and goddesses. They were agriculturists too and as such they beleived in fertility rituals. The dependence on nature creates a sense of submission to destiny which takes the shape of nature worship The Hindus and the Muslims together take part in different festivals connected with nature. There were festivals during sowing of seeds and hervest. The depedence of the Muslims on the Hindu custom is so much that Muslim festivals like Shab-i-barat almost take the image of Diwali. The Muslims here distribute sweets to friends, relatives, to the poor and illuminate houses, shops and every possible place. There are various

47. G. A. Harklot, Op. cit p. 8.

other Muslim, festivals which has semblance of the Hindu religious festivals. Besides these, various other smaller festivals connected with religion viz, the naming of a new born child circumcision, puberty and marriage resemble greatly with the Hindu festivals. [48] The most recent mourning festival which most of the Bangladeshi celebrate on the 21st february—the Martyrs day, it is also connected with many Hindu practices. Herklots comments, "Much of this fusion of beliefs and rites is, of course, due to the electic character of Hinduism, which readily accepts the worship of any saint or even of a martyr because he was slain in battle with the Hindus, whose advocacy with the Higher powers is supposed to be effectual. But it also points to the close association of Hiduism and Islam among the lower class votaries of both religions, a union based upon the ethnical identity of the two bodies." [49]

The continuous growth of the Hindu—Muslim cordiality gave rise to number of ceremonies and festivals connected with the Pirs. Islam does not sanction any such system. It speaks of "the learned" or "the experienced" who may be consulted in matters of religion if one is ignorant of the same. In Sufism the Pir is a teacher, a conductor or an instructor and in no case a god. Personality worship is totally forbidden in

48. A. K. M: Aminul Islam, A Bangladeshi Villge, Conflict and Cohesion—An Anthropological Study of Politics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974 p. 62

49. G. A: Harklots, Op. cit p. 9.

Sufism. [50] The Sufi Rumi says, 'Look not at my exterior form, but take what is in my hand.' Commenting on the role of a Sufi teacher Ibn el-Arabi says, 'The requirement of a teacher is, however, that he should possess all that the desciple needs'. [51] In a Sufi circle thus an unsuitable member will harm the whole. Sufi Sadi in his 'Gulistan' has spoken about it while commenting on the manners of Dervishes'. And in Indo-Bangladesh this happened with the local converts or with the Hindu followers The incompetence to understand the Sufi order has in a sense degenerated the whole system in Indo-Bangladesh. But this should also be mentioned that certain Sufi order became corrupt prior to their arrival in Indo-Bangladesh. Sufi Sadi has already talked of this in his Gulistan or Rose garden, on manners of Dervishes. Idries Shah points out, 'Contemporary dervishes of the Chisti' order' have strayed far from the instruction of their founder in this matter settling for a dissociated or ecstatic state induced by listening to or playing music. Muinuddin Chisti himself wrote against this practice : 'They know that we listen to music and that we perceive certain "secrets" as a result. So they play music and cast themselves into 'states'. Know that every learning must have all its requirements fulfilled, not just music, thought concentration. (Risalat, Epistles to Disciples) [52] Obviously this instruction of Muinuddin Chisti is directed

50. Idries Shah : The Way of the Sufi, New york 1973. p. 31.
51. Ibid p. 47.
52. Idries Shah, Ibid p. 44.

towards those who misunderstood the order. This is particularly true with the local Sufis of Indo-Bangladesh.

Baal Sufi order of Persia :

In Persian literature we come across a typical Baal Sufi order. [53] Dr. Mohd. Moin, Professor in the faculty of Literature in the University of Tehran in one of his books speaks of a typical Sufi order—Baal, meaning one who frees himself from an obligation by purgery, infatuated or in love with ; He was a wanderer in the desert. Dr. Moin also speaks of another Sufi sect known as Buhluliya sect. [54] The founder of the sect Abu Walid Ibn Amre Seirafia Khufi (Kufa in Iraq). He was known as Buhlul meaning blockhead and crazy. But Abu Walid Ibn Amre was earlier considered a wise man and preached during the time of the Caliph Harun Ar Rashid and other following Caliphs. He was later condemned for others did not like his approach to life. He died in Kufa in 806 A. D. He gave birth to Buhluliya sect. That Sufism had been very much misunderstood by the contemporary Dervishes is now an admitted fact, and in Indo-Bangladesh this gave birth to popular Islam. Dr. Enamul Haq comments, 'Islam being chiefly a missionary religion and its propagation in the East being mainly depended on the Sufi missionaries of Persia, Bukhara, Samarkhand, Afganistan etc. had to bring within its fold a large number of people already

53. Dr. Mohd. Moin : A Persian Dictionary vol. V. proper names, Tehqran 1978 p. 137.
54. Op. cit p. 148.

affiliated to a culture and civilisation almost different from those of the Arabs i. e. Semites. The amalgamation of these two sets of culture and civilisation, viz, Aryan (including non-Aryan) and Semitic produced many new things in the different sphere of our Bengali Muslim life. In the word of the puritanic Muslims, these new things are called "Bid'ats", innovations and they began to make their appearance from the fifteenth century A. D. and to grow and thrive in a congenial enviornment and atmoshphere up to the end of the Mughol rule in Bengal. [55] This popular Islam of Bengal includes many modified beliefs and practices with the original ideas. The Hindu culture also got an entry into muslim belief and together produced a mixed culture. The growth of popular religion in Indo-Bangladesh was caused by conventional conversion without any care of the formalities of religious instruction. The converts retained many of the old customs and belifs.

Development of Muslim Mysticism in Indo-Bangladesh :

Mysticism, in whatever way one may define it, is generally the outcome of a reaction or an inner rebellion of conscience against religious, social, political and economic injustices of the age.

The Muslim mysticism of which the Sufis are a part was first developed as a sort of a reaction against the Umayyads who established Kingship and drifted

55. Muhmmad Enamul Haq : A History of Sufism Bengal, Dacca, 1975, p. 294.

away from the ideas of Islam. The Muslim Kings and the governing classes provoked great disgust in the mind of pious Muslims. Kufa and Basra, the two towns of Iraq had witnessed horrible scenes of the Umyyad atrocities. Besides this, the Muslim mystics also reacted sharply to the ways of the orthodox or formal approach to the Ultimate reality. The rigidity and formalism of the various school of Fiqah also left/a tremendous reaction in the mind of the people. The over intellectualism and formalism of the Muslim theologians also gave birth to mystic thought. Fear of God, fear of Hell, and fear of Death also forced a group of people to take recourse to mysticism and they went to a seclusion.

The Muslim mystics traced back their faith to the Prophet who himself retired to the cave Hira for a certain period to meditate upon. They claimed that the Prophet had also esoteric teachings and these were rooted in the holy Quran. It may be said here that the mysticism which the Prophet experienced during Pre-Prophethood period was the result of his sharp reaction against socio religious injustic of the time. Although the Prophet did not prescribe this for others to follow the Muslim mystics have always firmly combated such theories and were eager to tread the same path.

The mystic movement in Islam had, according to Scholars, [56] three distinct stages : 1) Period of the Quietists 2) Period of the mystic philosophers 3)

56. K, A. Nizami, Op. cit. p. 51.

Period of the Silsilahs. The first period extends between 661 A. D. and 850 A. D. This had a personal and individual basis. Fear of god, fear of Hell and fear of Death together with dissatisfaction of the existing system or condition forced these mystics out of their home and they went into a seclusion. The second period was chiefly developed in Persia (Iran) during 9th century. Fear was replaced by Divine love. These mystics who were mostly concerned with metaphysics had a buring love for the Divine Being and it was all absorving and self effacing. God was no more the great Task master but the soul of Beauty and Tenderness. This period gave rise to number of philosophers and produced number of mystic literature on mysticism.

Silsilah and the Khanqah :

The last phase was the rise of the Silsilahs in the 12th century. This period gave birth to several Sufi orders and Khanqas. It may be pointed out here that the first Khanqa was constructed by Abu Hashim Sufi in the second century A. H. It was then a place of private worship but during the time of the Silsilah the Khanqa became the 'nuclei for the expanding movement of Tasawwuf and a forum for the discipline of the corporate life of the mystics.' These Khanqaas provided shelter for the mystics and their followers who did not possess any house of their own. Further this Khanqa also provided scope for the mystics an oportunity of regulating each others life, according to the instruction of the spiritual leader. K. A. Nizami writes, 'The Ahl-i-Khanqah (people of Khanqah)

were divided into two categories : permanent residents (muqiman) and travellers (musafirin). A traveller desiring to stay in the Khanqah was expected to arrive there before the 'asr' prayer. If he arrived late, he was advised to pass the night in some mosque and join the Khanqah the next day. As soon as a guest arrived he was expected to offer two genuflecti ns of prayer and then greet the residents of the Khanqah. If the visitor decided to stay on after the third day, he had to undertake duties in the Khanqah and help the inmates in their day to day work. The servants of the Khanqah were instructed to show extreme hospitality to all guests. [57] Another important characteristic of the Khanqah is the Sama (religious songs). The mystics justified Sama to the extent that it 'not only relieved the strain on man's emotions, but quickened his emotional response and attuned his heart to the Infinite and the Eternal.'

In Indo-Bangladesh the last named Muslim mystics became very popular and left tremendous impact on the common man, particularly because of their humanism and music. The new converts who came from ordinary stock and used to court these mystics being incapable of comprehending the mystic principles at a higher level accepted its ceremonial aspect and were drawn towards 'sama' 'urs' etc felt satisfied. The common man of Indo-Bangladesh looked upon the Muslim mystics as 'blessed miracle worker' and the mystic music drew more people to the fold of Islam than anything else.

57. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 60.

It may be mentioned here that Islam always stood against social stratification and caste system. But the Muslim rulers after sometime introduced some sort of social stratification by appointing the co-religionists as their officers and graded them as Saiads, Afgans and Mughols. They were granted rent free land and other amenities. Army were also composed of foreigners. Barani [58] mentions that the early Turkish Sultans contemtuously treated the low born people. Iltutmish dismissed thirty three persons from the Government service because of their low birth. History [59] records that Balban also dismissed low born persons from all important post and 'sharply' rebuked his courtiers for having selected Kamal Mahiyar, an Indian Mussalman, for the post of Mutasarrif in Amroha. It may be pointed out here that these early Sultans did come to India not with a view to preaching of Islam rather to rule over the local people. Islam did sanction neither the Kingship nor the Sultanate in its fold. The mystics of Islam who came to this country were opposed to such distinctions of man. This attitude of the Muslim mystics brought them very close to the local people and possibly for getting better results they relaxed certain principles which were afterwards misunderstood and became a part and parcel of the local mystics.

The Muslim mystics by their attitude also could bring a change in the administrative outlook of the later

58, Barani, Tarikh-i Firoz Shah, Edited by Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan, Calcutta, 1862 p. 29—30.
See K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 106—7.

59, Ibid.

Kings and the Sultans who by their humane behaviour conquered the hearts of the local people. So much so that many of them had also married Hindu girls, but in no case it was the Muslim mystics who made their impression felt all over the sub-continent, Professor Gibb writes, 'From the 13th century Sufism increasingly attracted the creative social and intellectual energies within the community, to become the bearer or instrument of a social and cultural revolution.' [60] In fact, Sufism left its mark on the local people since their coming, long before Shiabuddin Mohd. Ghori or his Turkish slave officers ruled the country. They came to this country at a time when the Hindu society was passing through most critical phases of its history. The caste system and the idea of physical contamination had weakened its social fabric. The non caste people who were denied all amenities of life and stayed outside city after sun set, got in touch with the Muslim mystics who set up their Khanqahs out of the caste cities. These non caste people who were mostly non-Aryan and non-privileged; found a social order entirely different and they accepted it. The Khanqah of the Muslim mystics was instrumental into the large scale conversion of the local non-provileged class. The Khanqahs were thrown open to all sorts of men and women who got in touch with the Muslim mystics. This Khanqah of the Muslim mystics which made the two distinct religions came very close to each other also

60. Journal of World History, Vol. I. No. I. An Interpretation of Islamic History, p. 59. Also see K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 260.

accommodated number of Hindus from lower strata and their amulgamation produced the Bhakti movement during fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and Rajjab are the products of this Khanqah life. It is this Khanqah life which also gave birth to number of religious cults including the Bauls of Bangladesh and their religious leaders undoubtedly belonged to lower strata of socie y. The iconoclastic attitude of religious cults which we experience now a days was deeply rooted in the Khanqah through which the Muslim mystics raised a voice of protest against all sorts of social injustice. Muslim mystics of the thirteenth century considered social service as 'the supreme object of all their spiritual exercises' The mystic's direction is the very direction of the clan of life'. [61] Shaikh Muinuddin Chisti believed that the highest form of devotion was nothing but helping the poor, the distressed and the downtrodden. [62] This was the faith of all the mystic teachers of Islam.

In India there existed certain cults and creed during the time the Muslim mystics visited. They might have come in contact with the Buddhist mysticism or Sahajiya cult and different Hindu creeds. They adopted the an attitude of sympathy and understaning towards all these cults and creeds. They said, 'O you who sneer at the idolatory of the Hindu

61. Bergson, Les Deux Sources de la Morali-et-la Religion, pp 246-51, Quoted by Toyenbee, Study of History (Vol VI) p. 213, See K. A. Nizami, Op cit p. 236.

62. Ibid.

Learn also from him how worship is done. Or 'Though Hindu is not faithful like me.' He often believes in thing as I do.' [63]

Nizami writes, 'They were concerned more with emotional integration than ideological synthesis which was very slow process and touched only a limited section of intellectuals. Emotional integration was a more difficult venture but with a surer results and on a larger scale. This liberalism of the Muslim mystics caused a change of outlook and it eastablished a compromise with the local religious cults. The Muslim mystics adopted either the Sahajiya or Hindu yogism or religious practices than their religious thoughts The Muslim mystics in the same way influenced the Sahajiya or Hiudu religious cults. They held discussion with the Hindu yogis and translated 'Amritkund' a Hindu work on yogism into Persian and Arabic from original Sanskrit with the help of the local yogis. But this interest for Hindu yoga was for the sake of knowledge and understanding and they did never deviate from their own mystic life. But with the passage of time the contact of the Muslim Sufis with the Indian mysticism increased to a great extent. The simplicity of Islam and its Humanism impressed the local people and they embraced Islam. These local converts formed the bulk of the population and they belonged to the lower cadre of life. Among the local converts there were number of people who could not understand the fundamental difference between Sufis and Yogism and they followed the practices of the Hindu yogis

63. Quoted by K. A. Nizami Op. cit p. 263.

in their own way of living. Even then the Muslim faith was vehement and irresistible Unable to thwart the onward movement of Islam Sree Caitanya made certain changes in the Bhakti cult which centres round worship of Krishna and tried to free Hinduism from Brahmanicat oppression. The rejection of caste system in the Krishna cult brought some desired result and Caitanya further shaped the Krishna cult more in the pattern of Muslim sufism then anything else. And this attempt was quite successful in neutralising the spiritual encroachment of Islam on Bengali soil and the result is an amalgum of the two ideas which gave birth to varieties of mystics who did not possess proper spiritual training, education and experience. The religious cults of Indo-Bangladesh present a unique specimen of this mixed cultural exchange. But this should be made clear that so far thoughts and practic s are concerned, the influence of muslim mystics was dominating over ott ers. The Muslim mystics although in certain respect observed the local religious practice they did not accept their thought. In the Buddhist mystic songs there had been an attempt to interpret the world in relation to Man. This idea of considering Man as the microcosm or the reflected Universe—the macrocosm, was possibly not unknown either to the non-Aryan or the Aryans. The Muslim mystics were very much aware of it. So far the records are concerned this may be said that the idea was practised by the Greeks in by gone days. Plato in his Timaeus once thought over a 'mystical inter-locking pattern of creation in terms of the Universe.

Plato conceived of the earth as a lesser circle in relation to the whole Universe and the head of man an ever lesser circle.' [64] Aristotle made certain improvement upon the idea. The Stoics accepted it from an ethical point of view. This idea was further expanded by the Alexandrine Neoplationists who gave it a perfect shape after a possible cultural interaction of various group—the oriental, the occidental, the pagan and the Christian. In the middle ages this macro-cosmic —micro-cosmic conception was basic to many Jewish and Christian fathers. This concept which took man for a little world had also formed a part of the rituals of many oriental religions as Taoism, Brahmanism, Buddhist mysticism and Gnosticism. Scholars like Mr. Carl, J. Jung are of the opinion that such idea was also prominent in medieval alchemy. They said that for the medieval alchemists it was a search after the 'elixer of life' which was at once both moral and mystical. Mr. Jung while making a comment on the attitude of the medieval alchemists said that th se alchemists were esoteric in their approach and most consciously employed both 'sphere and circle' as symbols [65]

In Buddhist mystic songs although man has been shown in micro—cosmic conception, this idea was

64; Marjorie Hope Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (Evanson : North Western University Press 1950. pp 9—10.

65. Carl. J. Jung, The Integration of the Personality, translated by Stanly Dell (New York 1939. p. 90 95)

degenerated into a mere nihilistic approach which gave birth to Sunyavada and then to Sahajiya cult. The Muslim mystics made certain improvement upon this concept and were of this opinion that Man might be compared to the little world or the Glove but he was much more than the world itself. He had more parts, more pieces. The Indian Mystics especially the Buddhist Mystics nurturing the concept of the of microcosm developed a relationship with woman. In the Buddhist Mystic songs the word Sahaja or Sunya has been figuratively called a woman and the Mahasukha has been used as the union or embrace of woman. The Sahajiyas believe that in order to attain spiritual height or ecstasy the male should transform himself into a woman because he understands that the experience of true love is never realised unless one becomes a woman. This is a Tantric conception, 'Discard the male (purusha) in thee and become woman (prakriti); thou wouldest thus be of one body and placed in eternity.' " This peculiar psychology of the Sahajiya which the Bauls adopted, has been explained by Manindra Mohon Bose, 'But what is meant by a man becoming a woman? Consider the state of an old man of eighty. He is male being, no doubt, but all his passions have suffered natural extinction and the male elements in him are conspicuous by their absence. This state of things in the grandfather is the effect of age and decay; but consider

66. Sahajiya song collected by Manindra Mohan Bose, Post Caitanya Sahajiya cults of Bengal, Culcutta, 1930. p. 42,

in case of a young man acquiring that state of neutrality by careful spiritual exercises. In him his senses will then remain vigorous and sound entirely free from the decaying influence of old age, but controlled to such an extent that they would produce no reaction due to external stimuli. This conception of woman as an exercise for spiritual attainment was possibly hinted because in love play woman was always considered supreme. In Sahajiya literature a particular emphasis is laid on erotic and sexual practices. They feel that if one desires to attain 'bodhi' one must indulge in 'kama' or lust in its five forms In Buddhist mystic songs as well as in other Vaishnava literature so much emphasis is laid on 'vamacara'. But in all cases this novel idea was lost into a mere sexual practice. This happened with the Bauls too. The Muslim mystics took into consideration both the Alpha and the Omega of existence. Both the world & the man are considered as the symbol circle and the Muslim mystics believe in the moving of Man from circle to Sphere. The Muslim mystics were greatly influenced as they came in contact with the Indian mystics and although they were aware of release from bodily limits and their subsequent entry into the limitless infinity or the sphere they were conscious of ultimate union of both body and soul. This concept of mysticism is possible the outcome of a spiritual movement that developed in Greece in the 6th century. Secret societies, known as mystery religions, were making a very strong appeal because they offered salvation to those who were initiated into them by means of ceremonial purification, ascetic practices

and the esoteric knowledge imparted during rites.[67] Professor Nilsson says, there exists in every man, however, humble his station, a dormant longing to enter into communion with the divine, to feel him. self lifted up from the temperal into the spiritual.[68]

Influence of Social stratification on Muslims of Bangladesh and growth of religious cults.

We have already explained that caste system which existed among Brahmanical religions including Hinduism is responsible to the large scale conversion of local people to Islam. These locals, mostly from low origin, were drawn towards the Muslim mys ics because of their liberal attitude. This happened because they did not get any social recognation from the Muslim governing class. They were deprived of high offices because of their low birth. Moreover this governing class looked upon education as the exclusive privilege of the upper strata of society and they did not consider it fit to spread the same among the lower classess. The Muslim mystics opposed the governing class of their attitude which was very much against principles of Islam. But although the Muslim mystics fought against caste concept and class distinctions among the Muslims these have shaped the Muslim society in Indo-

67. E. O. James, History of Religion, London, 1956. pp 145—46.

68. E, O. James, History of Religion, Ibid.

Bangladesh. According to Khandker Fazli Rubbee,[69] Bengal was under Muhammadan rule for more than five and a half centuries from 'Bakhtiyar Khiljis' invasion in 1203 A. D. until the English acquired the Diwani in 1765 the Muslim rulers attacted their co-religionists from other countries. They appointed Saiads, Mughols and Afgans as their officers of state and granted rent free lands to men of learning and piety. Numbers of such grants are still extant, chiefly in Rarh country and many villages and parganas still have Persian names, showing that they once formed a part of estates owned by Muslims of high birh,

That the local converts did not get entry into Army was evident from varicus contemporary records and history. Rubbe states that the Army of the Muslim governing class were also composed of foreigners who likewise settled in the country. Bengal was, moreover, a great asylum for Muhammadan refugees from Upper India, especially during the time of the independent kings (1338--1576). At the downfall of the Ghori dynasty during the reign of Muhammad Tughlok, numerous families sought shelter in Bangal. These foreign Muslims permanently settled in—Bengal and formed the higher strata of the Muslim society. Gradually these foreign Muslim community got attached to local customs. We have already mentioned that the local converts who came mostly from general mass accepted Islam because of miracles and piety of the Muslim mystics who also settled in the country. Besides them there were higher

69. Khandker Fazli Rubbee, The Origin of the Muhammadan of Bengal, Calcutta 1895.

section of people from the Hindu community who gradually succumbed to the influence of Islam because of political and religious grounds, became Muslims. Among these, the names of Bhojar Brahmin, Sultan Jalal-uddin Muhammad and Pirali Brahmanas.[70] There were also several examples of foreign Muslims taking Hindu wives or widow as second wife. The example of Muhammad Khan, a 17th century Bengali poet who was the product of an intermarriage may be cited. His ancestor a migrated Muslim married a Brahmin girl and left behind a line of children who were governors in Chittagong in the later Ilyas Shahi and Hussain Shahi periods.[71] Mr. Gait writes, 'It is also beyond doubt that owing to Muhammadan law of inheritance and other causes, many families of foreign have gradually sunk and become merged in the general mass of the population and that the numerous soldiers of fortune and their followers who once found a livelihood in Bengal must have left children behind them whose descendants are still alive.[72] Now this people claimed superiority of their blood over others and became Sayyids, Shaikhs, Khans etc.

Commenting on the Muslim social structure, Mr. Gait states that the conventional division of the Muhammadans into four tribes—Shaikh, Saiad, Mugol and Pathan has very little application to Bengal. In

70. Dr. Abdul Karim; Social History of the Muslims in Bengal, Dacca 1959. p. 145.
71. Ibid, p. 146,
72. Mr. E. A. Gait, Reports on the Census of Bengal, 1901. p. 165—166.

the proper sense of the words the Shaikhs should be Arabs and the Saiads the descendants of Hazrath Ali by his wife Hazrath Bibi Fatima, but in Bengal both groups include a great number of persons of purely local origin.

Although the Holy Quran does not recognise any caste system and speaks in unequivocal terms : 'O mankind, Lo ! we have created you men and women, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo ! the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Lo ! Allah is Knower, Aware,'[73] The Muslims themselves recognised two main social divisions, 1. Ashraf or Sharif, 2. Ajlaf or Atraf. The first includes the upper strata which means noble or persons of high extraction and their descendants including local converts form the higher strata, the second and the rest includes all converts of lower rank and position. It may be mentioned that Muslim social structure was constructed on functional groups and these have close semblance with the Hindu caste system. The Ashraf who constituted all undoubted descendants of foreigners and converts from the higher castes of Hindus never got mixed up with the Atraf who includes weavers, oil-pressers, barbers, fishermen, cotton-carders, tailors, farmers etc. The Ashrafs like the higher Hindu caste consider it degarding to accept menial service or to handle the plough. The Shaikhs and the Sayyids formed the priesthood while the Mughols and the Pathans corresponded to the Kshattriyas of the Hindu regime. They formed the official class.

73. The Holy Quran, 49 : 13.

These upper strata had always a contemtuous outlook over the lower strata. And although Islam does not believe in any such theory it does exist in the Muslim society of Bangladesh even today. There is generally no social intercourse and marriage between the Ashraf and the Atraf. But with the spread of the Quranic principle and teachings of the Prophet as compiled in the Hadis' a change in the outlook is also marked. However this social division created a bad blo d between the two groups. We have already mentioned that the lower groups did not enjoy any social status during the Sultanate period. Hussain Shah and few others are possibly exc ptions. History[74] records Hussain Shah in his early life was a servant of a Brahmin named Subodhi Rai He rose to be the Sultan of Bengal by dint of merit. This social injustice caused the Atrafs to have their own way of living. Their mystic outlook coupled with social inequality gave birth to many minor religious cults and they got satisfied with it. Statistics suggest that most of the minor religious cults particularly the Bauls of Bangladesh have people from lower strata of society. There ignorance help develop Pirism and Dargah in different areas. They make offerings to the Pirs or their departed souls and built tombs and illuminate them. Dr. Abdul Karim writes, 'The converts found in Pirs a resemblance of the Tantric Gurus and in the tombs and the Dargahs that of Chaitya or Stupa.'[75] In certain cases the Muslims and the Hindus having low birth have common deity viz Satya Pir, Panch Pir,

74. Dr. Abdul Karim, Op. cit p. 146-7.
75. Ibid p. 209 10.

Manik Pir, Ghora Pir etc. Manasha and Chandi also served as relief to these groups from all sorts of dangers. This has also given birth to number of nature worship including 'Garshi', a kind of nature worship very much common among the low class Muslims of Kushtia district. Lalan Shah is considered a demi-god—the lord of one's life. I have seen people, men, women and children coming to the tombs of Lalan Shah with prayers for their well being. In fact Sufism succumbed to the ideas and practices of Yogism and Tantrism, Faquirism like Baulism was developed as a mixed mysticism and the same incorporated in it the doctrine of sexo-yogic practice. A book named Yoga Qalander reflects the traditional and popular belief among the Muslims of lower strata. Sitala, Ola Bibi; Raksha-Kali, Ma-Khaki resembling Mother goddess got mixed up with both Muslim and Hindu community. The Hindus of low origin were very much drawn towards the Muslim Faquirs possibly for their liberalism and miracles. A low caste Hindu gave birth to similar type of religious cult in Kushtia. It was known as 'Balarami' under the name of its founder Balaram who belonged to Meherpur police station of Kushtia district.

Muslims of Bangladesh, particularly the lower strata people who believe in popular Islam also organise 'Urs' in honour of the departed Pir in celebration of his death. The word Urs means marriage. The followers of the Pir believe that death has caused a marriage or union of their Pir with God and hence they should celebrate the date gloriously, singing, dancing, prostrating before the grave.

Religious sects founded by the non-local Muslim mystics.

The Hyderis :

The founder of the Hyderi sect was a Turk named Shaikh Qutubuddin Hyder.[76] This sect reach very early. Sultani Durwesh, a member of the Hyderi sect first settled in Lakhnauti for preaching the idea of Hyderi sect. He was known as Qalander and was put to death when Balban marched against Tughrol.[77]

The Qalanders :

A Qalander is a kind of dervesh who disregards all appearances and is heedless of men's opinion [78]. He is a person who is free of all cares of this and the next world They originated in Persia or in Central Asia. They usually shaved off their heads, eye brows, beards and moustaches. They did not put on the Sufi Khirkah and wrapped up their body with a blanket, often a coloured one and fastened either a piece of blanket or a small sheet of cotton round the loins. They enjoyed a carefree life with an utter neglect of the laws of religion or the forms of society. They were insolently bold and refused to conform to any established tradition or convention of society. But unlike mystics they believed in violence and intimidation.[79] G. A. Harklot writes "The Qalander, the

76. Ibid p. 42.
77. K. A. Nizami, Ibid p. 287.
78. Edward G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia. Vol. II, Cambridge (1951), p. 265.
79. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 295.

'Calendar' of the Arabian Nights, are not really an order, but a class of begging monks. Some have wives, some not, some are 'within', others 'without' the law. They occupy straw huts outside, or retired spots, within towns where they pass their time in solitude, trusting to Providence, laymen providing their food and drink. The places where they resort are called Takya or 'Pillow'.....They have a secret argot and settle their own disputes with order and dignity.'[80]

These Qalanders were erotic in nature. One such was Fakhruddin Ibrahim of Hamadani better known as Iraqi. E. G. Browne writes, 'He is the typical Qalander, heedless of his reputation and seeing in every beautiful face or object a reflection, as in a mirror, of the Eternal Beauty. "Love" as one of his biographers says, "was predominant in nature" and hence his ghazals have an erotic character.'[81] They were also addicted to hemp-leaves.[82]

The Chishti Silsilah :

The Chishti Silsilah was introduced in India by Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi who reached India before the Turkish conquest. Their is no detail account available on the life of the saint in the contemporary history except few casual references. The first detail account of his life was given by Maulana Jamali who collected information about the saint nearly three centuries after his death. At that time mystic traditions were on the

80. G. A. Harklots, Islam in India, Op. cit p. 295.
81. E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol. III Cambridge (1951), p 124.
82. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 296.

decline in Persia.[83] According to Maulana Jamali Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti had a pantheistic approach which 'brought him very close to the treasures of ancient Hindu religious thought, particularly the Upanishads and created atmosphere favourable for the exchange of ideas at a higher level.[84]

The Chishti saints as well as their spiritual leader Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti led a very poor life and did not own any private possession as they considered it as 'serious impediment to the growth of one's spiritual personality. Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti and Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar never had any houses of their own. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had to move from place to place in search of a roof to hide his head'. It was during Balban's reign that he settled at Ghiasnpur and built up a small kutcha house to live in. Most of the time the Chishti saints starved. They lived on 'futuh' or unasked charity. Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri was the only Chishti saint of the thirteenth century who adopted cultiva ion for his livelihood.[85] The Chishti saints used to take a reduced diet in order to control 'the calls of flesh'. They did not possess sufficient clothes to cover their bodies and had to live on patched and tattered clothes. Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti used to cover his body with a two piece cloth. Shaikh Farid and Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya also had tattered clothes But these mystics with the exception of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya led a married life. The

83 Ibid p. 182.
84 Ibid p. 184.
85. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 199.

Chishti Khanqah was a big hall where all inmates lived a community and shared food together equally. The Chishti saints made it their practice to entertain guests whenever they would visit them if they could arrange food for them. The Chishti saints never hesitated to sell their personal belongings to entertain their guests. If nothing was available they would respectfully offer a bowl of water. The Chishti saints quoted the following Hadis in favour of their practice : 'If some one visits a living man and gets nothing from him to eat ; it is as if he had visited the dead.' The new entrants to the Chishti order used to shave their head and it was popular practice among the Chishti. They abstained from idle seclusion because they believed that this might make their 'self' neglectful. The Chistiya mystics allowed 'Sama' to be played with the accompaniment of 'Daff' only in their devotional gatherings as a means of inspiring spiritual ecstasy and the Khanqas of Multan, Ajodhan (Pak Pathan), Delhi, Gaur and elsewhere did useful service in spreading a taste for music.[86]

The Suhrawardia saints :

Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya was the founder of the Suhrawardia sect in India He was the disciple of Shaikh Shiabuddin Suhrawardia. Although Shaikh Shiabuddin had several other disciples who also migrated to India including Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi it was Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya who organised the Silsilah

86. Dr A. Halim, History of the growth and development of Northern Indian music during Sayyid-Ludhi period, JASP. Vol. I No. I Dacca 1956, p. 54.

in India. Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi settled in Bengal and set up a magnificent Khanqah over there. He converted large number of Hindus to Islam. This has been recorded in the contemporary Sanskrit work, Shekasubhodaya.[87] Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya was one of the most influential mystic teachers of his age. His mystic belief was radically different from that of his Chishti contemporaries. He never recommended a life of starvation and self mortification or fasting perpetually to those associated with him. He was very much strict in religious practices and did not approve of the Chishti practice of bowing before a Shaikh. As Salam Alaikum was the only salutation he approved. Unlike the Chishtis Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya participated in political activities and accumulated wealth and used to distribute the same in charity Although Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya entertained his guests generously his Khanqah was not open for all. In fact he organised the Suhrawardi Silsilah on firm foundations and attracted large number of talented disciples. He and his followers led a married life and took care of the members of the family. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya treated the Qalanders with indifference and it is said that some of the Qalander organisation of the period trace their spiritual descent from him. Makhdum Lal Shahbaz Qalander, one of the most celebrated mystics of Sind claimed spiritual authority from Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya.[88]

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri was one of the erudite scholars of his age. He belonged to the Suhrawardia

87. Edited by Sukumar Sen (Calcutta).
88. K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 225.

Silsilah and came to India along with Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. But he did not have any organising capacity of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Only a very limited persons were admitted to his disciples. He passed his time in mystic songs and dances—much against the tradition of his elder saints. In fact it was Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri who gave a legal sanction to the institution of Sama in India.[89]

Muslim mystics in Bengal :

The Suhrawardi order was introduced into Bengal by Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi who came to Bengal on the eve of the Turkish conquest of the country and died in Pandua (Gaur) in or about the year 1225 A.D. The last Hindu King of Bengal Laksmana Sena had built for him a mosque and Khanqah or monastery at Pandua. Following Tabrizi of Suhrawardi Silsilah came Makhdum Jhaniya Jahangasht Bukhari and Shah Jalal Mujarrad-i-Yamani of the same order.

Of the Chishti order the first man who came to Bengal was probably Shaikh Fariduddin Shakrganj. Following Shaikh Farid another saint belonging to same Chishti order Abdullah Kirmani came to Bengal and preached in the Western part of Bengal. Abdullah Kirmani founded a sub order of his own and converted a considerable number of Hindus to Islam. Next came Shaikh Serajuddin Badayuni who was sent by his spiritual guide Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi. When he died in 1357 A.D. he left behind him large number of

89. Minhaj-u's Siraj—Tabaqat i-Nisiri, Also see K. A. Nizami, Op. cit p. 303.

spiritual successors who propagated Chishti order for generations together.

The Qalandari order was introduced into Bengal possibly by Shah Safiuddin Shahid. He was a disciple of Bu Ali Shah Qalander and came to Bengal from Delhi in the last part of the thirteenth century. He settled in Pandua and died in or about 1295 A.D. From this time onward there was a heavy influx of the Qalanders and Muslim mysticism got a new momentum. By their mystic ecstacy they become highly popular with the local people and there was a good number of conversion into Islam. These Qalander mystics were greatly influenced by the Hindu rituals and afterwards produced a manuscript under the title 'Yoga Qalander' by the Muslim Dervishes.

Shah Madar a Muslim mystic came to Bengal and founded the Madari order. He was a nomad and widely toured different parts of Bengal and was 'a very successful preacher and a saint of great piety. He converted large number of Hindus in both Northern and Eastern Bengal. The Madaniyas are said to keep the hair long and tied into a knot behind. They were nothing save a loin-cloth and smokes hemp to excess. They resemble in many ways the Hindu Gosain and keep fire near him.

Besides these, there were various other Sufi sects including Naqshbandia, Qaderia, in Bengal. G. A. Harklot writes, 'Faquirs may be divided into two classes, 'Beshar' without the law and 'Bashar' within the law. A large proportion belongs to the former class, and are debauchees, using intoxicants like hemp, opium,

wine or spirits, all of which they consider lawful. These do not follow the precepts of the Prophet as regards fasting, praying & controlling their passions."[90] There is anotner kind known as Majzub. They are professed debauchee and a successful beggar. They believe in free thinking and do not follow any such rules as ablution, praying and fasting. Their dress consists solely of a loin-cloth and their hair is dishevelled. They do not have wives, families or properties.

Religious cults in Bangladesh :

The most important cause which led to the growth of religious cults in Indo-Bangladesh is the existence of of social stratification, religious persecution and economic deprivation. Most of the religious cults particularly the obscure one's have flourished among the lower and ignorant classes. The most important feature of these religious cults is the Guru worship. The Guru is something more than a spiritual guide. He is, in fact, 'divinity incarnate'. The Guru ship is hereditary. They are being worshipped by their followers. In Kushtia I have seen people worshipping Lalan Faquir and consider him above the deity. One of the followers of Lalan Shah named Kokil Shah is also worshipped by his disciples. The name also happened to Bellal Shah who died at Seuria Akhra of Lalan Shah. It is very often seen that there are Gurus who take more care of their own wordly affairs than about the spiritual welfare either of themselves or of their followers. These Gurus are often seen visiting their followers and come back with number of material possession. The followers

90. G. A. Harklots, Op. cit p. 294.

are considered by their Gurus as their subjects and make necessary collection of their dues as and when necessary. These Gurus are highly intelligent and many of them represent higher class. There is thus an exploitation by the persons who are socially and intellectually superior. Although the religious cults flourished among the low caste many of the Gurus viz, Caitanya and Krishna belong to upper society. Caitanya was a Brahmin and Krishna was a Kshattriya.

One of the various causes responsible for the growth of religious cults is the element of supersition. There is widespread faith in magic and witchcraft. It is believed that the prayers at the graves of the saints are efficacious in averting ailments and misfortunes. In Kushtia the grave of Lalan Shah is very often visited by large number of men, women and children with the obvious intention of averting ailment and misfortune. It is commonly believed that anybody visiting the grave of the saint and praying there for sometime often finds his prayer granted. Miracles of the saints also leave a tremendous impact on the mind of the common people who are drawn towards them. Magic forms an integral part of the obscure religious cults. The Gurus of the religious cults are believed to have acquired knowledge from some learned guide (Murshid) and is considered competent guide to do any job. There again Gurus who do not possess any knowledge at all but pretend to teach it to his followers at a cost of wealth and money. This exposes the followers' life to danger and many have ruined themselves. They have become mad and they wander in places. The Gurus very often invoke the Jinn (Spirits)

to fulfil their objectives. When a Guru once commands the presence of the Jinn or the demon he may by their means causes whatever he pleases to be done. This magical performances of the Gurus also contribute to the growth of the religious cults. Over and above, the free and unrestricted life also attracts people to join them. These people are also unwilling to work and maintain their life by begging. They take opium, Ganja and Bhang. These they take to succeed in the sexo-yoga practice. The use of Betel (pan) is quite common among the members of the cults of both sexes. It is considered a stimulant and assumes a sacramental form.

There are various religious cults in the society now-a-days. The religious cults which exist in Bangladesh include 1) Baul, 2) Nara, 3) Darveshi Faquiri, 4) Bhagabani, 5) Maibhandari, 6) Balarami, 7) Kartavbaja, 8) Satnami, 9) Spashtadyakha, 10) Bostomi. In West Bengal (India) they include 1) Baul, 2) Balarami, 3) Gurubadi, 4) Charan Dashi, 5) Kartavbajai 6) Shahebdhani, 7) Khushi-Biswashi, 8) Shakhibhavak, 9) Nara 10) Haribola, 11) Palua Dashi, 12) Apapanthi, 13) Satnami, 14) Spashtadyakha, 15) Darveshi-Faquiri, 16) Bostomi.

Besides these, there were certain other cults which developed under the name of certain local Sufi Faquirs. They include 1) Satya Pir, 2) Manik Pir, 3) Shah Madar, 4) Khaja Baba, 5) Garib Nawaz, 6) Pir Badar, 7) Lalan Shah, 8) Hasan Raja, 9) Panju Shah.

Origin of the Bauls as a religious sect :

Although the exact date of the origin of the cult is not known this can be said that introduction of Islam into the soil of Bangladesh gave birth to Baulism. The religious history of India clearly shows that an under-current of esotric sexo-yogic practice was in vogue from pretty old time. Shashi Bushan Dasgupta maintains, 'these esoteric practices, when associated with the theological speculations of the Saivas and the Saktas, have given rise to Saiva and Sakta Tantrism, when associated with the Buddhistic speculations, have given rise to the composite religious system of Buddhist Tantrism, and again, when associated with the speculations of Bengali Vaisnavism, the same esoteric practices have been responsible to the growth of the esoteric Vaisnavite cult, known as the Vaisnava Sahajia movement."[91]

Islam, however, brought about a change in the esoteric practice of its mystic movement-Sufism. As regards Sufi practices 'Dam' or the control of the breath plays a very important part in all forms of Zikr. Zikr is of two kinds—Jali which is repeated loudly and Khafi which is repeated silently or secretly. In some Sufi orders including Chishti, Qalanderi and Suhrawardi Zikr is accompanied with 'Sama' or music. It is again connected with 'Latifah'. This is done through inhalation and exhalation. Latifahs are few definite places in the human body. These are : 1) Qalb (heart), 2) Ruh (spirit), 3) Sirr (inmost conscience), 4) Khafi (hidden depth), 5) Akhfa (most hidden depth),

91 Dr. Shahi Bhusan Dasgupta, Op. cit page XXXIII-XXXIV.

6) Nafs or Evil Self. Nizami writes, "The mystical attitude grows out of the basic metaphysical postulate adumbrated in the doctrine of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujid'. Briefly put, it means that whatever exists objectively as well as subjectively, outside the mind of man as well as inside it, is One ; call it whatever you like—Universe, Nature, Reality, Truth or God. Faith in this unity of noumenal and the phenomenal world is the beginning of the mystical experience."[92] These mystics conceived God as the totality of cosmic existence and always craved for a communion with him. Gnosis (Marifat) or Union (Wasl) is the summum bonum in a mystic's life. The mystic believes that the way to God is of three kinds : 1) Maqam (station or stage) which denotes the way of the seeker and his progress in the field of exertion and his rank before God in proportion to his merit. 2) Ḥal (stage) denotes the favour and grace which God bestows upon the heart of his servant. 3) Tamkin denotes the residence of spiritual adepts in the abode of perfection and in the highest grade.[93] The chief contribution of Islam towards Hindu India was its Humanism and with it came the Sufi love for the Divine Being. A. M. Shustery points out, "The monotheistic doctrine of Islam gradually and consciously spread among all classes of Hindus and cast its influence, subtle in form but nonetheless effective, not only on religious beliefs but also on high philosphical conceptions. Several new religious movements started in India as the result of such influence."[94]

92. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Op. cit p. 230.
93. Ibid p. 231.
94. A. M. Shustry, Outlines of Islamic Culture, Vol. II, Bangalore 1938; p. 758.

Sufism of Islam left such a great influence on the mind of the Hindu that although many of them did not respond to the Quranic Islam they did not hesitate to follow Tasawwuf in their approach to life. Caitanya had also free exchange of views with the Muslim mystics and was also greatly influenced by them.[95] Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji feels that the real spiritual synthesis of Islam & Hinduism in India was taking place through Tasawwuf. He maintains further that Tasawwuf made hundreds of Hindus appreciate Islam and they found that they could be Sufi and yet remain in the Hindu fold.[96] Possibly this feeling has given birth to Baul cult.

The basis of the Bauls thus as a religions sect, rests in humanism and in this regard Islam has made greater impact on them. The Bauls look for an inward truth, and they have an adherence to the path of love and a belief that man is the ultimate measure for the spiritual attainment. The image which the Baul presents is the image of a mystic who follows no stricture of society and goes deliberately against it. They draw upon a spirit of iconoclostic ideas which swept across Northern India and Bangladesh and inspired Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and Caitanya. There is no doubt that Islamic mysticism left a tremendous

95. (a) Krishnadas Kaviraj, Sree Caitanya Caritamrita, Madhya Leela, p. 331, ed. Subodh Chandra Majumder (b), M. EnamulHuq, Impact of Islam on the Gaudian form of Vaisnavism, JASP, p. 131.

96. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Islamic Mysticism Iran and India, Vol. I. No. II, Oct. 1946, page 35.

impact on them which subsequently inspired Baul cult in Bangladesh. There are, however, scholars who like to consider the Bauls as a part of Sahajiya cult although they feel the impact of Sufism on the Baul cult as all absorbing and powerful. Dr. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta[97] says, 'When we shall analyse the tenets of the Bauls as enbodies in their songs that are available to us, we shall find that the Doctrine of the earlier Sahajiya forms the real background of their religion although Sufism of Islam have introduced new spirit in it..... In speaking of the earlier Sahajiya background of the Bauls we mean mainly the school of Buddhist Sahajiya and Vaisnava Sahajiya.....But the earlier Sahajiya cult underwent a notable transformation in the hands of the Bauls ; for the Bauls, by derivation and innovations effected a great change both in the ideology and practice of the Sahajiya.....The Buddhist Sahajiya conceived Sahajiya as Maha-Sukha which is the unity of the duality represented by the man and woman as Upaya and Pranja The method for the realisation of this Sahaja consisted, therefore, essentially in a sexo-yogic practice. To this, however, the Vaisnava supplied the element of love. But here in the Vaisnava school also, Sahaja was conceived as supreme love which can be realised by the union of Krishna and Radha who reside in the corporal form of man and woman. The process of the Sadhana is also, therefore, a process of Divinisation of the human love. But in course of his interpretation of Vaisnava Sahajiya

97. Dr. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, Obscure Religious Cult as Background for Bengali Literature, Calcutta 1969, pp. 165.

love Dr. S. B. Dasgupta further says that this love is not the love of the nature of the most intense yearning of man and woman or of wom anfor man. The Vaisnava Sahajiyas never speak of any love beyond the purest and the most perfect form of human love and of any lover and beloved other than man and woman who are themselves incarnation of the eternal lover and the Beloved. Dr. Dasgupta adds, 'But the Bauls conceived Sahaja as the innermost eternal Beloved who is the 'Man of the Heart'. (Maner Manush) The Bauls also speak of love and union but this love means the love between the human personality and the Divine Beloved within and in this love man realises his union with the Divine or in other words he merges his personal existence in the Beloved that resides within this temple of the body. Great has been the influence of Sufism on the Bauls in the evolution of this new conc ption of Sahaja and in their religious approach.'[98] Commenting on the formation of the Baul cult as a religious sect Dr. S. B. Dasgupta concludes, 'The Sufistic ideas that were thus introduced (by Muslim Sufis since the beginning of 11th century) were soon assimilated with the prevalent Sahajiya ideas and the result of this amulgum has been the Bauls of Bengal.'[99] Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya[100] intends to group the Bauls as a part of Vaisnava religious sect who consider sexual yoga as a part and parcel of their religious faith. According to him the Bauls go for their sexual

98. Dr. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, Op. cit pp. 166-67.
99. —do— pp. 169.
100. Dr. Upendranath Bhatt charya, Bangar Baul O Baul Gaan, Calcutta, 1957.

yoga at a time when the female cycle or menstruation originates in a woman. The first three days of the woman menstruation period is very important for the Bauls. During these three successive days the Bauls perform their sexo-yoga practices. Dr. Bhattacharya and Dr. S. B. Dasgupta in fact got the Baul cult completely up with the Vaisnava Sahajiya cult. They were right possibly in a wrong way. There is, of course, no doubt that the Bauls consider all human beings as female and the Sain as the only male principle in the Universe and they understand that the Divine is manifested in its two form as the pair principle—the active and the passive. The active form appears during woman's menstruation or monthly cycle to take part in the life of man and the Man of the Heart can thus be regained and is made to reunite with its passive form within the bodies of men and women. This attitude is derived from the Sahajiya. But this is not all. It merely serves the Indo-Bangladeshi part in the whole process. This sexo-yogic practice is a subsequent introduction and this amalgamation of heterodox mysticism produced the Baul cult. This happened because the Sufi teachers when died, his followers in the country rearranged their function and posed themselves as advanced mystics. They adopted many local practices because they marked that some of their teachers had also developed a bit of interest in them. These people through lack of experience in reflection were without means to judge such situations as these, readily stepped into the shoes of Sahajiya cult and got the whole thing amalgamated. The scholars feel that there is a form of knowledge which can be attained by man, which is

of such order that it is to scholastic learning as adulthood is to infancy.[101] An ordinary adult cannot always understand the attainments of a Sufi mystic. A non-trained Sufi follower, when imitates without knowledge, there is all posibility of his misunderstanding the order. Sufis contend that far from this lore being available in books a great part must be personally communicated by means of an interaction between the teacher and the learner.....And when Sufis draw diagrums for such purposes as these, imitators merely tend to copy them and use them at their own levels of understanding.[102]

In fact Sufism had been refreshingly free of myschievous variety of mystification and obscurantism. But in the absence of a Sufi teacher every village or group of villages acquired its local saint, to be supported and revered during his life time, worshipped and capitalised after his death. This ruinous state of affairs were exploited by both politician and theologians alike and they found it easier and profitable to share in the swindle. The majority of these professional mystics were either hypocrites or self-deluded and battened on the credulity of their followers.[103]

The obscure religious cults which have a Sufi bias are thus the products of the cross current of several forces—Tantrik or Sahajiya Buddhism, Vaisnava Sahajiya and Indo-Persian Sufism. In the Baul cult there is an amalgamation of all these three elements with Indo-

101. Idris Shah Op cit p. 26.
102 Ibid p. 27.
103. A. J. Arberry, Sufism, London (1950), p. 121.

Persian Sufism dominating. The Bauls of West Bengal are more Sahajiya influenced because the larger section belong to Hindu community and they have a Sahajiya bias. In Bangladesh the Muslim mystics prevail over others.

But this can be said that Baul as a cult was first developed as a distinctive type in areas which form part of West Bengal and the present Bangladesh. And although exact date of the origin of the development of the cult could not be determined because of absence of literature produced by the Bauls in the medieval period. The medieval literature, however talked on the Bauls by way of reference. But the writers in most of the cases were not unprejudiced observers. The first reference was made by Maladhar Basu in his 'Sree Krishna Vijoy' a work composed during fourteenth century. The word Baul came twice as a reference in a Sanskrit play, Bidaghda Madhava by Rupa Goswami (1516 A. D.). Number of reference were made on the Bauls by Sree Krishna Das Kaviraj in his noted work 'Caitanya Cairtamrita', composed possibly between 1580-81 A. D. In this work the poet however named, the Bauls as 'Bauliya' 'Aul' and 'Baul'. He also considered Caitanya as the great Baul of the time. Govinda Das a contemporary of Krishna Das Kaviraj also made a reference about the Bauls in one of his works. In the poetical works of the Vaisnava poet Chandi Das there had been a reference of the Baul word. The work was edited by Manindra Mohon Basu and published in the 12th issue of the Art Journal of the Calcutta University. In the contemporary literature the word 'Nara' (Nada)

a substitute for 'Baul' is also available. He has been identified as 'Narar Faquir'. Nara (Nada) refers to 'singleness' or 'oneness' without any root and any offspring. But in all these literature both the Bauls and the 'Narar Faquir' were more or less condemned except in one case where Caitanya Deva had been shown as the great Baul. The poet says that Caitanya Deva called himself as the great Baul under certain circumstances. All these suggest that Bauls were very much prevalent in the medieval society and they were not held in high esteem for reasons, religious, political and social. The Medieval Hindu society considered the Muslims as most hostile to them for their humanistic approach. The Muslim mystics who were known among the common people as 'Auliya' left a tremedous impact on the society and their liberal attitude had made people more close to their mystic ideology. These people copied and imitated what the 'Auliyas' did in their mystic activities. There had been large scale conversion to their ideology which created a sharp reaction in the mind of the contemporary Hindus. They possibly condemned them as 'Bauliya or Baul', a following word of 'Auliya' and developed as Folk etymology.

From the reports of the medieval literature it becomes now evident that the Bauls as a religious sect was in existence during fourteenth and fifteenth century and they had a Muslim mystic bias. The Buddhist mystic influence which is discernible among the Bauls is possibly due to conversion of the Buddhist mystics into Islam as Vaisnava Sahajiya in subsequent years.

Defination of the Baul term :

There are different religious cults in Bangladesh and each has been evolved under certain mystic ideas and doctrine. We call them cults because they have a mysterious value and we cannot fully rationalise it. It is a complex action in which the whole nature of the cult member is concerned. The rituals and practices which consist of gesture song, sacramental meals are prescribed only to the followers as a part of his worship In Bangladesh followers of such cults often introduce themselves as Faquirs. And herein lies the difficulty in one's understanding of a particular cult.

The Bauls of Bangladesh including its Hindu followers take the name of Faquir. The more one becomes close to them the more one understands their nature and way of living which justifies their particular cult and it differs greatly from others. Occasionally they also call themselves as Bauls. But why are they so called ? Is it their own or a given term ? The very word 'Baul' suggests close semblance with Muslim word 'Auliya', a term used for a person who becomes a friend of God by his unqualified devotion to Him. He practices control of breathing as a part of his worship. So does the Baul. This is necessary when he undergoes a process of Zikr. His looks, dress, gesture and posture, his pattern of behaviour everything reflects that of an 'Auliya'. But he fails to attain his mystic height and becomes a crazy one. In medieval age people call them 'Bauliya', a following word, in order to suggest a fake attitude to the Sufi mysticism or to project their hatred towards the cult itself.

Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta suggests that the word Baul can be derived in three ways. Sanskrit 'Vatula' meaning mad, crazy (as affected by wind disease) or from 'Vyakula', meaning impatiently eager. According to him this can be accepted as possible derivation but he does not rule out 'Auliya' (plural of Wali, meaning near and is used for friend or devoted class of perfect m n) as possible source.[104] Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya considers 'Vatula' as a possibility.[105] Sanskrit Vatula, Vyakula may have been derived from such word as Vajula which originates from Vajryana sect of Buddhism.[106] Edward C. Dimock Jr. says that the rags on the shoulder of the Bauls are reminiscent of those of the 'durves', the saint of Sufi Islam, to whom the Baul is similar in other respect as well. Dimock feels that the doctrinal and poetic similarities between the Bauls and Sufis are plentiful. But taking all these into considerations Dimock is rather confused as to whether Bauls have a Sufi origin or they belong to a Sahajiya sect.[107] He comments, 'But whether it is fair to conclude that Sufi Islam influenced the Bauls in the areas of the religious usage of song and dance, the importance of the Guru (the Sufi Mursid), opposition to external religious practices the conception of man

104. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, Op. cit p. 160.
105. Upendranath Bhattacharya, Banglar Baul O Baul Gaan, Calcutta 1957, p. 50.
106. S. M. Lutfar Rahman, Journal of the Bengali Deptt. Dacca University, 1376 B. S. Winter, p. 121.
107. Edward C. Dimock Jr., The Place of the Hidden Moon, Erotic Mysticism in the Vaisnava Sahajiya Cult of Bengal, Chicago, 1966, pp. 251.

as the microcosm and the connecting link between the divine and phenomenal creation, and the conception of God as the Beloved, is at least doubtful. For we have seen that most of these characteristics are present also in the very old Sahajiya tradition. And if the Baul songs team with Sufi terminology, there are in them equally many words special to the Sahajiyas and to the Tantric tradition.[108] The Bauls do have points relating both to Tantrika and Sahajiya cult and we have already discussed the issue. Dimock possibly understands that Bauls are not Sahajiyas. Then what are they? To this question, Dimock answers, "While not quite Sahajiyas, the Bauls are fitting hybrids ; the Vaisnava, Sahajiya, and Sufi strains yield beauty, sympathy and strength. From the Vaisnavas, and from the Sufis, comes the Baul vision of the warmth and humanness and love of God."[109] Both Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta and Edward Dimock do not rule out the possibility of Sufi influence and admit that there are definite amalgamation of both Vaisnava Sahajiya and Sufi doctrine. Charles H. Capwell[110] also forms the same opinion. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji feels one with Upendranath Bhattacharya and refers the source to Sanskrit Vatula and Vyakula.[111]

108. Edward C. Dimock Jr., Op. cit page 258-259.
109. —do— Ibid page 270.
110. Charles H. Capwell, The Esoteric Belief of the Bauls of Bengal. Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIII No. 2, February 1974.
111. Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, ODBL, Calcutta 1978, p. 423.

In Persian language the word Baal[112] means one who frees himself from an obligation by purgery, a wanderer in the desert. It may also mean; infatuated with or in love with. It also denotes, one who escapes or is hidden. Another Persian word Bowl[113] refers to urine. Among the Persian Sufi sect there is one Bohluliya[114] sect which is derived from the word Buhlul meaning block head, crazy, laughing or smiling. The sect has its founder named Abu Walid Ibn Amre Seirafia Khufi. He was known as Bohlul. He was however a learned man and used to preach during the time of the Caliph Harun-ur-Rashid and other Caliphs and died in 806 A. D. in Kufa (Iraq). A section of people considered him crazy & mad for his philosophy. The word 'Baul' may also be derived from the name of a Qalander spiritual leader, Bu' Ali. A section of Qalanders used to shave their heads, moustaches, beards and lead a celibate life. There is no doubt that the Qalanders have left an impact on the Bauls so far as their mystic approach is concerned but the Bauls do not project the image of the Qalander atleast outwardly. The Persian word 'Baal' also refers to heart, mind, soul. Bawali means the name of a bird and Baali, is the old and worn out garment.[115] All these clearly indicate a possible semblance with the term—Baul. The Bauls of Bangladesh consider the heart or the soul as

112. Dr. Mohd. Moin, A Persian Dictionary, Vol. V, Teheran 1978, p. 137.
113. Ibid p. 605.
114. Ibid p. 148.
115. F. Steingass Ph. D.—A Comprehensive Persian English Dictionary, New Delhi, 1977.

the most important and essential element in their *sadhana*. The unknown bird figures out prominently in Baul songs and the Bauls are dressed in old and worn-out garments. Whether 'Baul' is a native word or foreign is indeed very difficult to ascertain. But considering all the derivation it is most likely that the word has a Persian bias or atleast a learning towards Persian. The Persian language came to Bengal at the beginning of the thirteenth century when the whole country came under the sway of the Muslim conquerors. But unofficially the language might have left its mark on the soil with the Muslim mystics who came to Bengal much ahead of the Muslim conquerors. The common people got in touch with the Muslim mystics and there might have been exchange of both ideas as well as language, of course in a limited scale. The Persian language was most dominant in Bengal during the Muslim Sultanate and the Bengali language also flourished under their kind patronage much against the wish of the Hindu Brahmins who considered the language as most corrupt.

Under these circumstances we could take up the following words for our discussion : 1) Auliya > Bauliya > Aul > Baul (Folk etymology), 2) Baal > Boal > Baul (Phonology), 3) Bawali > Bauli > Baul, 4) Baali > Bauli > Baul, 5) Bohluliya > Bauliya > Baul (corruption in language), 6) Bu' Ali > Baul, 7) Bowl > Baul. The Persian word Bowl means urine. The Bauls of Bangladesh, in certain cases, take urine as a part of sexo-yoga practice. It is doubtful whether the Muslim mystics identified with detestation certain local followers who followed sexo yogic practice

as Bowls from which the present Baul term might have been derived. But in our language the following words are very common. These are : Bauliya, Baul, Aul. In that case Auliya becomes a possible source. The word Bauliya becomes either a following word or it may be a product of folk etymology. The word Bowl denoting sexo-yogic practice possibly got mixed up with folk etymology producing a total effect on the word Baul which forms a particular religious sect with Sufi and sexo-yogic practice. And of course with Sufi idea predominating. The term Baul, may possibly have been developed as a following word of Auliya because the local followers of the Muslim mystics might have faked their practice. In any case it appears that the term is a given one, of course, this has been interpreted in different ways by the Bauls themselves. The most common interpretation is the fixing up the wind through control of breath or 'Dam'. With Sufi it, is connected with Zikr but the Sahajiya influence leads it to sexo-yogic practice. But ultimately it is the Zikr that counts. According to the Bauls they follow sexo-yogic practice in order to attain a mystic height of the Sufis because they feel that extinction of 'self' is a must to have communion with the ultimate. This they term as a dead living (Jantey Mora). The Baul lives like a dead man, particularly those who live in Akhras. They strive to free themselves from the bondage of the world both in theory and in practice. They keep no attachment to the world. And consider the world as illusory or 'Maya'. They get pleasure only in mystic devotion. They lead either a celebate or a married life. If married they are against limited child birth for obvious reason. There is another type of Baul who are known as Grihi

Baul. They ate either married or take a Seva Dashi (female associate). Although they are not against child birth but this is permitted only in certain cases when circumstances prove efficacious. This must conform to certain practices or rituals. It should be mentioned here that the Bauls do not believe in complete rejection of the world as advocated in the Upanishad or Vedanta. This is a Sufi attitude towards life. It is a rejection not of the world but of the materialistic approach to life and its problems which they hate and detest. They believe that the more a man gets involved in materialistic pursuits the more he is drifted from the spiritual life. The Baul cult is a salvation religion wherein the saint totally annihilates all his desires, except communion with the ultimate or the Man of his Heart, his pleasure and pains. He is always happy with his lot and never complains. This self contentment figures prominently in the Baul cult. These the Bauls maintain possibly because they are divorced from common run of life.

The Baul path is more an 'Ulta Path' which means reverse action. And it is connected with respiration, necessary for sexo-yogic practice as discussed earlier. Possibly this led Edward Dimock to consider the Bauls as infected with wind disease, Vatula. Edward Dimock as well as others holding the same view are confused of the mystic process of the Baul cult. The control of breath is considered most important during sex play because the Bauls are not permitted to discharge semen into female genital organ except on occasion. It is necessary for their mastery over the 'self'. This is the influence of the yoga on the Bauls. This leads to

'cessation of mental state or the stoppage of the conscious and sub-conscious mental flow.'[116] It is practised to 'steady the mind on the gradually advancing stages of thoughts towards liberation, so that vicious tendencies may gradually be more weakened and atlast disappear altogether.'[117] This is salvation or Mukhti. The Sufi method is 'Nafi Izbath'. It is effected through 'La Ilaha Illallah', by holding the breath. In this method of drawing and letting out the breath the Qalb or the soul is made free to follow the right track to the meeting of the ultimate. It is the Zikr. In this process the Guide or the Murshid plays an important part. He is the medium to the whole process of Zikr. He is a teacher to the follower, 'a conductor and an instructor—not a god'. Personality worship is strictly forbidden. Sufi Rumi thus once said, Look not at my exterior from but take what is in my hand.'[118] But in the Baul cult the Murshid is called the god. Because it is believed that without the visualised image of the Murshid the follower or the Murid is unable to control his mind. They argue that God has no definite form and for that one requires something tangible for the control of one's mind. And it is why the Murid visualised the image of his Murshid for the concentration of all thoughts to a single point.[119] This is a clear departure from the Sufi practice in its original

116. S. B. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, Chicago 1927, p. 70-71.
117. S. B. Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, 1922, p. 270.
118. Idris Shah, Op. cit p. 31.
119. Muhammad Enamul Haq, Op. cit p. 105.

frm. Conclusion : From this above survey we now come to this conclusion that the word Baul although it may have its source in any of the Sufi terminology it has been evolved out of corrupt practices of the Sufi ideology as practised in Bangladesh and its subsequent amalgamation of sexo-yoga practice. It may also be the product of a folk etymology. It may be started here that mysticism in Islam did not follow any single pattern or idea since it came into being. Mysticism as developed in Arab and in Persia differed widely both in thought and in action. There is a point of similarity between Persian and Indo-Bangladeshi Sufism in matters of thought but so far action is concerned Indo-Bangladeshi Sufism made a departure from its original idea with the introduction of sexo-yoga practice. And in certain cases the Muslim mystics, particularly the Qalanderia and the Chishtiya mystics kept a bowl with them as a part of their religious practices. The Bauls also keep a deep, round, hollow, dish known as bowl with them. In fact, bowling is a very old and ancient tradition which originated from a religious ceremony. The mystics of the world, both past and present and irrespective of religion made a common practice and kept a bowl with them. And there is nothing significant in it. Under these circumstances the following derivations may thus be a possibility. Auliya > Bauliya (Developed either as a following word or a given term by a section of the people to express hatred and detestation for their obscure and corrupt practices or as they faked or made false imitation of the Auliyas). Aul > Baul (Folk etymology). Auliya > Bauliya > Aul > Baul.

The Bauls are thus a religious sect belonging to an obscure religious cult who are not Sufi proper but whose ideas are mostly governed by certain Sufi doctrines together with sexo-yogal practice.

The Baul cult : (1)

The Baul cult has both mystic and mysterious value. It is a sort of experience which is atonce philosophical and intellectual and involves everybody attached to the cult. The action of the member of the Baul cult both male and female, is a complex one in which their 'whole nature is concerned and which has at its full development, the characters of a work of art.'[120] The ritual of the Baul cult includes speech, gesture, sacramental meals and song. Fish plays important in the preparation of food. Sacramental meal is termed by the Bauls as 'Sheba' or (Service to self). There are three types of 'Sheba—Balya Sheba' (Morning meal), Adhibesh (Night meal), Purna Sheba (Full meal). Meat taking is not permissible and sacrifice is also not prescribed. These rituals develop from a basic human need with positive intention and conscious purpose. The gesture and posture of the Bauls before the Guru or spiritual Guide is a symbolic vehicle by which both the guide and the disciple express themselves. These are parts of their religious phenomenon. The rites of the Baul cult include many things relating to female genital organ. The female principle plays a most vital and unique part in the whole cult. The female genital organ is expressed in the Baul cult as 'Tribeni' or 'Tripini'.

120. Evelyn Underhill, Worship (New York : Harper Torch Books, 1957), p. 23.

The Bauls, when they start their ritual practice, or pay homage to the Guru, make certain expression symbolising female genital organ. This 'Bhaga' or 'Tribeni' is triangular in shape. In the Baul cult 'Bhaga' is considered very sacred as they believe that their 'Shain' or 'Man of the Heart' takes pleasure in love making for amusement. There is no doubt that the conception of the 'Maner Manush' or the Man of the Heart is purely an idea developed by the Bauls. But this we may say that a search for the inner truth, conceived as 'something bodiless and hiding within the body', was also made by the Muslim mystics of Persia and the Buddhist mystic singers of the Caryapad. The conception of the 'inner truth' was not a non-physical spiritual principle, it was a physical aspect connected with human nervous system. But the Bauls made it altogether a physical as well as a spiritual principle. They made certain improvements upon the Tantrika and Sahajiya conception of the body. The Bauls lay emphasis upon the body because they want to understand the process of a change in the whole creation on the analogy of the human birth. And therefore, the importance of 'Bhaga'. Human birth, thus plays an important part in the Baul cult. In Tantrism, body is conceived as a microcosm of the whole universe. One who knows the mystery of the human body becomes a wise man. In Baul cult the same idea is practised but with a difference. In the cult the stress is laid on the yogic element. In the Baul cult there is a blending of Yogic and Sufistic elements. The Bauls conceive that there, in the body, lies 'the Ganga' and 'the Yamuna'. 'The sun' and 'the moon', 'the Mecca' and 'the Medina', 'Krishna', 'Hari',

'Muhammad', 'Adam' and 'Allah'. Both the Tantrikas and the Sahajiyas do not go beyond 'body' and consider the body as something be-all and end-all.

For the Bauls the 'Body' is the means and not the end and so there is thus the hankering after 'Maner Manush' or the Man of the Heart. The Sahajiya or the Tantrika cult considers the 'brain' as the seat of consciousness but with the Bauls the 'Heart' is the central organ and seat of consciousness. They, however, do not ignore the importance of the Brain'. The Brain acts in support of the Heart. The Bauls like the Tantrikas and the Sahajiyas believe that the birth of the human being and that of the universe follow the same principle and so the study of man in relation to the universe is considered very important in the Baul cult. The Bauls followed certain rituals performed in first three successive days during the period of female menstruation. They consider 'menstruation' as something very significant in their search for the inner truth. For the Sahajiya also 'menstruation' forms a part of their sexo-yoga practice and it is sinequanon with their religious faith. The Bauls study the human body not merely from the materialistic point of view, their study is very much spiritualistic although they are not indifferent to materialistic conception of life. The 'Sparm' is considered important and the Bauls idealise the whole thing and study the same in relation to the soul. The Bauls believe that the Creation has a purpose and Man has a definite role to play on since he is the best creation of all the created being. Their study does not centre round Sparm' only as it happens with the Sahajiyas or the Tantrikas. It is also not the end in itself. Rather

it paves the way for further study of the soul. This has brought the unknown Bird or the 'Achin Pakhi' into picture. The Man of the Heart or 'Maner Manush' is the inner truth which the Bauls conceive through the study of 'Achin Pakhi' or the unknown Bird. The search for the Achin Pakhi or the unknown Bird leads us to discuss the cosmagony of the Baul cult. It is connected with deha-tattva. The Bauls believe that the Universe is the product of a sex play of the Divinity as exactly as human beings are. This idea is however developed by the Tantrikas[121]. The ritual practice of the Bauls 'aim at establishing a harmony between cosmic lust and human lust'. The Baul sadhana is, thus in one part, a *Kama sadhana* which is undoubtedly the effect of Sahajiya sect. This reflects the materialistic out look. But with it was mixed the spiritual attainment. In one Carya song it is said, "Some one bodiless is hiding himself in the body—he who knows him there, is librated."[122] This same idea is incorporated in the Baul song. This, I understand, is possibly the outcome of a Sufi contact. The Buddhist mystics might have come in contact with the Sufis coming from Persia. The Buddhist idea states that everything being in reality nothing but pure void and there is nothing beyond body.[123] But the Bauls maintain that the importance of the body lies in the fact that it speaks of a deep insight into the mechanism of human body and it is necessary for the realisation of the 'self'. This

121. Deviprasad Chattopadhyay, Op. cit p. 336.
122. Monindra Mohon Bose, Post Caitanya Sahajiya Cults of Bengal, Calcutta 1930, p. 105.
123. Idid p. 103-4.

idea is primitive and the mystics of the world including the Bauls only inherited it. The mystics of both past and present feel, that since the Universe and the Body are made according to the same principles and composed ofthe same materials, and since the same forces operate in the same manner within both,—by developing the forces inherent in the body, one can have the forces of Universe in one's favour. There is no instrument more wonderful than the Body. And none can construct an instrument as worderful as this.[124] The Bauls believe that the human body is constructed with a purpose of knowing the mystry of life and the ul imate being who works through it. There is a missing link between the ultimate being and the human being. The Bauls fe-l that there is no possibility of the realisation of the missing link without the body. In fact, this missing link is the Maner Manush or the Man of the heart. The whole Baul cult evolves round it.

(II)

The Bauls differ with the Sahajiyas on number of points. The Sahajiya poetry is very much sensual, doctrinal and dry. But the Baul songs though erotic and sex based these are covered up with beautiful imagery. They have the quality of a good poetry, both elegant and effective. But the fundamental point of difference lies in the fact that the Sahajiya cult including the Buddhist and the Vaisnava speak of sexual union and birth control. It is because they believe that the *deha* or the ma erial human body is all

124. Racanavali by P. Bandapadhyaya, p. 284-5. Quoted by Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, OP cit p. 343.

that should be cared for and their religious practice is very much concerned with the union of men and women and their success lies in the duration of the union. They are against discharge of semen into female genilal organ. The Vaisnava Sahajiya considers the discharge of semen as something sinful against their belief. Caitanya also speaks of the same and his feeling was quoted in verse by Brindaban Das.[125] The ethics behind this practice rest in the pleasure principle of Tantrika cult. I have personally talked to many Sahajiyas regarding the justification of this practice. They are of this opinion that the child birth brings pain both physical and mental. It further stands in the way of their devotion. Like the Buddhist Sahajiya the Vaisnava Sahajiyas also feel that the only end of man is enjoyment of pure pleasure and to avoid the pain which accompanies it. This practice of the Sahajiya sect is known as *Bindu Sadhana* or *Dhatu Sadhana*. This Sahajiya sect also holds women in great esteem. The *Yoga Sadhana* of the Sahajiya sect speaks of the control of breath and withhold of semen for the greatest pleasure or '*Maha-Shuka*'. This *Yoga Sadhana* is based on the Tantrika *Sat-Cakrabheda*. According to this system there are two nerve cords running parallel on the two side of the central cord, called Susumna, which stretches, according to the Tantrikas, from near the pelvic curve to the brain, and therefore, it is often roughly identified with the spinal cord. Within the *Susumna* is conceived another nerve-cord called the *Vajrakhya* within which again, is conceived another

125. Brindaban Das, Caitanya Bhagabata, Madhya Khando, page 10.

nerve-cord called the *Citrini*. In short this Citrini is the inmost core of the central nerve cord, the Susumna. Seven *Padmas* literally lotuses, are conceived as situated on seven different positions of the Susumna-cord.

That eroticism formed a part of the religious rite with the Buddhist Sahajiyas (Vajrayana and Sahajyana) in the 10th century or before, was observed by L. de la Valee Poussion.[126] Vajra (with the variant mani) is taken as a mystic phrase for linga, the male organ, just as Padma, lotus, is the literary rendering of *bhaga* or *yoni*. This may be said that the seven lotuses on the Susumna-cord are the seven seats of femininity and it is inherent in every human being.[127] In Tantrism, the seven *Saktis*, Kulakunduli, Varuni etc. also have a close semblance with female genital organ and these Saktis are found in the seven Padma of the Susumna-cord. They are the seven sects of femininity in the central nerve-cord. Deviprasad writes that the essence of Tantrika yoga sadhana consists in arousing and vitalising the female principle residing in her nethermost centre and then transmitting to her highest centre, the seat of consciousness, after piercing all the intermediary positions.[128] According to him it is nothing

126. L. de la Poussion, Encyclopadia of Religion and Ethics Edited by J. Hastings, Edinburgh, 1908-18, pp. XII, 196.
127. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Lokayata People's Publishing House January 1968 (Reprint), (New Delhi), pd. 281.
128. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Ibid pp. 282.

but an effort towards a total transformation of the personality into femininity. According to Tantrism Sahasra-dala-Padma is the seat of consciousness and herein the Kulakundalini Sakti or the female force unites with the masculinity that risides there and the happy blending or union of the masculinity with femininity presents a state of non-duality and all absorbing femininity is aroused. Sahajiya Vaisnavas follow the same principle. But they introduce *love* or *prem* which is the result of Sufi influence. The Bauls adopt the idea with a difference. They lay stress, not on the seat of consciousness as the be-all and end-all, rather their whole cult is developed centering round the *soul* of human being which gives birth to their search of Maner Manush or the Man of the Heart. The Bauls pose themselves as women because they believe that a true love cannot be experiened till one transforms oneself into a woman. This concept has brought in them the idea of *Shain* or the Man of the Heart. This is also the outcome of Sufi influence. The Sufis considered God as the Soul of Beauty and this idea was adopted by the Indian mystics in their own way. Commenting on this Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji writes, 'Love between Man and Woman—even the sensuous and sensual aspect of it as a symbol of the most intimate relationship between Man and God, was no new thing in the world. Already, in the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, which is in all certainty a pre-Buddhist work, the state of the human soul in the perfect bliss of dreamless sleep 'which is the result of communion with the Supreme Spirit is described in the following terms. 'This verily, is that form of his which is beyond desires, free from

evil, without fear. As a man, when in the embrace of a beloved wife knows nothing within or without, so this person, when in the embrace of the intelligent soul, knows nothing within or without. Verily, that is his (true) form in which his desire is satisfied, in which the soul is his desire, in which he is without desire and without sorrow.'[129] Hazrath Rabiya, a woman Sufi saint conceived God as male and addressed him as *Masuqh*. In Baul cult the eternal Beloved becomes the *Shain ;* this is undoubtedly a Sufi idea but in regard to the *Lover* as women it is an Indian conception In this connection it may be said that the conception of Shain has certain definite development. In the first stage it is the *Murshid*, in the second or intermediary stage it is the Prophet Muhammad (Sm), or Krishna and Caitanya as God incarnate. In the third or final stage it is God Himself. But this final stage the Bauls could never achieve or attain and that is why they hanker after Him. He is an Invisible Being the Man of the Heart and whom he touches he is made great. Prophet Muhammad (Sm.), Krishna or Caitanya all, according to the Bauls, have become both man and superman because of His sudden touch. And it is their love and devotion which brought them so close to Him. It has already been mentioned that the first Sufis were the Arabs but they had a different approach to God. Fear of God, fear of Hell and fear of Death formed the basic principles of their creed. But the Persian element soon

129. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Islamic Mysticism Iran and India (Reprinted from the Indo-Iranica Vol. I, No. II, October 1946), pp. 24 (Br. Ar. Up, IV, 3, 21 Tr. R. E. Hume).

brought about certain changes in the whole doctrine. In the 8th century, Hazrath Rabiya was one of the first to bring the idea of love into Sufism. It was all absorbing and self-effacing. For Rabiya it was a burning love which scorned to think of Paradise or Hell. 'God no more becomes the great task master it is a Soul of Beauty who can be appreciated only through love'. On this, Nicholson comments, "The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost the Universal self is found or in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicates and becomes united with God. Asceticism, purification, love, gnosis, saintship are developed from this cardinal principle."[130] This conception of Sufis with regard to their love finds an echo in the Bauls—the Man of the Heart. The Sufi conception of God as Beloved is purely the idea of their own. It does not bring in the picture of God who is all powerful, Omnipotent, Omniscient and who is to be afraid of and to whom everybody must surrender without question.

The *Shain* of the Baul cult is not the 'Brahma' as explained by H. C. Paul. But we agree to his point when he says, 'he is the Mashuq or Beloved of the Sufis'. He is in fact the *Maner Manush* on which Rabindranath built his Jivan Devata principle. H. C. Paul in his article on 'Chari-Chandra' has compared 'Chandra' or moon to the mind. And 'Chari-Chandra' as the four gradual developed states of the mind. He

130. R. A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam, London, 1966, page 89.

went so far as to explain the 'Chandra-bhed' as the splitting of the mind or the mind being crushed.[131]

But this is not true. The Bauls speak of 'Chandra' or the moon and in their explanation of the moon they bring both Sahajiya and Sufi interpretation. 'Chandra' or the moon forms the very basis of the Baul cult. It has indeed, certain stages of development but not that one as explained by H. C. Paul.

The Bauls, believe in a very selective child birth and this moment is earnestly looked for by the Bauls. After menstruation woman becomes fit for child birth. The Bauls consider the bright fortnight as the possible step for child birth. This is the first part of the cycle. But here again, there is a definite point. It has a close semblance with the cycle of the moon. The moon when full is the period when child birth is admissible. In this case again, the time and moment will be fixed only when it suits the purpose. Because all moon-rise and full moon are not considered suitable for child birth. The Bauls follow certain method in fixing the time and occasion. This occasion is hardly available to the Bauls. The Bauls are very much against improper child birth. They maintain certain restriction. Of course, for the common and ordinary Bauls the spiritual leader suggests complete birth control because they fear that there may be a misuse of the semen which the Bauls consider very holy. Birth control also thus forms an important part of the Baul cult. These they achieve by certain procedures. They say that in every

131. H. C. Paul, Baul Poets on Chari-Chandra, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Vol. XVIII, No. I, April 1973, pp. 13.

tree there is a flowering time but every tree does not bear fruit. Similarly in every woman though there is a menstrual flow, after every menstruation a woman does not acquire the child bearing capacity. These they understand by following certain procedures. Further they count days and adopt breathing control.

The Bauls consider the human body as something very important because it contains the soul. The body is a means and the proper knowledge and understanding of the body help realise the soul or the Maner Manush. The body consists of four elements, earth, air, fire and water. The Bauls do admit of these elements. 'Chari-Chandra bhed' means the splitting of the body into four aforesaid typical elements. These are necessary for the realisation of the truth or the Man of the Heart. We have already discussed that the Bauls speak of the human body as moon from a figurative point of view. For both body and soul are important and they are closely related to each other. The Bauls believe that the soul has two parts—the one is upper, the soul pure and the other is lower, the mind. The pure soul represents the Paramatma. It is the *Maner Manush* or the Man of the Heart of the Bauls. Mind represents Jibatama. This mind is deceitful, and cares more for worldly pleasure than anything else. This is the beastly nature and the Bauls desire much to have a control over the mind. And these they try to achieve through their love and dedication to the Man of the Heart, whom they cannot perceive and yet they cannot avoid. Now to talk about the 'Chari-Chandra' or the four moon it may be said that the Bauls have tried to distinguish the colours of the four moon as Laal-bright

red, Zard-intrinsic yellow, Siyah-black and Safid-white. The four elements of the body which constitute the four moon of the Bauls are said to be of similar colours.

Professor Upendranath Bhattacharya has termed these elements as stool or filth, urine, menstrual flow and semen. According to him, these things have certain chemical action in the body of both male and female engaged in the *Sadhana*. These Bauls drink the liquid of woman or menstrual flow by admixturing the semen or the generative fluid of the male. Professor Upendranath Bhattacharya might have gathered these from certain Bauls who are Sahajiyas by faith. The Bauls who are Sufi bias take the soul into consideration.

Explaining the Baul cult Mr. Abdul Wali said, "They (the Bauls) argue thus ; whatever that is in the Universe is in the human body, so it is necessary to make love with human body. The Murshid, Guru or spiritual guide is to be found in it. He can only be found through woman. The temple of God is said to be in the middle of the earth but in fact that temple is in the centre of the human body.

God is present everywhere, so to sanctify one thing and to abuse the other, to eat some as clean and to reject others as unholy are not proper. Nay the very things rejected as unholy and unclean ought to be partaken of in reference to the other things, because

132. Professor Upendranath Bhattacharya, Banglar Baul O Baul Gaan, Orient Book Company, Calcutta, 2nd Edition (1378 BS), pp. 424.

man's body is unholy and unless unholy is mixed with unholy man does not attain spiritualism.....Man's mind is the scripture which should be cultivated and through which only the whereabout of the Murshid may be traced. Again, the ordinary Quran is in 30 sections but the remaining 10 sections are with Faquirs. It is not written but the heart communicates its contents.

Within the heart rise billows. To know oneself is the Faquiri. In the unwritten scripture of the mind we have faith and not in the written Quran. It is of no use to pray or to fast without knowing the secrets of life. So we sing deho-tatva (on the secrets of life). We make the milk sour in order to convert it into ghee (clarified butter). We pursue a different course from the ordinary religions to arrive at the desired end..... Water, fire, earth, wind are man's common property— they give benefit to all, irrespective of casts, creed and colour. So the devotees never distinguish between man and man as well as between man of different pursuits. If a believer be a true devotee although outworldy a Hindu or a Muhammadan or a Christian, he will shape his course according to his cardinal beliefs and not to the outer garments."[133]

(III)

We have already talked that the word 'Moon' has a special and peculiar meaning with the Bauls. These

133. Abdul Wali, On curious tenets and practices of a certain class of Faquirs in Bengal. The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. V, 1900, pp. 211-213.

are : 1) the sex urge (kama) by both the lover and the beloved. With the female it is also a kind of fluid discernible as soon as the menstrual flow stops normally. 2) the seminal fluid or the sparm of the male. 3) the lady love occasionally the lover and the child. 4) earth, water, fire and air—the four elements as chemical substance of the body. In the Baul cult these are known af four moons. Since the whole thing rests on the cosmogony or the creation of the universe as well as man, these four elements are considered very significant. 5) the human body. 6) the invisible soul as it works through the visible heart. In the Baul cult it is also known as the Man of the Heart. The soul has two grades—the higher and the lower. The Divinity and the Earthly. In the lower grade the mind operates through sense and sensibility of the body. Herein is sex play which is known as Leela, dominates. The Bauls believe that in the beginning of the creation the lord of the self was all alone. The lord known as *Shain* or god father in the Baul cult, became two with a feminine, known in the Baul cult as the god mother. Their sex play or *Leela* is believed to have been responsible for the creation of everything.

It may be mentioned here that the Baul cult is full of symbolism but this symbolism is to a great extent very much erotic in nature. In the Baul songs we come across several symbolic words taken from the Quran. These words when interpreted is far from actual meaning, viz, Bismillah (in the name of Allah), is interpreted by the Bauls as Bis mi Allah or Allah is in the semen (Bis) Alif, lam, mim—Alif stands for Adam, Lam for Allah and Mim for Maa (Mother eve or Hawa

In Bengali Hawa stands for wind or air). Mim also stands for Muhammad. Nur stands for light and Nukta stands for semen. In the Baul cult Nur or Nukta are considered one and these have erotic explanation.

The Bauls believe that Allah (the invisible) became a visible being in Adam through the puff or whiff which he made during the time he created Adam. The puff is also considered as soul or life force. This soul is embodiment of Allah (God) forming the Man of the Heart of the Baul cult. Adam is interpreted as the puff in Adam. The puff is taken as Hawa (Eve). Again the word Alif is taken for *Lingya*, the penis or the phallas. *Nur* or *nukta* are considered as seminal fluid. The word Ahad which refers to Allah, signifying oneness of God, is felt engrossed in *Adam* referred to Hazrath Muhammad, meaning all praised. The Bauls believe that if the syllable is dropped from the word Ahmad the word Ahad referring to Allah is available. Alif, Lam, Mim again interpreted as follows. Alif—Allah, Mim—Muhammad and Lam serves as a connecting link between Allah and Muhammad. It is the puff which has been interpreted as the soul. Lam referes to La Moqam or Lahut Moqam which is situated at the Heart. Sometimes the angel Jibrail is also considered as Lam who served as a via-media between Allah and Muhammad. Jibrail brought the Quran and the first message—'Read in the name of Allah'. The Arabic letter Nukta symbolises the drops of ink. It is believed that Jibrail serves the purpose of Nukta or connecting link between Allah and Muhammad. There is another Arabic letter—Nun which is very much significant in the Baul cult. It has a close semblance

with Lam. The point of difference is in fact the Nun is shorter than Lam and possesses a point overhead. This point is known as Nukta and it is very much suggestive because it stands for feritility. Both Nur and Nukta are considered one in Baul cult.

Besides these there are other words in Baul cult which are very suggestive and symbolical. These include : 1) Phul—flower, menstrual flow which paves way for ova, female germ or sex cell, capable of developing into a new individual when fertilised by male sparm. 2) Amavasya—darkest period preceding the appearance of new moon—the menstrual flow. 3) Purnima - the full moon. The Man of the Heart is compared to the full moon because the Bauls believe that all great men were born on the occasion. Their birth is thus identified with the full moon. Nir Khir—Nir refers to female fluid, Khir means the sparm or seminal fluid. Achin Pakhi means the unknown or the elusive. It refers to the soul which works through the human heart. Mind works into it. It is also connected with seminal fluid Adhar Manush also refers to the soul. It is also associated with seminal fluid. Tribeni refers to Bhaga or female genital organ. It is triangular in shape. The Bauls call it Tribeni because herein passes all the three courses of menstrual flow. For three days the Bauls make a close watch over the colour of the menstruation.

The Sahajiyas, of course, have different explanation with regard to certain terminology. The word 'Moon' is interpreted in the following four ways. 1) the male sparm, 2) the menstrual flow, 3) stool, 4) urine.

The Sahajiyas consider these things as a chemical substance of the body. Besides these they also speak of twenty four moons and a half. These are closely associated with Kama-sadhana or sex play.

It may be mentioned here that although the Bauls and the Sahajiya may interpret it as it suits them, the word moon is very much connected with sex play since ancient times. In the primitive thought the moon is conceived as the giver of natural fertility.[134] In love play both the lover and the beloved are considered as moon. The Bauls consider the Man of the Heart or the soul as moon because they feel that it is inconceivable. This is the spiritualistic conception of the moon which has a materialistic base in the Sahajiya and in this respect the Bauls are more close to the Sufis in regard to their treatment than the Sahajiyas.

I have talked to many Baul Faquirs as to their sexo-yoga practice. They told me that it was necessary for their understanding of the body mystery which, when realised, gives them perfect bliss. They also added, the sex-play was also necessary for their understanding of the cosmogony of the Universe as it follows the same course of action. In the Baul cult the female is considered a medium, a means to an end. The end is the discovery of the missing link between Man and God. The Bauls call it as the Man of the Heart or the Mind. The study of the

134. Thomson G.—Studies in Ancient Greek Society, London, Vol. I, 1949, p. 210 ff, Also quoted by Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Ibid p. 283-4.

different courses of child birth paves the way to the understanding of the missing link. This is connected with materialistic approach to life. The moon although is considered a female principle it ultimately, changes into a male principle when everything dissolves into a kind of non-duality. This male principle is the Shain or the Man of the Heart or the elusive bird or the Anqa of the Sufi mysticism. The Bauls do not consider the study of the sexo-yoga as perversion since they feel that it is part of their religion. There is, in fact an under current of curious mixture of alchemical process and obscene sexual rites on the one hand and Sufi spiritualism on the other. As I said earlier it is in the sexo-yoga practice the Bauls find semblance with the Sahajiyas. But the Bauls, particularly the Muslims do not follow the 'Rasa-sadhana' of the Sahajiya. Although the Rasa is understood to be the exudation of the body, it is in fact, the urine, menstrual flow, seminal fluid and female fluid. The four substance of the body are believed to be essential component for the preservation of the body. This conception of physical immortality gave the Sahajiyas the word for mercury or parada. According to Sahajiyas who also follow Tantrism mercurial preparation could make the body imperishable. Many Sahajiyas afterwards joined the Baul cult due to Sufi influence. And as such the Sahajiya conception of the immortality is also seen among certain Bauls.

These Sahajiya Bauls follow certain techniques like the respiratory technique, the sexual technique and the alchemical technique for the purpose of

attaining a state of immortality. The Sahajiya conception of Deha-vada rests on this philosophy and afterwards incorporated into the Baul cult. The Sahajiya sadhana which follows Yoga sadhana inserted the conception of a personal God afterwards due to influence of the Sufi sadhana. The Sahajiyas however differed on points from the Sufis. They believe that this God neither creates the Universe nor does he rule over it. He does not reward or punish the actions of men.

It may be mentioned here that the earlier Yoga sadhana did not include the conception of God and in the Sankhya—Yoga there is no conception of personal God. Garbe[135] writes, 'The idea of God, however, once having been received into the Yoga system, it became necessary to establish a connection between God and the world of mankind, for God could not continue to exist for his own sake alone. A relation between God and Man was found in the fact that, while God does not bestow earthly or heavenly felicity (for this is to be obtained only by individual merit and springs necessarily from it), He in His mercy aids the man who is entirely devoted to Him to remove the hindrances which stand in the way of the attainment of deliverence. But even this slight relation dependant on human devotion to God and on divine favour is with difficulty intelligible as combined with the doctrine of yoga.' The introduction of God into Sahajiya-yoga is possibly the result of a deliberate effort to modify

135. Encylopaedia of Religion of Ethics, Ibid p. 831-2.

it on spiritualistic lines. The Sufism of Islam might have influenced this idealistic conception of the Sahajiya yoga in later years.

Now a question arises why do the Bauls follow the sexo-yoga practice of the Sahajiya sect. To this question the Bauls make the following answer. According to them, as the birth of a child is caused by the union of male and female so does the creation of everything. The Tantrikas and the Sahajiyas maintain that the production of creation results from the union of *purusha* and *prakriti*. This idea was possibly formed on the study of the origin of the creation which involved Adam and Eve, the first male and the first female. Purusha originally meant the male human body and this had a reference to the earlier Upanishads.[136] The Prakriti was also understood as the female body. And the world is thus the effect of the sexual urge and the whole creation effected because of the union of this male and female. This understanding of the male and the female might have given rise to the conception of the eternal Man and the eternal Woman. And with it originated the sex rituals which were not considered a perversion. This too has a reference in the Chandogya Upanishad under Vamadevya Saman.[137] Saman means vedic chanting. The vedic sages attached great importance to the Vamadevya Saman wherein it is said, 'One summons—that is a Himkara. He makes request—that is a Prastava. Together with the woman he

136. Deviprasad Chattopadhya, Ibid p. 61.
137. Ibid p. 66.

lies down—that is Udgitha. He lies upon the woman —this is a Pratihara. He comes to the end—that is a Nidhana. He comes to the finish—that is a Nidhana. This is the Vamadevya Saman as woven upon copulation. He who knows this Vamadevya Saman as woven upon copulation comes to copulation, procreates himself from every copulation, reaches a full length of life, lives long, becomes great in offspring and in cattle, great in fame. One should never abstain from any woman. That is his rule.'[138] The whole Saman has a five fold division which is followed in the sexo-yoga practice of the obscure religious cults of Indo-Bangladesh. The Vamadevya Saman reflects fertility rituals.

In the Sankhya philosophy the human reproduction was considered a symbolic one. In Sankhya the Prakriti meant the primordial matter rather than the female and the Purusha meant the soul, rather than the male. Deviprasad[139] however holds opinion that in the original Sankhya philosophy there is a doctrine of the Pradhana which means the primary, the original, the chief or the first. The other term for the Pradhana is Prakriti. Deviprasad however maintains that the Purusha in the Sankhya is an indifferent one or udasina. This Purusha was understood to mean the soul by the later philosophers. According to the Sankhya the experienced world was basically real and

138. Hume R. E.—Thirteen Principal Upanishads, Oxford, 1921 (ii, 13), Quoted by Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Ibid p. 61.
139. Ibid p. 383.

the Purusha had no participation in it. The Vedanta made a departure from this theory. According to the Vedanta the experienced world is unreal and although the Purusha which is considered as the ultimate reality, the Purusha had no real participation in the actual world process.[140]

The Bauls consider the Purusha as the Man of the Heart or the soul of the souls. He is the *Shain* or the *Adahar Manush*. This idealistic conception of the Man of the Heart although it had its basis either in the Veda or the Vedanta it is Sufism which determined its nature afterwards. Deviprasad is of the opinion that the pastoral economy of the early Vedic people brought into vogue an outlook of male domination and since Purusha literally meant the male, it is here that we expect to find the principle of the Purusha raised to an exalted philosophical status.[141] The Bauls consider it a non-human phenomenon and the Vedanta and the Sufism both agree to this idea. The Sahajiya has, of course, a materialistic conception to the whole thing and herein they are close to the Sankhya philosophy. The term Prakriti is a Tantric phenomenon which means the female principle. In Tantrism, the human body, particularly the female body, was understood as the microcosm of the universe and as such the Prakriti became the cosmic principle. The Sahajiya and the Bauls more or less agree to this principle.

140. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Ibid p. 388.

141. Ibid p. 41.

Without going into no further detail on the subject we can conclude that the Man of the Heart is the ultimate goal for which the Bauls strive and it determines the entire Baul cult which is, in fact, the amalgamation of the Buddhist mysticism, Vaisnava Sahajiya and the Persian Sufism. The relation of the Man of the Heart and the human body is like honey.[142] The Vedanta speaks, 'This soul (atman) is honey for all things and all things are honey for this soul. This shining immortal Purusha who is in this soul and with reference to oneself, this shining immortal Purusha who exists as soul– he is just the soul this immortal, this Brahma, this all Verily this soul is overlord of all things, the king of all. As all the spokes are held together in hub and felly of a wheel, just so in this soul all things, all gods, all worlds, all breathing things, all these selves are held together.'[143] The Purusha is thus considered as the principle of consciousness and it is also identified with the ultimate reality. The Bauls of Bangladesh although do not differ to the concept of consciousness they however do not agree to the view that it is identified with the ultimate reality. They consider God as the ultimate reality and to Him everything surrenders or submits The Purusha of the Baul cult is the human soul. It is also considered as the unknown man or the elusive bird. They believe that God works in and through the human soul and it is thus an exalted link connecting between God and Man. We have already discussed that in Persian

142. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Ibid p. 404.

143. Ibid p. 403 (Tr. Hume p. 103-4.).

Sufism God is often considered as the sweetheart, or the 'Soul of Beauty and Tenderness who can be approached only through Love.'[144]

The idea of considering God as the Shain or Lord, the Lover is conceived by the Sindhi or the Punjabi Sufis who are believed to have visited Bangladesh in different groups.[145] The Bauls who had their base in Persian Sufism might have incorporated them into their cult. The sexo-yoga element in the Baul cult is possibly the result of a practice by certain Sufis who had taken great interest in it in order to come close to Indian thought. The work of Dara Shikoh, particularly his Persian treatise, Majma'ul-Bahrayn or 'Union of the Two Oceans' a Sanskrit version of which called the Samudra-sangama may be cited as an example. The Yoga Qalander is also a study of the Sufi practice in the light of the sexo-yogic culture. In Bhakti cult of Vaisnavism and Sahajiya the individual man is considered God. This is of course—'not a personal God with attributes such as the God of theism, but the incomprehensible God of absolutism'. The Bauls although influenced by the Sahajiya they differ on points particularly in matters of treatment of the conception of God. In this respect they are close either to Muslim mysticism or to the Vedanta.

The ultimate reality of the Vedanta is not a non-entity. It may be explained as pure being, pure intelligence and pure bliss. There is thus a point

144. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Op, cit p. 10.
145. Ibid p. 27,

of difference between the Buddhist mysticism and the Vedanta. The Buddhist mystics look for salvation in non-entity and consider the doctrine of universal nihilism of the Sunyavada. The Bauls of Bangladesh consider the ultimate reality as a pure being and the Man of the Heart which is also the Soul of Beauty is the connecting link between the ultimate reality and man.

(IV)

Sex idealism :

In Indo-Bangladesh mysticism is very much sex based. Here the relation of the soul to God is conceived in terms of the 'passionate adoration of a woman for her lover'. In Indo-Bangladesh the relationship between the sexes is regarded as 'a sacred mystery' and is never held to be suggestive of indecent ideas. 'Here life and religion cannot be separated from each other'. Of the religious cults the Sahajiya who shaped themselves into an order on the decline of Buddhism based their idea that in sexual love, 'there is a higher side pointing to love divine' and it is sex which paves the way to a spiritual attainment. Earl of Ronaldshay comments, 'In theory no doubt it was worship rather than love in its more worldly sense that it was sought to inculcate; but when the objects of such romantic attachment were young and beautiful women, and when further it was held that with a man's own life the highest results could not

be expected[146], the dangers of the creed become sufficiently obvious; and it is not surprising to learn that the early love poems inspired by the tenets of the cult and composed by a Buddhist scholar, Kanu Bhatta, later in the tenth century, were by no means free from obscenity.[147] The Sahajiyas however look at the whole thing from a spiritual point of view. They also introduced Parakiya Rasa into it. The love story of Krishna and Radha thus possesses a purely symbolic meaning. Krishna becomes a God incarnate and Radha—a human soul. Such a love makes a mystic longing in the heart of the devotee for the realisation of the ultimate reality. But this is not always true. Dinesh Chandra Sen observed, 'It goes without saying that in their earnest efforts to attain salvation by worshipping young and beautiful damsels, many a youth turned moral wrecks'[148] The Sahajiyas also came for a severe criticism even

146. Earl of Ronaldshay, The Heart of Aryavarta, London 1925, p. 145. 'Swami Vivekananda, speaking of the devotional exaltation of the Bhaktas in general, declares that it often happens that the devotees who sing in praise of divine love accept the language of human emotion in all its aspects as adequate to describe it. He admits that even the love of husband and wife is not intense enough for the inspired Bhakta. So he takes up as his ideal the idea of illegitimate love because the emotion in it is so strong'.
147. Ibid p. 146.
148. D. C. Sen, History of Bengali Language & Literature. Also see Ronaldshay, p. 148.

from scholars of Tantra.[149] The Sahajiya cult has been condemned as 'lust, mummery & black magic.'[150] These scholars are of the opinion that the system of worship as laid down for Tantrikas does include a ritual involving the practice of sexual intercourse. They however are of the opinion that the guidance of an experienced teacher is essential for the realisation of its ideals. But this has not been possible and the whole cult has fallen into a disastrous consequence of vulgarity.

The Baul cult has also been influenced by the Sahajiyas and although they maintain that the cult is indeed 'the repository of a high philosophic doctrine', this also met almost the same fate as that of Sahajiya. The Sufi influence on the Baul cult, however, puts a check to the moral erosion but since the Bauls do not follow all the instructions of the Sufis the deviation is always there.

(V)

Deha-vada : Bindu-sadhana and Birth control.

Deha-vada forms the basis of almost all the religious cults in Indo-Bangladesh particularly those which are obscure. It was very much in vogue in Buddhist India. The philosophy of the Buddhist mystics rest on Deha-vada. The Upanishads talked of Deha-vada. The Vaisnava-Sahajiya have their faith in Deha-vada and so does the Bauls of Bangladesh

149. Ibid p. 149, (Sir John Woodroffe and Brain Hodgson.)
150. Ibid.

but with a difference. In all cases the source of the same is sought in Tantrism. We have already talked that Deha, the material human body, was conceived by Tantrism as the microcosom of the universe itself. It was believed, 'the world originated from the union of the male and the female and that it could not have any other cause than kama or the sexual urge'. And sex thus governs the Indian religion except Christianity and Islam. This Deha-vada is believed to have been originated from agricultural magic and it rests on the fertility or productivity of nature—the female earth and the same was induced by the imitation of the human reproductive function. The human fertility is viewed as dependant on fertility of nature.[151] Deviprasad maintains that in primitive thought this has been considered that the birth of the universe is no more mysterious than the birth of a human baby.[152] This idea governs Tantrism, Upanishad, Buddhist and Vaisnava mysticism as well as Baulism.

In all these religious cults Deha-vada is considered as something necessary for physical immortality and as a result a complete control over discharge of semen into female genital organ is suggested. This control is achieved by number of practices such as 1) respiratory techniques. 2) sexual techniques. 3) gymnastic techniques and 4) alchemical techniques. These are known as Bindu sadhana. Such a conception was prevalent among the Taoists in ancient Chinese

151. Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya, Op. cit p. 333.
152. Ibid.

society.[153] The control of the semen from its obvious discharge into female genital organ is taken as liberation of the human body. This conception of liberation is closely associated with physical immortality. This is achieved by aforementioned practices which include mercurial preparation.

The one most important thing in the Baul cult which strikes the attention of a modern scientist is its scope for birth control. Birth control is in fact very old. There has been a reference of birth control in an ancient Papyrus written nearly 4,000 years ago. History suggests that the Greek philosophers had talked of it atleast 2,400 years back. In China the first library reference was made in a medical text as old as 1,300 years from today.

In Bangladesh Tantra and other religious cults including the Baul cult speak of birth control for hundreds of years. The Caryapada and the Buddhist mystic songs made reference to birth control during the 10th century. It was in fact a part of religions faith of the Buddhist mystics. The Buddhist mystics and the Vaisnava Sahajiyas go for complete birth control but the Bauls suggest for quality birth. Like the Buddhist or the Vaisnava Sahajiya this idea also

153. Needhum J.—Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. II, Cambridge, 1956, p. 426. 'It is then of great interest to find that just an ancient and early medieval Taoism was deeply interested in the phenomenon of sex, so also this was central of Tantrism'. Also see Deviprasad Chattopadhyaya. Lokayata.

forms the basis of their belief. For birth control, the Bauls make following observation. At the time of the menstruation of the female associate the Bauls examine the colour for three successive days. It is this study which enables the Baul to know for certain the period of fertility. The fertility period is divided into two parts. The good part forms the bright fortnight. It is the first phase of the cycle and it corresponds to the cycle of the moon rise and its culmination with full moon.

It is indeed difficult to get in touch with the rise of moon in the body and its different phases of development. And for this a ritualised 'coitus reservatus' performed on three successive days during the time of menstruation. The menstrual flow of the female is a guiding factor. The test is made on a piece of white cloth or with the help of tongue. The menstrual flow takes four different colour, Laal —bright red, Zard— intrinsic yellow, Siya—twilight black and Safid—white. The taste is also of three kinds—bitter, salty or sour and sweet or honey like. The Baul also considers the smell of the menstrual flow and the female associate during this time. The coveted moment for the union of male and female is proved by a peculiar fragrance coming out of the body of the female associate. A glow is also discernible in the appearance of the female associate and it is also significent and suggestive.

In my discussion I have already mentioned on number of occasion that the Baul cult is mostly a matter relating to *Bindu-sadhana* or a ritual concerning *bhaga* or female genital organ and the male

one. It differs on points with other obscure religious cults so far as the fertility cult is concerned. The Sahajiya suggests for complete birth control. Caitanya has been quoted as saying that Bindu-sadhana should be given top priority in the spiritual attainment of the Vaisnava sect.[154]

We have already mentioned that the Bauls believe in quality birth and for this they study the menstrual blood. The menstrual blood is considered since by gone days, as the basis of human reproductivity.[155] It is believed as the manifestation of the life giving power inherent in the female sex. The menstrual blood is called the flower in the Baul cult and Kusuma or Puspa in Tantrism. 'Red is renewal of life' and the menstrual blood when is pure red is considered suitable for child birth. It may be pointed out here that in Tantrism the female is compared to a plant. The plant yields fruits just as the female organ bears babies. And menstrual blood serves as a means to the child bearing capacity of women. The Bauls thus give much too importance to menstrual blood and herein they follow Tantrism and other Hindu yoga.

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154. Brindaban Das, Caitanya Bhagabath, Madhya Khando. p. 10.
'Prabhu bolen Krishna shakti Dhatur prachar
Dhatu sutra Bakhaniye shuno sharbajan
Dekhi kar shakti acchey karo khandon'.

155. Crooke W.—Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India, Oxford, 1926. Religion and Folklore of Northern India. Oxford, 1926, p, 250.

It may not be out of place here to mention that there is science in the Baul cult. The Bauls like Tantra and other religious cults go for the preservation of the body which could be obtained by mercury and by the suppression of breath. The Bauls follow something which cures them from sickness and disease. I have seen an old Baul of 86 years looking excellent and fresh with youthful vigour. This Baul takes urine and female fluid which precedes the menstrual blood of a young unmarried girl. This female fluid is known in the Baul cult as *Akhanda-Rasa* and the rituals connected with it known as Akhanda-sadhana.

In fact the Bauls contribute to different Bangladeshi medicine. Mr. Abdul Wali[156] makes the following observation. 'In the district of the 24 Parganas, Nadiya, Jessore and Khulna and probably in other parts of Bengal, a class of mendicants is to be seen who are called by different names and whose peculiar habits, unshaven hair and repulsive manners are as much a curiosity to a strangers as the rigid secrecy they maintain with regard to their tenets and practices is inexplicable. What these men believed and practices are only known to the members of the 'mystic cult', but never to others,- even to those intimately connected with them. My attention to them was attracted

156. Mr. Abdul Wali, the author of the article, On Curious Tanets and Practices of Certain Class of Faquirs in Bengal Published in the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. V, No. IV, (1900) was a Subregistrar in Sailkupa under Jhenidah Subdivision in 1884.

first in this way. I had in my employ a servant aged apparently 22 who had been suffering from intestine cholic, which had reduced him a mere skeleton. He tried several medicines while in my employ and after he had left it, with no efiect. Those who are acquianted with the disease, can testify that it is very hard to cure and baffles the skill of physicians. For a time I did not see the young man. Inquiry revealed that a Faquir—commonly called Narar Faquir had cured him of the malady. When I next saw him, I found him a new man—hale, hearty and robust. I tried my best to have a talk with the Faquir and to procure from all other sources information regarding the mode of treatment and the medicine used. But beyond the fact that they can cure all diseases that flesh is heir to, I could gather no useful information.'

I know many Baul Faquirs who have also cured many diseases. The one such Faquir was Aftab Shah who died some years back at the age of 80 in a Jessore village There is a chemical process in regard to urine, stool and menstrual blood which are used for treatment of different diseases. Birth control is one which the Bauls most successfully achieved following a chemical process of menstrual blood.

I myself know some of the alchemy of the Baul cult which help cure disease & attain birth control. The Bauls also believe that a man should preserve his body by means of mercurial preparation of all the four elements of the body. They maintain, in this particular case, that stool, urine, menstrual blood and semen are the chemical substance of the four elements of

the body, viz, earth, water, air and fire. According to them these mercurial preparation could make the body imperishable. One thing significant here is that most of the Bauls prefer to take a young girl as a female associate and Lalan Shah, the great Baul had a young woman named Bishakha as his female associate. He had, of course, another lady who used to take care of him. Her name was Matijan Bibi, wife of Malam Shah of Seuria village. Malam Shah donated a vast area of his landed property to Lalan Shah and herein the mausoleum of Lalan Shah and Lalan Academy are built up.*

* I talked to some of my friends in the medical profession who are of the opinion that the medicine as used by the Baul Faquirs with regard to the curing of different diseases and more particularly the method they adopt for birth control, should be taken up by the scientists and they believe, this may prove fruitful to the medical science.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND THE BAULS

Rabindranath Tagore was a Baul, if not by his faith because he did not receive any 'Mantra' or 'Kalma' but atleast by his action and love. Dr. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta and Edward C. Dimock have termed him as the greatest of the Bauls of Bengal.[157] They did so because many of his songs express 'most perfectly the Baul like yearning of the individual personality for the Divine.'[158] In fact, Tagore has shown the importance of the Baul songs in the making of his genius. And although Tagore as a Baul should be 'viewed only as an honorary title'[159], it was Tagore who put the Bauls on a 'respectable level by his praise of the beauty of their songs and spirit and by his frank and proud acknowledgement of his own poetic debt to them.'[160] Rabindranath was very much drawn towards the Bauls since his childhood. He was born in a family which nurtured the folk culture.

157. Dr. Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, Obscure Religious Cults & Edward C. Dimock, 'Rabindranath Tagore —The Greatest of the Bauls of Bengal, Journal of Asian Studies XIX, No. 1 (November, 1959).
158. Charles H. Capwell, The Esoteric Belief of the Bauls of Bengal, Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (February, 1974) p. 250.
159. Ibid.
160. Dimock, The Place of Hidden Moon (The Bauls of Bengal), Chicago, 1966, p. 253.

His father Maharshi Devendranath preached liberalism in religion and he was a pillar of the Adi-Brahmo-samaj. He was also an ardent admirer of the Persian Sufi poets. The influence of Persian Sufi poets and the Western thought also left a tremendous impact on the mind of Rabindranath. In his childhood days he came in contact with the Vaisnava and the Baul singers and it was his visits at Shelaidah Kuthibari in Kushtia with his elder brother Jatirindranath Tagore during his youth which made possible for him to know the Bauls more closely. It was this time possibly when he could come in contact with the Great Baul saint Lalan Shah. Although a section of people feels otherwise, there had been speculations over his meeting with Lalan Shah while he was in Shelaidah particularly in his very youth. There is, of course, no mention of such a meeting in Tagore's writings or discussions nor Lalan's name. His elder brother Jatirindranath Tagore drew up a pencil sketch of Lalan Faquir on the Padma boat while cruising over the Padma along with other members of his family. It was 5th May, 1889. Lalan died on October 17, 1890. This sketch of Lalan Faquir has recently been discovered from Rabindra-bharati in Jora-sanko home of the Tagores. This sketch was declared lost by a section of people and a different sketch not at all drawn by Jatirindranath was given wide publicity for reasons not known. This imaginary sketch was drawn by Nandalal Basu and it was used by Dr. Upendranath Bhattacharya in his book, 'Banglar Baul O Baul Gaan'. Dr. Bhattacharya however received this sketch from Sree Sachindranath Adhikari who got it drawn by

Nandalal Basu. It was Sachindranath Adhikari who circulated a story regarding the meeting of Rabindranath Tagore with Lalan Faquir in one of his books.[161] But in other editions he used a foot note wherein he mentioned that Jatirindranath Tagore might have such meeting with Lalan. The original sketch has, however, been kept preserved in the museum of Rabindra-bharati, Calcutta.

In fact, Jatirindranath and Rabindranath Tagore were among the first to recognise the poetic genius of Lalan Shah. It was Rabindranath who was the first to make a proper assessment of his songs. In deed, he it was who brought Lalan to the limelight when twenty of his songs which he collected during his stay at Shelaidah, six miles from Kushtia town and Lalan Academy, were published in an issue of monthly Prabashi, Calcutta. (1322 B. S. April-May, 1915). Besides the Zemindari Estate the Tagores had a business concern at Kushtia town and Rabindranath lived there occasionally. It was very near Seuria village where the present Academy is located. It is here Lalan died.

Rabindranath Tagore was so much influenced by the songs of Lalan Shah and the Bauls of Bangladesh that in many of his songs he adapted Baul tune and wordings. His 'Gitanjali' or 'Song Offerings' bear ample testimony to this truth. Tagore in number of

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161. Sachindranath Adhikari, Pallir Manush Rabindranath, 1st Edition 1352, p. 35.

of his lectures[162] delivered home and abroad he talked about the Bauls. '.....These people roam about singing their songs, one of which I heard years ago from my road side window, the first two lines remaining inscribed in my memory :

'Nobody can tell whence the bird unknown
Comes into the cage and goes out
I would feign put round its feet
the fetter of my mind
Could I but capture it.'

This village poet evidently agrees with our sage of Upanishad who says that our mind comes back baffled in its attempt to reach the unknown being ; and yet this poet like ancient sage does not give up adventure of the infinite, thus implying that there is a way to its realisation ..... It reminds me of Shelley's poem in which he sings of the mystical spirit of beauty :

The awful shadow of some unseen power
Floats, though unseen, among us visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep flower to flower,
Like moon beams that behind some piny mountain shower.

It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance.

That this unknown is the profoundest reality though difficult of comprehension is equally admitted by the English poet as by the nameless village singer of

162. Rabindranath Tagore, The Philosophy of Our People, Presidential Address at the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1925.

Bengal, in whose music vibrate the wing-beats of the unknown bird, only Shelley's utterance is for the cultured few, while the Baul song is for tillers of the soil, for the simple folk or our village households who are never bored by its mystic transcendentalism.

On other occasion Rabindranath said, '..... I felt that I had found my religion at last, the Religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and co-operation. This idea of mine found at a later date its expression in some of my poems addressed to what I called Jivan-devata, the lord of my life. (emphasis added)'.....'It spoke of an intense yearning of the heart for the divine which is in man and not in the temple or scriptures, in images and symbols.'[163] Tagore started collecting Baul songs from 1883 and continued for a greater part of his life. This he did mostly during his stay in Shelaidah. Some of these songs as we said earlier, were published in the monthly Prabashi and his love for the Bauls was so much so that he published a book-let under the caption, 'Baul' in 1905. It was printed by P. Roy on behalf of the Majumdar Library, 20 Karnawalis Street. The price of the book-let was two annas.

It may be mentioned here that two more persons Nafar Chandra Dutta and Nirmal Chandra Chattopadhyaya collected Baul songs and published them in

163. Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of Man, (London 1931), p. 96-97. Hibbert Lecture Delivered in Oxford Univers 3, 1930.

the monthly Prabashi[164] prior to Rabindranath. But none of these collectors did make any study on them. It was Tagore who in fact initiated a systematic study on the Bauls and their songs. He commented that there is always an inter connection between the folk literature and the modern one.[165] He writes, "Those who are acquianted with my writings, they know it very well that I have expressed my love and regard for the Baul songs in number of my essays. I have infused tunes of Baul songs into many of my songs and I have also consciously or unconsciously followed them in other cases as well with regard to composition of songs. From this, it is quite evident that the Baul tune and wordings have quite easily entered into my feelings which I cannot ignore."[166]

Such is the feeling of Tagore for the Bauls and their songs. He acknowledged their debt in his youth when he wrote an essay on the songs of the Bauls in an issue of their family Journal, Bharati.[167] Rabindranath in one of his letters addressed to Nandalal Sengupta[168] pleased to declare himself as 'Rabindra

164. The Baul songs of Tagore were published in the monthly Prabashi, No. VIII. Calcutta 1915. Songs collected by Nafar Chandra were published in 1883 and those of Nirmal Chandra Chattopadhyaya in 1886.
165. Tagore, Loka-Sahitya (1907), p. 91.
166. Prabashi Caitra 1334, Calcutta. English rendering by the Author.
167. Bharati, Baisak 1290 B. S. p. 34. Editor, Dijendranath Tagore, Publisher Jatirindranath Tagore.
168. Nandalal Sengupta, Kacher Manush Rabindranath, p. 100. The letter dated 3rd Jaistha, 1345 B. S.

Baul' and stated that he had heard original songs of the Bauls while he was at Shelaidah and met number of them. He, in fact, collected as many as 298 songs of Lalan Shah. These songs have been kept preserved in the Library of Viswa-Bharati, Santinekatan.

The Baul world and the natural scenery of Kushtia particularly the mighty Padma made a lasting impession on the poet. These have shaped the poetic genius of Tagore and became a source of pleasure to his creative force. He published a collection of songs under the caption 'Baul' in 1905 with an introduction detailing his deep attachment and yearning for the Bauls. So much was the impact of the Bauls on him that he made a reference to a Baul song (Nobody can tell whence the bird unknown comes to the cage) in one of his novels, 'Gora' published sometime in 1314 B. S. Besides these, Rabindranath himself portrayed the role of a blind Baul in his plays. His poetical works and innumerable short stories portray the Baul philosophy and ideas. So great was the impression that he could not forget it till the end of his life. In 'Shesh Saptak' which was composed during the last part of his life he presented the idea in modern ferment.

It may be mentioned here that the Jivan-devata conception of Tagore was formulated purely by his contact with the Bauls of Bangladesh. Jivan-devata or 'Life's deity" does not reflect the idea of his 'God'. Sati Ghosh comments, 'It seems he never knew what his God was like and perhaps he never wanted to know. He seems to have enjoyed thoroughly the initial

stages of God intoxication and like the philosopher Bernard Bosanquet believed that the hankering for the infinite in man was his religion.'[169] This idea of Rabindranath has a close semblance with the Man of the Heart of the Bauls. The Jiban-devata conception of Tagore was his cosmic consciousness. It was his key to his God consciousness. Tagore writes, 'According to Upanishads, the key to cosmic consciousness to God-consciousness, is in the consciousness of the soul. To know our soul apart from the self is the first step towards the realisation of the supreme deliverence.'[170]

Rabindranath was drawn towards the songs of the Bauls because he discovered in it the philosophy of the Upanishads. He says, 'The Upanishads say with great emphasis. Know thou the One, the Soul. It is the bridge leading to the immortal being. This is the ultimate end of man, to find the One which in him; which is his truth. which is his soul; the key with which he opens the gate of the spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom.'[171]

Explaining his Jiban-devata conception and the Man of the Heart of the Bauls Rabindranath says, 'Man's cry is to reach his fullest expression. It is this desire for self expression that leads him to seek wealth and power. But he has to discover that

169. Sati Ghosh, Rabindranath, Calcutta 1949, p 23.
170. Rabindranath Tagore, Sadhana, 1920 (Indian Edition). p. 30.
171. Ibid p. 35-36.

accumulation is not realisation. It is the inner light that reveals him, not outer things. When this light is lighted, then in a moment he knows that Man's highest revelation is God's own revelation in him. And this cry is for this—the manifestation of his soul, which is the manifestation of God in his soul. Man becomes a perfect man, he attains his fullest expression, when his soul realises itself in the infinite being who is *Avih* whose very essence is expression.....

The revealment of the infinite in the finite which is the motive of all creation, is not seen in its perfection in the starry heavens, in the beauty of the flowers. It is in the soul of man. For there, will seeks its manifestation in will, and freedom turns to win its final prize in the freedom of surrender.'[172] And then he concludes, 'I can never forget that scrap of a song I once heard in the early dawn in the midst of the din of the crowd that had collected for a festival the night before; 'Ferryman, take me across to the other shore!' In the bustle of all our work there comes out this cry, 'Take me across' The carter in India sings while driving his cart, 'Take me across.' The itinerant grocer deals out his goods to his customers and sings, 'Take me across.'

What is the meaning of this cry? We feel we have not reached our goal; and we know with all our striving and toiling we do not come to the end, we do not attain our object. Like a child dissatisfied with its dolls, our heart cries, 'Not this, not this. But what is that other? Where is the further shore?'

172. Rabindranath, Sadhana, Ibid p 40-41.

The struggle is on and there will be no end of this sufferings till the Jivan devata or the Man of the Heart accepts him. Rabindranath says, "This 'I' of mine toils hard, day and night for a home which it knows as its own. Alas, there will be no end of its sufferings so long as it is not able to call this home thine, Till then it will struggle on, and its heart will ever cry, 'Ferryman, lead me across.' When this home of mine is made thine, that very moment is it taken across, even while its old walls enclose it. This 'I' is restless. It is working for a gain which can never be assimilated with its spirit, which it never can hold and retain. In its efforts to clasp in its own arms that which is for all, it hurts others and is hurt in its turn, and cries, 'lead me across.'..... Where I can meet thee unless in this my home made thine? Where I can join thee unless in this my work transformed into thy work? If I leave my home I shall not reach thy home; if I cease my work I can never join thee in thy work. For thou dwellest in me and I in thee. Thou without me or I without thee are nothing. Therefore in the midst of our home and our work, the prayer rises, 'lead me across."[173]

The aforesaid line of the Baul song which Rabindranath explained in connection with his interpre ation of Jivan-devata and the Man of the Heart of the Bauls is from Lalan. Herein we very well discern the impact of the Baul idea on the great poet. The Baul idea of the Man of the Heart is possibly

173. Rabindranath, Ibid p. 162-164.

derived from Sufism of Persia. And the Upanishads also, speak of the same Rabindranath was astonished how these illiterate Bauls could speak of such a philosophy in such an unusually easy terms.

Rabindranath was inspired not by their obscure *Sadhana* but by their thoughts which he considered the Alpha and Omega of his poetic career. In fact, the Baul thought together with other Oriental ideas brought for him the coveted Novel prize. And Tagore owes deep debt of gratitude to the Bauls of Bangladesh for this great honour.*

* For details, please see my book Rabindranather Shelaidah, published by the Folklore Research Institute, Kushtia.

BAUL MUSIC : ITS ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh is primarily a land of villages and her attitude though occasionally guided by modern ideas, is dominated by traditional beliefs, superstitions, manners, customs and observances passed through generations. The ethnic origin of the bulk of population, though still a matter of conjecture, can be said, taking the physical feature of the people at a glance, to be an admixture of different stocks. And most of the people belong to a common, ordinary life with their age-old beliefs and ideas. Such a stock can very well be termed as folk since the connotation does not mean otherwise.

Bangladesh is an agricultural country and her villages with the exception of few are still in a semi-primi ive level. They have not yet experienced the manifold changes in the social and economic pattern—the flow of information, the circulation of knowledge and ideas in modern human society. It is because their communication is yet to be developed and it is surprising that some of the villages have no good roads leading either to the town or to the nearest police stations. The houses in such villages are clumped together, fields stressed in all direction from the village. There is hardly any industry but there are people who work diligently at handloom, pottery, smithcraft, carpentry and house-building. Most of the houses are neat and well-built with traditional

designs. These people love music. The popular song of the country is her folk song. The folk song is the traditional music of the country. It is her heritage, both cultural and social. Man and music are one—singularly one. So in Bangladesh the proper study of the culture of her people is through her music. The music reveals the whole man—the eternal man.

Folk music in Bangladesh presents a non-Aryan attitude, but the Aryan and the other foreign elements are not altogether missing. There is, in fact, a cultural diffusion and it is as much true as the race itself.

The folk people of Bangladesh are mostly religious and so is their song. The secular element though not untraceable is always a mixed one. But we should bear it in our mind that although the folks are religious, they are religious in a peculiar way. There is no doubt that they do believe in certain major religions-Islam and Hinduism, for example, but in their way of living and approach to life they develop certain codo or principles of their own and these are both erotic and esoteric in nature.

Although Bangladesh is chiefly a Muslim populated area the age-old association of her people with the *Sahajiya* cult of the Buddhists and the Hindus has led to a remarkable change in their approach to life, more particularly in their music. It may be mentioned here that folk song in Bangladesh is chiefly the product of the Muslim folk who have cultivated and nurtured the same since bygone days. Hindu scholars including Kshitimohon Sen, Dinesh Chandra Sen, Guru

Saday Dutt, Ashutosh Bhattacharja, Shashi Bhushan Dasgupta have gratefully acknowledged the Muslim contribution to the origin and development of folk song of Bangladesh.

According to Dr. Abdul Halim, "Indian music owes deep debt of gratitude to the religious movements in India. Muslim mystics being the ambassadors of Muslim culture used music as a vehicle for the spread of their cult, long before its patronage by the Muslim kings ..... The Chistiya mystics allowed *Sama* to be played with the accompaniment of *dafl* only in their devotional gatherings as means of inspiring spiritual ecstasy and the *Khankas* of Multan, Ajodhan (Pakpathan). Delhi, Gour and elsewhere did useful service in spreading a taste for music."[174]

K. M. Panikkar, an Indian scholar while recognising the Muslim influence said, "Such influences as become apparent in the field of thought were in religion and here the ancient Bhakti philosophy merged harmoniously with the Sufi doctrines, between the mystics song of Ramananda, Kabir and Mirabai and the Sufi saints of Islam.'[175] According to Sir John Marshall, "Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar,

174. A. Halim, History of the growth and development of North Indian music during Sayyid-Ludhi period, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan Vol. I, Dacca, 1956, pp. 53-54.

175. K. M. Panikkar, A Survey of Indian History, Bombay, 1971, p. 148.

as the Mahomedans and the Hindus, meeting and mingling together."[176]

Muslims, in fact are never opposed to religious songs. History speaks that in the first century after the Hijra we hear of several Arab singers, natives of Mecca and Medina, who set favourite passages to music and hundreds of examples of these songs are to be found in the *Kitabul-Aghani* or Book of Songs.

But there is no doubt that Sufi music was chiefly developed in Persia. In India the Sufi music was first introduced by the Chistiya school. One of the earliest of the Sufis, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan (1170-1225) is said to have left a book on Sufi doctrines and practices including musical exercises. Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Nizamuddin Balkhi, Latif Shah, Amir Khasrau of Delhi and many others contributed much to the Sufi music. Qalandaria and Suhrawardia—the two other Sufi schools also cultivated Sufi music.[177] The Muslim Sufis thus left a tremendous impact on the mind of the people of India and Bangladesh.

Dr. Enamul Haq, while commenting on the *Samkirtana music* of Chaitnya Dev of Nadia says, "In so far as these things are concerned, as '*Samkirtana*' perfectly resembles the Sufi performance of '*Halqah*'. A '*Halqah*' literally means an assembly of persons met together for the purpose of devotional exercises

176. Cambridge History of India, III, p. 518.

177. R. A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1953, p. 236.

through the medium of *Dhikr* accompanied by musical performance of *Sama*. Congregation, music, exhortations, dance, ecstasy and devotion all these are common in both 'Samkirtana' and 'Halqah'. In the realm of ideas and their concrete manifestations, resemblances like these cannot be possible as strange coincidences."[178]

Dr. Enamul Huq has gone so far as to find out a point of similarity between the *Ghazliyat* of the Sufis and the *Padavali* Sahitya of the Vaishnavas. According to him both the word Padavali and the Ghazliyat conveyed the same meaning. The ideas, they convey. the pictures they depict, the symbols they use, the way they are interpreted, in the manner they are sung—all these are similar. Dr. Enamul Huq maintains that the Padavalis were conceived and written exactly on the model of the Sufi Hagiologies, known as *Tadhkirah-i-Awlia*. He claims further that the type of literature the Sufis produced was unknown to the pre-Chaitanya literature of Bengal. *Horsha-Charitam* or *Ram-Charitam*, the early biographies of the Hindus differ greatly with latter biograghies of the Hindus.

The Samkirtana of Chaitanya Dev was not any new introduction into the world of music of Indo-Bangladesh. *Kirtan* as a distinct form of dance music was prevalent among the Oraon tribes of Chotto Nagpur, India.[179] These Oraon dance poems are of

178. M. E. Huq, Impact of Islam on the Gaudian form of Vaishnavism, JASP, Vol. XIII, No. 2 Aug, 1968, p. 135.

179. Ibid p. 135.

four lines and are fitted to the drum rhythms. These are songs by the boys and girls in advance and reverse action. The first two lines are called the *or*, it means the opening, and the first and fourth lines are known as the Kirtan or reverse.

The Sufi music Sama has almost same musical sequence. But Sufi music is non-erotical. Eroticism, in fact, existed long before Chaitanya. It is a non-Aryan element. Chaitanya, however, made certain improvement regarding erotic practices when he introduced divine love into it. But the Vaishnava Sahajiya which is an ofishoot of Chaitanya's Vaishnavism makes the full exploitation of eroticism both in their thought and music.

The Baul song although erotical in certain respect, presents a mystical view with Sufi belief predominating. The difference between Baul and other religious folk song lies in the fact that the Baul song is occasionally ritualistic while the other is not.

The Baul music was developed as a distinct form in the 9th century and with the advent of Lalon Shah, the greatest Baul, a tremendous impact on the mind of man was exerted. Abdul Wali, commenting on the curious tenets and practices of certain class of Faquirs in Bengal, says, "Another renowned and the most melodious versifier, whose dhuyas are the rage of the lower classes and sung by boatmen and others was far famed Lalon Shah. He was a disciple of Seraj Shah and both were born at village Harishpur, sub-division Jhenidah, Dist. Jessore..... After travelling long and making pilgrimages to Jagannath and

other Shrines and meeting with all sorts of devotees, he at last settled at mauza Siuriya, near the then sub divisional head-quarter of Kushtia (Nadia). There he lived, feasted, sang and worshipped and was known as *Kayastha* and died. His disciples are many and his songs are numerous."[180]

In Kushtia, Jessore and Khulna the Baul song is also known as *Bhavgaan* or thought-provoking song. Common people also confuse this song with another mystic type which is known as *Shabdagaan* or word music. This song is made of mystic word carefully chosen and is sung in accompaniment of *Ektara* (One-String), *Do-tara* (Two-String) and *Dugi* (Kettle drum) which is tied to the waist of the singer. Pagla Kanai of Jessore, a contemporary of Lalon Shah was very famous for this type of song. He used to sing before thousands of people keeping them spellbound for hours together. Shabdagaan is also a kind of mystic song but non-ritualistic and non-meditative. But Baul song is both meditative and ritualistic.

The Bauls are not primarily a singing group and do not form a part of "the village labouring class". They are again neither "mad" nor "crazy" but are certainly very much in love with the Divine self.

In Baul song speech is more important and these are carefully set to surprise the fellow-Bauls. It is

180. Abdul Wali, On curious Tenets and Practices of a certain class of Faquirs in Bengal, Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 17.

a part of their religious practice and the typical language of the Baul song can be understood only when one is initiated. Thus the importance of Guru or Guide is always there.

The melody of the Baul song is always very simple and in its composition it does not conform to the rules set by classical school or established pattern. In Bangladesh the tune of the Baul song is of two types, one, as practised and sung by the Bauls living in the *Akhras*, two, as sung by the nomadic Bauls before large gatherings. Song composed by Lalon Shah and as practised by latter Bauls also undergoes same sort of experience. At Siuriya Akhra in Kushtia where Lalon lived and died the melody is gentle, calm and sonorous. But when sung by the nomadic Bauls this is very much vigorous, high-pitched and strong. It is because in the Akhras the the singers when present a song consider it their religious rite but outside of it the feeling is just the opposite. The performance of the invidual singer counts most because he is to satisfy large number of audience.

The Baul songs of West Bengal are of different type so far the text and tune are concerned. The Bauls of West Bengal, because of pre-dominance of Vaishnavism follow Sahajiya pattern and in many respects the songs are *Kirtana* and *Jhumur*-biased. Although Sufism is not altogether missing the text is based mostly on Krishna, Radha and Gour (Chaitanya). Purna Das Baul is a neat singer of Baul song in West Bengal. He is a son of *Khepa* (mad) Baul of Birbhum. He lives in West Bengal and has

earned international reputation as a singer. But his tune differs widely from other Baul singers of West Bengal. He pays with *Khamak* and brass anklet bells, making a *Jhum-Jhum* sound on his feet. He makes a free play of the tune while he presents his song. Manju Das, his wife also a fine singing voice. Amar Pal is another singer of Baul song. But he has modernised the tune to a great extent. All of them live in Calcutta and they are Radio artistes.

In Birbhum, Pankaj Banerjee, Shivram Giri, Ram Chandra Mondol are quite famous as singers. But originally none of them were Bauls by faith and their tune serves the modern mind to a great extent. Pankaj Banerjee occasionally presents Baul song in Calcutta city.

In Bangladesh the text and tune are Sufi-biased but in no case these have any semblances of *'Bhatiali'* or *'Bhawaiya'*. The Baul songs of Bangladesh originated chiefly in Kushtia and Jessore districts and these have a close semblance of *Shabdagaan* (word-music) of Southern region and *Murshidi* of Eastern region.

In Siuriya Akhra where Lalon Academy is established to perpetuate the memory of Lalon, Ismail Shah was a great singer. At present Golam Yasin Shah and Abdul Ghani Shah maintain more or less same trend which they learnt from their *Guru*. Golam Yasin Shah is senior to Abdul Ghani. He claims that he has learnt it from his Guru Bholai Shah, a direct disciple of Lalon Shah. Both of them are real Bauls. Of them Golam Yasin Shah is held in high esteem

because of his long association with the cult. Both these artists play Baul song with *Ektara* (One-string) in accompaniment of *Khamak, Jurri and Dugi*. According to these singers Lalon Shah did not use Ektara. He played with a kind of instrument not in use now-a-days. It is a very small drum played by a single finger.

Behal Shah, Kanai Shah, Mahendra Shah, Jharu Shah, Nemai Shah, Khoda Bakhsha Shah, Mahim Shah, Abdul Karim Shah, Khorshed Shah, Fakhir Chand, Jomela Khatun, Laily Begum, Nani Bala, Khejmat Shah, Matu Shah are few names who have earned name and fame as Baul singers. Kanai Shah is very much famous for his song which he plays in accompaniment of dance sequence. He belongs to Jessore and aged over 80 years He is known as Khepa Baul. Behal Shah is also a singer of repute and has a long association with the cult. But these singers differ greatly from those who live in Siuriya Akhra of Lalon Shah. They are nomadic Bauls and depend very much on music for their livelihood.

Among the modern Baul singers mention may be made of Moksed Shah and Farida Parveen. Both of them are Radio-T. V. artistes and not Bauls in the real sense of the term. Farida Parveen has a fine singer's voice but her presentation leads to musical virtuosity than to the listener's reflection of Baul ideas. Moksed Shah in many ways twisted the original tune of the Baul song and is more inclined to introduce classical and Kirtana tune into Baul song. The Baul songs are thus as important as the cult itself. Their song though sung to the accompaniment of the *Ektara*, a one-string musical instrument or a *Dotara*

a two-string musical instrument, *Khol, Dugi, Khamak, Jurri, Prem Jurri, Ektara, Khanjani* further add to the music produced by the Baul singers.

The words and phrases used by a Baul singer refer to the different limbs of the human body and these are highly symbolic and are regarded as a means of ascending to the heights of mystic contemplation. The text of their songs devote entirely to the mystic practices adopted by the Baul. Through these songs the Bauls communicate their ideas to the other Bauls. These songs as mentioned earlier, are composed chiefly to serve the purpose of their *Sadhana* or religious practice. But as these are produced by the folk people these songs do not follow the rules framed by the qualified or educated musician. These songs do have their own set of rules, artistic in their peculiar way. These are meditative and mystical, inspiring solemn ideas in which the singer is deeply absorbed or lost in ecstasy. The songs of the Bauls do represent poetical expression and the different symbols and images make the song more attractive to the listeners. The songs of Lalon Shah, Duddu Shah, Gosain Gopal, Gagan Harkara, Madan Shah bear ample testimony to the poetic quality and are of great value in the whole range of Bengali literature. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore was greatly impressed by the Baul songs for their unique poetic expression of certain mystic ideas and their music.[181] The song of the Bauls is

181. R. Tagore, The Philosophy of People : Presidential Address at the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1925, See Rabindrayan. 2nd Vol. p. 76 (Bengali), edited by Pulin Behari Sen (Calcutta).

highly melodious, flowing and flexible with wide range of spiritual and emotional expression. Although the song contains one single note, it has a beginning, a middle and an end. This song can be classified as Dannya (Submission) and Prabarta (Initiation). Dannya and Prabarta are again classified as Raag Dannya and Raag Prabarta.

Raag here does not include the six principal modes of classical music as prevalent in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. There is a question of sentiment and since these songs are spiritual in nature it expresses the peculiar behaviour of the singer or the *Sadhaka*. The Musical mode or the tune follows the behaviour pattern of the singer. The *Raag* can thus be explained as something that expresses the peculiar passion or sentiment of the singer or the Sadhaka. The Baul song was greatly influenced by the Sufi music and dance on the one hand and the devotional Vaishnava song or Kirtana on the other. The impact of Sufi music and dance is tremendous on the Bauls.

But since this is developed in a natural way under a natural setting, it is not properly organised. And thus it is very difficult to locate the scale as we generally understand by our association with classical or other music There is no doubt that one can easily put them into certain scale since the melody is more vocal than instrumental. And in that case the scale or range may be from eight—SA to SA.

In the Baul song the tune is a mixed one. The lower tone precedes the higher tone and the sequence is changed when the climax is reached through the

concluding part of the song. The song takes a very quick turn in the concluding part and is brought back to the middle of the test and repeated often times with much quicker note. The musical instrument accompanying the song also maintains the same till the song ends. The Baul song has three parts, the first part is the refrain, the second part is the intermediary between the refrain and the final development of the music of the song and the last part bears the key note of the whole song.

Although the Baul songs have a number of stanzas it presents a compact idea. The image is one and single. The refrain is very often repeated in support of the governing idea. Baul songs are of various types and nature. In one song a question is raised and in other the reply is made but this is done in a subtle way. Sometimes questions and answers are set in one. In most cases this is one in *Prabarta* or *Raag Prabarta*. In this case a problem is raised in the refrain, then it is elaborated in the middle and finally the *Sadhakas'* helplessness is revealed in the final part when he fails to solve the problem. In other cases the problem is brought to a solution by setting different points of simile. The note of the song varies according to them upon which the whole song is built. In *Dannya Pada* the note is melancholic, in Prabarta it is mixed. Here very often the singer dances while singing. At this stage the singer forgets himself and his movement presents the image of *Khepa* or a frenzied being deep in emotion and excitement.

Baul dance and tune are best explained by late Guru Saday Dutt when he says, "The most striking

feature of the Baul dance and of the tune is a spirit of joyous self-forgetfulness and fluidity of rhythmic movement which is in the complete accord with the sentiments of the songs. The Baul tune with its ripples of rise and fall resembles the surface of a large tank or lake wrinkled by the spring breeze."[182] When the Baul dances as he sings he gives the whole weight of the body alternately on each leg, both knees are slightly bent and the leg which is lifted upward moves slightly sideways and then the weight is shifted on it When this is done the other leg repeats the movement. Sometimes when the Baul dances in a revolving manner he makes a hop with one leg thrown forward. The dance of the Baul also includes peculiar movement of the waist. The dance is more of a feminine character and the movements involve exercise of abdominal muscles without being vulgar.

But in the Akhras Baul songs are sung with the singer seated and there is no dance accompaniment. It is common with the nomadic Bauls. The tune of Baul song varies as it travels from place to place. This song, the most completely soul-stirring of all music, is influenced both by the local dialects as well as the tune. Somewhere it fits into the tune of Shabdagaan and Murshidi. Since no notation is possible as yet the singer makes a free use of the tune as it suits his temperament. The recent introduction of pop music in the folk song has caused

182. G. S Dutta, The Folk Dances of Bengal, Calcutta. 1954, pp. 71-74.

a considerable damage to the Baul song. The Radio and Television very often present Baul song with a non-trained Baul singer and with its sophistication the original tune is completely lost.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the system of notation as is available in the country is harmony based and does not conform to the Baul tune as practised by the Baul singer. I have marked with grave concern that the folk song of our country does not present the original tune as sung by the folk people and there is no arrangement for its preservation. If any arrangement is made for its collection it is not at all scientific.

The folk song of Bangladesh, be it religious or secular, is the most excellent music that we can boast of. Nature itself is its composer and the tune is thus shaped accordingly. The folk instruments are also the products of nature. The *Ektara* which is a one-string instrument is made of a hollowed and dried cavity of a gourd. The *Khamak* is also made in a same way. To talk of the Baul singer it may be said that they are almost illiterate and quite ignorant of the classical or other types of music. They have learnt it by heart from generation or as taught by the *Guru* or the spiritual guide. The folk tune of Bangladesh as it is nourished and nurtured by the folk people may add glamour to the traditional music, if treated properly.

The Baul music of Bangladesh is the real folk music of the country. But unfortunately there has been no attempt for its preservation. No notation

has yet been possible. There has been no systematic attempt for the recording of the Baul music. It is indeed very surprising that in our country there is hardly any musicologist who understands international notation. The notation system of our country is limited within the country and if we want to project our culture through music internationally accepted notation should be adopted and followed.

In the absence of proper notation of the music the singer often sings in his own way & thus unknowingly causes a great damage to the original tune of the song. We have already lost great Baul singers in the past. But still there are Baul singers who could serve the purpose. But the recording must not be made in the Studio. This will spoil the flavour of a folk air. It is seen by experience that a Baul singer when sings all by himself, in his own domain, the tune appears excellent. Our musicologists should go to the field and collect tune before it is broadcast through Radio and Television. The outdoor programme of the Radio and Television could do a lot in this regard. Baul song has made substantial contribution in the field of music of Bangladesh. Rabindranath Tagore was greatly influenced by the tune and text of the Baul song. In his *'song offerings'* he has assimilated the typical Baul tune and made improvement upon it. He went so far as to declare himself a Baul. He considers that 'Baul song is the very basis of our cultural heritage'.

Nazrul Islam was olso influenced by Baul tune and adapted the same in some of his songs, of course, with modification. We do not raise any point of

objection to the adaptation of the Baul tune in Rabindra, Nazrul or modern songs. We only object to its improper adaptation. The crux of the Baul song is to find out original tune which passed through generations and forms a very important part of our cultural heritage.

LALAN SHAH—THE GREAT BAUL

Lalan Shah is the leading 'Baul' of Bangladesh. His influence on our people, both rural and urban, is indeed tremendous. Every year thousands of people from different parts of the country throng at Lalan mausoleum to observe his death anniversary which falls on the first of Kartik (B. S.) and at the time of annual festival in the month of Falgun for three consecutive nights. The whole Kushtia then takes a festive look. Bauls both male and female, come from distant places to pay their homage to their great spiritual leader Lalan Shah who died at Seuria village adjacent to the Mohini Mills of Kushtia and where the Lalan Academy is located, on the 1st of Kartik, 1297 B. S. corresponding to 17th October, 1890 A. D.

Mystery shrouds over the birth of Lalan Shah and it is difficult to learn precisely the details of his life. They were not written in any biography excepting two old records one published by Abdul Wali, a sub-registrar of Sailkupa under Harinakundu,

P. S. and subdivision Jhenidah, Dist. Jessore in an article entitled 'On some curious tenets and practices of certain class of Faquirs in Bengal' in the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay 1900, Vol. V, No. IV wherein it was written. '.....Another renowned and most melodious versifier whose dhuyas are the rage of the lower classes and sung by boatmen and others was far famed Lalan Shah. He was a disciple of Seraj Shah and both were born at village Harishpur, subdivision Jhenidah, Dist. Jessore..... Having travelled long and made pilgrimages to Jagannath and other shrines and met with all sorts of devotees he at last settled at mauza Seuriya near subdivisional Head-quarters of Kushtia (Nadiya), Here he lived, feasted sang and worshipped and was known as Kayastha and where he died some ten years ago. His disciples are many and his songs are numerous.'

The article of Mr. Abdul Wali was read on Wednesday, the 30th November, 1898 at the ordinary general meeting of the society and was presided over by Lt. Colonel G. Waters. I. M. S. President of the Society. Mr. Abdul Wali was a scholar of repute and contributed as many as 38 articles in different issues of the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay and Asiatic Society of Bengal.

The other reference on Lalan Faquir was published in a fortnightly Journal, Hitakari of 1297 B. S. (1890 A. D.) which came out from Lahinipara, Kushtia and it was possibly the the oldest record published so far. The paper published an article on the death of Lalan Faquir. The paper stated that it was commonly known that Lalan was a Kayastha and

ardent personal devotion to Krishna; Muhammad (Sm.) and Caitanaya. Lalan, whose mystic experience was shaped by Shiraj 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, in fact, wanted to bring about a reconciliation between Muslim and Hindu mysticism. He condemned religious exclusivism and sought to initiate men into a new idealism commonly known as Baul cult. He developed a most intimate and personal realisation of God expressed in religious symbols drawn from both Hindu and Muslim faith. He was neither a Sufi nor a Vaisnava but these elements are 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 religions made him a heretic and he was subjected to considerable persecution by orthodox people.

The songs of Lalan Shah may be grouped as follows : (1) Devotional songs concerning God. (2) Songs concerning creation. (3) Songs concerning Murshid including Prophethood of Muhammad (Sm.), Krishna and Caitanaya. (4) Songs relating to Body. (5) Songs concerning soul or the Man of the Heart.

The songs of Lalan Shah although fall within the classification of Baul song they are typically his own and as such are known as Lalan Geeti. Broadly

speaking they are technically of two types (Danya or submission, Probarta—Enquiry). In Probarta, Guru and disciple figure prominently.

Lalan Shah belongs to that group of mystics among whom Kabir, Dadu, Rajab are perhaps prominent. Lalan 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. 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 Lalan was greatly influenced by Sufism of Islam but he escaped their excessive emotionalism. He built his ideas on whatever is realistic and logical. Lalan understands that the whole of creation is a play or a game of the eternal lover and this is discussed in relation to human beings. But this he expressed through metaphors and symbols. The songs of Lalan bears ample testimony to Hindu cult. This happens because of the long association with the Vaisnavite Sahajiya many of whom became his followers afterwards. This resulted in the production of many songs which include Lila or Sports of the eternal lover. But with all these the Sufi imageries became dominating. The Achin Pakhi or the elusive bird of Lalan represents the Nightingale singing in the Shiraji Gurden of the great Sufi poet Hafiz. This 'Achin Pakhi' also bears semblance with the Sufi '*Anqa*' or the fabulous bird. Lalan Shah like other Bauls, speaks of Maner Manush or the Man of the Heart as the Cosmic Man. He is not an invidual 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 the Heart is possibly derived from the Sufis particularly those who belong to Persian Sufism. Hazrath Rabiya was the first among the Sufis who considered God not as the great task master but as the Soul of Beauty. He can be approached only through love. In fact, hers was a burning love 'all absorbing and self' effacing. This idea was afterwards incorporated by the Bauls of Bangladesh including Lalan 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 image of the Cosmic Man cannot be understood, it may be felt. No wards can express it for it is beyond all relation and knowledge.

In this case a reference be made to Sufi 'Anqa' or the fabulous bird which does not exist in reality.[183] The Man of the Heart is on occasion compared to Achin Pakhi or the elusive bird. Adhar Manush or the Man who does not exist in reality.

Lalan discovers that life has a fine hamony and deep melody and this in 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 play. Lalan realised it and this laid stress on both song and Sadhana. The songs of Lalan Shah present certain images of fish, tree, flower, moon, bird, stream, rain

183. Muhammad Iqbal, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Lahore 1959, page 86-88.

water, earth, lotus, house, boat mirror etc. His songs are erotical 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 attitude towards life is very much governed by it. In Buddhist and Hindu religion particularly with those of Sahajiya sex formed a part of their faith. The Baul cult is no exception and Lalan does not ignore it since he considers that his thought could be more explicitly expressed in erotic language as the common people are quite conversant with it. The rise of different obscure religious cults suggest that common and ordinary people who could not follow the teachings of the major religion looked for these cults as salvation religion. And Lalan stands as a centrefugal point in the salvation religion like Baul cult.

SONGS OF LALAN SHAH

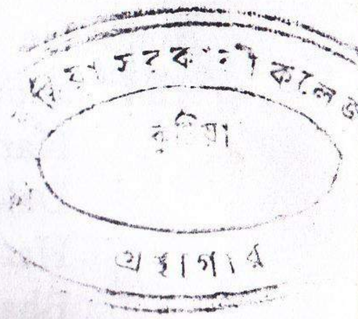
(1)

Elahi Alamin go Allah Badsha Alampana Tumi
Dubaye bhashaite paro
Bhahae Kinar dau Karo
Raakho Maro Hath tomaro
Taite Tumai Daki Ami.
Nuhu Name Ek Nabijire

Bhashale Akul pathare
Abar Tare Meher Kore
Apani lagao Kinare
Jaher Acce E Sangsare
Amai Daya Karo Swami.
Nijam Name Batpar Seto
Papete Dubia Rahito
Tar mone Sumati dile
Kumoti Tar gelo chole
Auliya nam khatai likhile
Jana gelo Ei rahame
Nabi na Mane Jara Mohahed Kafer Tara
Sei Moahed daimal Habe
Behishabe dojokhe Jabe
Abar Tare khalash dibe
Lalan bole more ki hai Jani

Translation : You are the lord of my life, Allah, the emperor of the whole universe. You can drown a man, then keep him alive and also bring him ashore. You have the power to do whatever you like, you can keep me alive or make me die. For that I call you. There was once a Prophet, Noah by name. You caused him to float over a limitless flood water and again by your mercy, you brought him ashore when the flood receded. All these things are very much known to all and O Lord, have pity on me. There was one cheat known by Nizam, he was totally immersed in evil activities. You bring him back to his senses and he gave up his wicked nature. He was made Auliya or a saint, gradually we came to know of it. Those who do not obey the Prophet, they rank themselves as infidels. They will face damnation and go to hell without trial.

But they will again be granted redemption and shall be released of their sufferings. Lalan says, I know not what fate I may meet with.



(2)

Ami Ekdino na dekhilam Tare
Amar barir kacce Arshi nagar
Setha Ek Parshi bashath kare
Geram bereya Agadh pani
O Tar Nai Kinara nai Tarani pare
Mone bancha Kori Dekhbo Tari
Kemne Se gai Jaire
O Tar Hasto pado Skandho Matha naire
O Se Khanek Thake Sunyer upor
Abar Khanek bhashe nire
Parshi Jadi Amai ccuto
Amar Jam Jatona Sakal Jeto dure
Abar Se aar Lalan Ek Khone roi
Lakkho Jo Jojan Fak re

Translation : I have not seen him even for a day. There exists in the mirror-city close to my quarters a neighbour of mine. A vast bottomless water is all around the city. It has no limit nor there is any boat to take one across. I have a longing to see him but how can I go to that city (village). To speak you of my neighbour, he has no hands or legs, neither shoulder nor head. He is occasionally up in the air and occasionally dips in the water. If my neighbour could touch me all my sufferings would have gone. Although both He and Lalan live in same place there exists a limitless wide gulf between them.

(3)

Amar Ee ghar khanai Ke biraj kare
Ami Janom bhar Ekdin dekhlam naare
Nare chare Ishan kone
Dekhte paine Ee nayane
Hather Kacee Jaar
Bhaber Hat bazar
Ami dhorte gele Hathe paine Tare
Sabe bole pran pakhi
Sune ccupe ccepe thaki
Jal Ki Hutashan
Mati Ki Pabon
Keu bole na Ekti nirnai kore
Apon Gharer Khabor Haina
Bancha Kari Parke china
Lalan bole par balte Parmeswar
Se Kemon Rup Aar Ami Ki rup re.

Translation : Who is He that resides in my room ? I have not been able to see him even for a day throughout my life. There is an act of movement at the north east corner of the body. I fail to see him. The world market stands very close to me but if I intend to get in, it disappears. Everybody says it is life bird I listen and maintain silence. Is he, water or fire, earth or air ? None speaks anything definite.

I know not my own room and I intend to know the stranger. Lalan says, this stranger is the Lord of my life. But I know not what image does he have and what is mine.

(4)

Sab loke kai Lalan ki Jat Sangsare
Lalan bole Jaater ki rup Ami dekhlam na e najare
Chunnat dile hai Mussalman
Nari loker ki hai bidhan ?
Bamon chini Paitai praman
Bamni chini kishe re
Keu mala Keu Tasbi galai
Taite ki Jaat bhinna balai
Jawa kimba ashar belai
Jater chinna rai kar re
Garte gele Kup jal hai
Gangai gele Ganga jal hai
Mule Ek Jal Se je bhinna nai
Bhinna janai Patra-Anusare
Jagath bere Jater katha
Loke gaurab kare jatha-tatha
Lalan Se Jater fata
Bikiece sadh bajare.

Translation : Everybody says what religion or birth does Lalan belong to. Lalan says, I have never experienced the exact nature of either religion or birth. If one is circumcised he is Muslim but what is the rule for woman ? I recognise the Brahmin because of his sacred thread, but how do I recognise the Brahmani Some one uses a string and others a bead or Tasbi around one's neck. And by that do they change birth or religion ? When one is born or as he goes to the other world what caste does he proclaim. This water when it is found in a ditch it is called ditch water and when found in the river Ganges it is called the Ganges water, But

originally it is the same water, difference is only, how one keeps it. Everywhere in the world people feel proud of their birth. Lalan says, I have sold out my birth to the market of my fancy or desire.

(5)

Khanchar bhitar Accin Pakhi kamne ashe jai
Dhortey parley monoberi ditam Pakhir pai
Aat kuthuri nai doroja Aata
Maddhey maddhey jarka kata
Tar upar acce sador kotha
Aina Mahal tai
Mon, Tui raili khanchar ashey
Khancha Je Tore tairi kancha Banshey
Kondin khancha porbey khashey
Lalan kai, khancha khuley
Shey Pakhi kon khaney palai.

Translation : How does the bird unknown move in and out of the cage. If I could catch the bird I would put the fetter of my heart around its feet. The cage has eight cells and nine doors, besides small openings at points. And on the top of it there is a mirror chamber. O my heart, the cage you are after is made of raw bamboo. And may collapse any day. Lalan says, the bird then will open up the cage and escape. No one knows where.

(6)

Key katha kai rey dekha deina
Narey charey hather kacce
Khujley janam-bhar mele na
Khunji Tare Asman Jami

Amarey cchini ne Ami
Eki bhishan bhuley bhrami
Aami Konjon Shey Konjona
Ram Rahim Shey Konjon
Mati ki paban jal ki huthasan
Shudailey Tar anneshan
Murkho dekhe Keu balena
Hather kacce haina khabar
Ki dekhtey jau Dilli Lahore
Seraj Shain kai Lalan re Tore
Shadai Maner bhrom gelo na.

Translation : Who is he that makes a speech and remains invisible. He stirs near at hand but is never found in one's life time. I search Him in the sky and on the earth. But mine, I know not. O, what an illusion it is ! What stuff has made me And with what stuff is the being—who is known as Ram as well as Rahim.

(7)

Naajene gharer khabar takao keno Asmane
Chand rayechhe Chander kole Ishan kone,
Prathame Chand uday daksine
Shukla pakse aashe neme baame
Aabar dekho Krishna pakse
Kirupe jai daksine
Khujle Aapan gharkhana
Tumi pabe sakhal thikana
Baaro maashe chabbish paksha
Adhar dhara Tar sane
Swarga Chandra deha Chandra hai

Taate bhinna kichhu nai
Ee Chand dharile Shei Chand miley
Fakhir Lalan kai nirjane.

Translation : Why do you look at the sky without knowing the position of your house. The moon rests in the lap of the moon at the north east corner. First the moon rises in the right side. It comes to the left during its bright fortnight. Again look, how it does move to the right during its dark fortnight. Search out your house and you may locate all its position. Twelve months have twenty-four fortnights. With it rests the device for catching the elusive (uncaught). The heaven moon becomes body moon. And it makes no difference. Faquir Lalan speaks in seclusion that if this moon is seized the other moon is available too.

(8)

Acche Alif Lam Mim Ahad Nuri
Tin Harafer Marma bhari
Alif hai Allah Hadi
Mime Nur Muhammadi
Lamer mane Keu karle na
Nukta bujhi halo churi
Nabbai Hajar Kalma jari
Nabir sange karlen bari
Trish Hajar Shariat jari
Sat Hajar bujhaite nari
Seraj Shain bole re Lalan
Nuktar agey Kar nirupan
Nukhta nirik thik habe jakhan
Thakbe na to Kot Kacchari.

Tanslation : There exists in Alif, Lam and Mim the radiance of the One-Ahad. These three letters bear much significance. Alif symbolises Allah, the all powerful. Mim stands for the light of Muhammad. None is there to explain the meaning of Lam and Nukta which is the point hidden is most probably stolen. God (Bari) has issued ninety thousand words of faith to the Prophet. Thirty thousand are social injunctions of Islam but the rest sixty thousand I cannot explain. Seraj Shain speaks to Lalan well, you must fix the point (Nukta) and justify its importance. When you will be able to fix the point (Nukta) properly you will have no problem at all. (Kot-kachari means the law court where the dispute is settled.)

(9)

Alif Lam Mimete—
Koran Tamam Sodh likhecche
Alif Allaji
Mim mane Nabi
Lamer hai dui mane—
O tar ek mane hai Shara Praccar
Ar mane Marefate
Dar Miyane Lam
Acchey dane bam
Alif Mim Duijane
Yamun gachh Ankur, ai mata ghur—
Na pari bujhite
Isharai lekhan Koraner mane
Hishab kara dehete
Habe pabi Lalan tar Anwesan
Ghurish ne ghur pathe.

Translation : The whole of the Quran ends with three letters—Alif, Lam and Mim. Alif stands for Allah, the all powerful and glorious. Mim means the Prophet. Lam has got two meanings. One meaning signifies the social injunctions, the material and the other one is spiritual. Alif and Mim, the two stands between Lam, right and left. The tree is concealed in the seed. It is indeed problematical and I fail to comprehend. The meaning of the Koran is suggestive. You measure the body. Lalan, when you will do it then you will find the truth. Do not follow a wrong track.

(10)

Amavasyar dine Chandra thake kon Sahare
Pratipade hole uday dekha jai na tare
Mashe Mashe Chandrer udai
Amavasya Mash ante hai
Amavasya purnimar nirnai
Jante habe nehar kore
Solokola hole sashi
Take bole purnamashi
Shei purnima hai kishi
Panditera kai samsare
Jante parley deha-chandar
Swarga chandrer pai se khabor
Seraj Shain kai Lalan re tui
Mul harali koler ghore.

Translation : Where does the moon reside during the darkest phase of the lunar cycle (Amavasya). It is not visible on the first lunar day of the month. The moon rises in every month. One should find out

the process of change in the lunar cycle leading to the darkest night and the full moon. When the moon develops to the full, it is called full moon. The learned finds out how this full moon comes into being. If one knows the body mystery (Human body is taken for a moon) it is then possible to know the proccess of change in the moon which is in heaven. Seraj Shain speaks to Lalan that he has lost the truth in false-hood.

(11)

Anek bhagyer fale Se Chand keu dekhte pai
Amavasya nei Se Chande didale Tar baram udai
Jetha re Se Chandra-bhuvan.
Diba-ratri nai Alapon
Koti Chandra Jini Kiron
Bijli chanchala sadai.
Bindu-nale Sindhu bari
Majkhane tar Swarnagiri
Adhar Chander Swargapuri
Sei to Tini Pranam janai
Darasane Dukkha Hare
Porasane Sona Kare
Emon Mahima Se Chander
Lalan dube dobe na tai.

Translation : One could view at the moon by sheer good luck. There is no dark phase (Amavasya) in the cycle and its glow is visible in the two petals. Where stands the domain of the moon there is none to converse with for the day and the night. Innumerable moon shines brightly over there and lighting moves briskly all the time. In the penis (Bindu-nale) there

appears water of the Sindhu (river) and in between, there is the golden mountain (the female genital organ). And there lies the golden abode of the elusive moon and herein it is revealed. The sight of it frees one from pain and sufferings and the touch of it makes one a touch-stone. Such is the grace or glory of the moon. Lalan although he dips into it, he is not drowned.

(12)

Amar gharer chabi parer hate
Kemne khuliye se dhan dekhbo chokkhete
Apon ghare bojhai sona
Pare kare lena dena
Ami holem janma kana
Na pai dekhite
Raji hale darwani
Dar ccariey deben Tini
Tare ba koi chini shuni
Berai ku pathe
Ei Manushe acce ratan
Jare bole Manush ratan
Lalan bole peye se dhan
Parlam na re cchinite.

Translation : The key of my room is held by another. How can I open it and view at its treasure. My room is filled with gold and others make business with it. I am blind by birth and cannot see things for myself. If the gate-keeper is agreeable he will open up the door for me. But neither I know nor I hear him and thereby I move astray. In this Man rests the gem whom we call the jewel Man. Lalan says, I got hold of the jewel Man but failed to recognise him.

(13)

Acchey Adi Makka Ei Manab dehe
Dekh nare Mon bheye
Desh deshantar Daure Ebar
Marish Keno Hapiye
Kore Ati Ajab bhakka
Gathecche Sain Manush Makka
Kudrati Nur diye
O Tar Char Dare Char Nurer Imam
Madheye Sain baccieye
Manush Makka Kudrati Kaj
Uthcche re Ajgubi Awaj
Sat tala bhedieye
Acchey Sing darajai Dari Ekjan Nidra Tyagi Hoye
Dash duari Manush Makka
Gurupade dube dek-ga
Dhakka Samlaye
Fakhir Lalan bole Se je Gupta Makka
Adi Imam Sei Miye.

Translation : There exists the real Makka in this human body. Explore it, O, mind. Why do you get tired running here and there. This human Makka has been built up with a skilful and glorious light (Nur) by Sain making a strange approach. The Sain (God) takes the seat in the centre and the four divinely blessed guides (Imams) are all around. The Man-Makka is a skilful work and a strange sound is coming out from the top of the six stories. There exists a gate-keeper at the main gate. He keeps watch and does not sleep for a moment. There are ten openings in Man-Makka. Submit yourself to the spiritual guide accepting all his unkind or harsh words

and this may help you learn the mystery. Fakhir Lalan says, that is the hidden Makka and therein lies the real guide (Imam).

(14)

Ki Sadhaney Ami pai go Tare
O Se Brahma Bishnu Dhyaney Paina jare
Swarna Sikhar Jar Nirjan gofa
Swarupe Sei to Chandrer Ava
O Se Ava cchai
Hate Nahi pai
Kemane Se Rup Jai go Sore
Tin Raser Sadhan Karo
Rup Swaruper Tatva Dharo
Lalan Kai Tabe Jadi paro
Pran Jurate Se Rup Here.

Translation : By what particular way of worship may I get him. He is unattainable even to Brahma and Bishnu who are always in deep meditation for his lordship. His lonely abode rests on the golden top of the mountain. The human form is the glow of that moon. I am after that 'glow'. But it is unattainable. I do not understand how this glow disappears. Practice ardously the three 'Rasa', try to grasp the point which exists between the Soul of Beauty and the human form. Lalan says, then only you may feel satisfied as you enjoy the beauty of His form.

(15)

Emon Manab janam Ar Ki Hobe
Mon ja Koro Tarai Koro Ei bhave
Anantarup Srishti Korlen Sain

Shuni Manaber Uttam Kicchui nai
Dev-devatagan Kare Aradhan Janma nite Manabe
Koto bhagyer fale Na jani
Mono re payecco Ei Manab Tarani
Beye Jau Tara Su dharai
Jeno bhara na dobe
Ei Manushe Hobe Madhurja bhajan
Taito Manush-rup gathle Niranjan
Ebar Thakle aar Na dekhi Kinar
Adhin Lalan Tai bhabe.

Tanslation : Could I ever have such a unique human life. O Heart ! Whatever you intend to do here on earth do it early. Sain has made this endless forms or shapes and I am told that there is none better than man. So much so that Angels also pray for human birth. It is indeed by sheer luck, O, Heart, you got such a human vessel. Row up quick in a favourable stream, see that the boat does not sink or you do not get lost. That man, it is believed will attain the glory of the glorious, he is thus built by God. Lalan, the poor fellow, is very much worried and finds no way out if things once go wrong.

(16)

Amar Moner Manusher Sane
Milan Hobe Koto dine
Chatok prai Aharnishi
Cheye Acchi Kalo Shashi
Hobo bole charan dashi
Ta Haina Kapal gune
Megher bidyut meghe Jemon
Lukale na pai Anneswan

Kalare Haralem Temon
O Rup herieye swapane
Jakhan ai rup smaran hai
Thake na Lok-lojjar bhoi
Adhin Lalan bole sadai
Prem je kare sei jane.

Translation : When shall I meet the man of my heart. I am almost like the Chatok and longs for the dark moon in order to worship at your feet. But luck does not favour me. As lightning mingles in the cloud and none gets the trace of it. Similarly I lose Him who is of dark complexion as I enjoy his beauty in dream. When I recollect the image I experienced, I do not care for scandal or anything. Lalan, the obedient, speaks this everytime, whoever is in love he only understands what it is. (Chatok : a kind of bird in Bangladesh. The bird looks upon the sky for a drop of water.)

(17)

Pakhi kakhon jani ure jai
Bad howa lege khanchai
Khanchar aara polo dhoshe
Pakhi aar daarabi kishe
Ai bhabona bhabei boshe
Chamok jara baicee gai
Bhebe anto nahi dekhi
Kaar ba khancha kaar ba pakhi
Amar ei Anginai thaki
Pakhi Amare Majate chai
Agge jodi jeto jana
Jongla kabhu posn mane na
Tabe uhar prem kartam na
Lalan Fakhir kende kai.

Translation : The cage has been made weak by the air being polluted and I know not when the bird shall move out. The pole has collapsed and I am worried how the bird shall stand over there. A sort of burning sensation or hyper tension runs all over my body. I find no clue whom this cage or the bird belongs to. The bird rests in my compound and tries to win me over. If only I could know earlier that the wild bird could not be tamed or domesticated, I would not have fallen in love with it.

(18)

Chand acce Chande ghera
Ooree, Kemon Kore Se Chand dharbi tora
Lakkha Lakkha Chande korecce Shova
Tar Majhe Adhor Chander Ava
O Se Chander bajar dekhe ghurni lagge
Dekhish dekhish pacce hobire gyan hara
Chander gacce Chander fal tai
Theke Theke Jhalok dai
Ekbar drishti kore dekhi
Thik thake na ankhi
Ruper Kirone Chomok para
Alek Name Shahar Ajob Kudrati
Rete udai bhanu dibashe baati
Je jon Alor khabor jane
Drishti hai nayane
Lalan bole Se Chand dekhicce Tara!

Translation : The moon is moon encircled. Well, how do you intend to catch it. Billions of moons have made thing decorous and in it the elusive moon

shines brightly. When I experience such a radiance of the moon in hundreds I am at my wit's end. Take care, otherwise you may also lose sense. In the moon tree the fruit it bears is also a moon, occasionally it flashes. Once you look at its radiance your eyes will get dazzled. The bright shine of its form makes one dazed. There is a city known Alek where there is unusual happings. The sun rises in the night and it gives light in the day. The one who explores the mystery of the light and is successful, the truth is revealed to him when it casts a glance over his eyes. Lalan says, such men could enjoy the glory of this moon.

(19)

Samai thakte bandhal bandhale na
Jal sukabe Min palabe
Pastabi re Mon Kana
Tribenir tin dhare
Min rupe Shain bihar kare
Tumi upar upar berau ghure
Se gabhire duble na
Mashantor Mahajog hai
Nirashete Ras bheshe Jai
Korle na Se joger Nirnai
Min rup khela khelle na
Jagath Jora Min Abotar
Shandhi bojha Shandhir upar
Seraj Shain kai Lalan re Tor
Gelo Kebol Auna jau na.

Translation : You should have set up a dam when there is still time for you. The water will get dried and the fish will escape and you will have nothing

but only to blame your luck. In all the three parts of the Tribeni (female genital organ), the Shain under the guise of a fish makes a game. You want to move in the surface and not ready to dive deep into water. (How do you expect to catch him). Every month there is an auspicious moment and in a place which is totally dried up, is filled with Rasa (menstrual flow). And you do not fix up the coveted moment and you lose the game of the fish. The whole world bears the image of the fish deity and both are connected with a hinge-joint. Seraj Shain speaks to Lalan, well, yours is only coming and going (and all your attempts proved a failure).

(20)

Paare loye Jau Amai
A-par Hoe boshe acci ohe Dayamai
Ami Eka Roilam ghate
Bhanu Se boshilo pate
Toma bine ghor sankate na dekhi upai
Nai Amar bhajon sadhan
Chiradin bipathe gamon
Nam shunecci patit pabon
Taite dei dohai
Agatir na dile gati
O name rahibe khati
Lalan kai Adhomer poti ke bolbe Tomai.

Translation : Ferry man, lead me across the shore. Oh, merciful, I have not been ferried over or rescued and waiting in vain. I am left alone on the bank and the sun also sets down. I do not find any other

alternative save you who can relieve me from such a dangerous situation. I have no religious prayer to my credit. All though my life I have followed evil courses. I have heard you are the saviour of the sinner and for that I call you. If you do not help the helpless your good name will bear a black spot. Lalan says, who will then call you as the saviour of the wretched ?

GAGAN HARKARA

Gagan was a Baul singer and a postman under the Zemindary of the Tagores at Shelaidah. He was a Kayastha and born in a village named Arpara near Shelaidah. He was possibly a follower of Lalan Shah. Gaganendranath Tagore published his sketch along with another Baul leading him somewhere, in the 'Haramoni' section of the monthly Prabashi, Baisak, 1322 B. S. A song by him (where shall I meet him, the Man of my Heart) collected by Tagore was also published in that issue. According to Rabindranath, "The name of the poet who wrote this song (where shall I meet him, the Man of my Heart) was Gagan. He was almost illiterate ; and the ideas he received, he received from the self—consciousness of the modern age. He was a village postman, earning about ten shillings a month, and he died before he had completed his teens. The sentiment to which he gave such intensity of expression, is common to most of the songs of his sect. And it is a sect, almost exclusively

confined to that lower floor of society, where the light of modern education hardly finds an entrance, while wealth and respectability shun its utter indigence."[184] Rabindranath while commenting further on his song said "The first Baul song which I chanced to hear with any attention, profoundly stirred my mind. Its words are so simple that it makes me hesitate to render them in a foreign tongue, and set them forward for critical observation. Besides, the best part of a song is missed when the tune is absent ; for thereby its movement and its colour are lost, and it becomes like a butterfly whose wings have been plucked.

The first line may be translated thus : Where shall I meet Him, the Man of my Heart ? "This phrase, 'The Man of my Heart' is not peculiar to this song but is usual with the Baul sect. It means that, for me, the supreme truth of all existence is in the revelation of the infinite in my own humanity."[185]

We are almost stunned when we get similar ideas in a modern philosopher. Bergson writes, "Everything is obscure in the idea of creation if we think of things which are created and a thing which creates."[186] It may be mentioned here that Rabindranath adapted the tune of Gagan's song, where shall I meet him the Man of my Heart, to his famous

184. Rabindranath Tagore, An Indian Folk Religion, Creative Unity, p, 79.
185. Ibid p. 78.
186. Bergson, Creative Evolution—Ideal Genesies of Matter.

song, My Golden Bengal, I love thee. This also suggests what a tremendous impact do the Bauls leave on him.

(1)

Aami Kothai Pabo Tare Aamar Moner Manush Jere
Haraye Shei Manushe Taar Uddashye
Desh bideshe berai ghure
Laagi Shei Hriday Shashi, Sada Pran
Hai Udashi, Pele mon hato khushi
Dibanishi Dekhtam Nayan bhore
Aami Premanale Marcchi Jole Nebhai Kemon Kore
O Taar biccede Praan Kemon Kore
Ore Dekhna Tora Hriday Chire
Dibo Taar Tulana Ki, Herile Jurai Ankhi
Samanye Ki Dekhite Pai Tare.
Tare Je Dekhecce Shei Mojecce
Ccai diye Sangsare.
O Se Na Jani Ki Kuhak Jane
Alokshey Mon Churi Kore
Kulman Sab gelore Tabu Na Palam Tare
Premer Lesh Nai Antorey, Taite More
Deina dekna Se re O Tar basath
Kothai Na jene Tai Gagan bhebe more
O Se Manusher Uddish Jadi Janish
Kripa Kore Amar Suhrid Hoye
Bethar bethith Hoye Amai bole de re.

Translation : Where shall I meet the Man of my Heart. I move heaven and earth insearch of Him. I took distracted for Him, the soul of my souls—the moon and I would feel happy and continue enjoying his beauty if I could ever get in touch

with him. Mine is a love-lorn soul. His absence makes a heart-burning. Cut open my heart and see for yourself. He is beyond any description. If I could see Him my eyes would get satisfied but it is not so easy for an ordinary creature like me to locate His whereabouts. Whoever has seen Him he gets drowned in His love and does not care for this worldly life. I know not what a magic does He possess and takes one's mind off from him unnoticed. I lost all my prestige in the society for Him but I am yet to see Him. This happens possibly, because He feels, there is no real love in me for Him. Gagan is thus very much worried because he knows not where does his love reside. Well, if you know His whereabouts, please have pity on me and let me know of it.

LIST OF THE COMPOSERS OF BAUL SONGS AND THEIR PUBLICATION.

(The following list of the composers of the Baul songs and their publication has been prepared on the basis of information collected by Prof. Ali Ahmad of Dacca University from Bengal Library Catalogue, Calcutta and published afterwards in Lok-Shahitya Patrika, Vol. II, No. I & II, Kushtia, Ed. Abul Ahsan Choudhury.)

1. Akshoy Kumar Gupta, Baul Sangeet, Feb. 10, 1885, p. 12, Calcutta.
2. Akshoy Kumar Sen, Baul Sangeet (1st part), Dec. 9, 1883, p. 12, Calcutta.
3. Upendranath Mukherji, Brihath Baul Sangeet, March 5, 1888, p. 48, Calcutta.
4. Umakanta Chakravarty, Shuchi Sangeet (1st part, Baul Gaan) May 12, 1883, p. 20, Calcutta.
5. Fikhir Chander Baul Sangeet, 1st to 10th part, May 26, 1885, p. 12 each, Calcutta.
6. Kangal Fikhir Chand, Baul Sangeet, Sept. 24, 1916, p. 189, Calcutta.
7. Kangal Fikhir Chand Fakhir, Baul Sangeet, 1904, p. 230, Kumarkhali (Kushtia).
8. Kazimuddin Khan, Baul Sangeet, May 8, 1887, p. 14, Delduar (Tangail).
9. Kunjabehari Dev, Bhavo-roger Totka (1st part, Baul songs) p. 8, Jan. 12, 1887, Calcutta.
10. Kushai Sarker, Baul Sangeet, Sept. 8, 1892, p. 12, Dacca.

11. Sakher Baul Sangeet, Aug. 12. 1886, p. 8, Dacca.
12. Tinkari Smriti Ratna, Baul Sangeet, 1st & 2nd part, 1882, p. 94, Calcutta.
13. Tinkari Smriti Ratna, Brihath Baul Sangeet, 1st part (Vol. I-V) Sept. 18, 1883, p. 34, Calcutta.
14. Dasarath Saha, Baul Sangeet Har. Aug. 30, 1886, p. 20, Comilla.
15. Dinanath Das, Baul Sangeet, Sept. 20, 1893, p. 8, Sreenagar Dacca.
16. Nandalal Roy Brihath Baul Sangeet; June 21, 1882, p 60, Calcutta.
17. Nafar Chandra Dutta, Baul Sangeet, 1st part, Nov. 19, 1881, p. 46, Calcutta.
18. Tinkari Smriti Ratna, Baul Sangeet, 2nd part, May 1, 1882, p. 36, Calcutta.
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22. Nrisingha Kumar Ghosh (Publisher), Brihath Baul Sangeet, July 6 1886, p. 48, Calcutta.
23. Parbati Charan Bhattacharya, Baul Sangeet, March 2, 1886, p. 22, Calcutta.
24. Banamali Das (Sudha Sangeet Gitabali : Baul Sangeet) March 30, 1892, p. 9, Dacca.
25. Baul Das Babaji, Baul Sangeet, July 1, 1884, p. 12, Calcutta.
26 Baul Nabin Chand, Baul Nabin Chand Geetabali, March 15, 1885, p. 14, Bogra.

27. Benod Behari Seel, Brihath Baul Sangeet, April 21, 1889, p. 64, Calcutta.
28. Beharilal Sarkar, Baul Sangeet (1st part), July 23, 1890, p. 14, Calcutta.
29. Baishnav Charan Basak, Paramarthik Geet O Baul Sangeet, Jan. 8, 1898, p. 94, Calcutta.
30. Monomohon Gangulee, Brihath Shibpur Baul Sangeet, 1st part, June 1884, p. 24, Calcutta.
31. Mahendranath Bhattacharya, Andul Kali Kirtan O Baul Geetabali, March 16, 1918, p. 92, Calcutta.
32. Jadunath Chakravarti. Baul Sangeet, July 3, 1884, p. 8, Hoogly.
33. Rabindranath Tagore, Baul (Sangeet), Sept. 30, 1905 p. 32, Calcutta.
34. Rajaram Nath, Baul Sangeet, Aug. 26, 1886, p. 36, Calcutta.
35. Lalbehari Sen, Natun Sakher Baul Sangeet, Dec. 25, 1884, p. 12, Calcutta.
36. Haridas Babaji. Baul Sangeet, 1st part, Aug. 10 1884, p. 12. Calcutta. Baul Sangeet, 2nd part, Aug. 17, 1884, p. 36, Calcutta.
37. Hridoy Lal Dutt, Baul Sangeet, May 15, 1882, p. 48, Calcutta.
38. Ananda Chandra Das, Sakher Bauler Geet, 1st part, June 21, 1882, p. 24, Calcutta.
39. Kunjabehari Chanda, Natun Sakher Baul Sangeet, June 20, 1882, p. 24, Calcutta.
40. Hridoy Lal Dutt, Baul Sangeet Sankalan, 1882, p. 48, Calcutta.
41. Gopal Chandra Goswami, Baul Sangeet, Nov. 1, 1912, p. 6, Hoogly.

Besides these, there are certain others who also became famous during their life time. They are: Gagan Harkara, Madan, Panju Shah, Pagla Kanai, Rashid, Duddu Shah Jadu Bindu, Chandi Das Gosain, Kubir Chand, Pacchu Shah, Rajkrishna Khepa, Howre Gosain, Erphan Shah, Purna Chandra Gosain, Gosain Ramlal, Gosain Gopal Kalachand, Radhya Shyam, Khepa Baul Kalu Shah, Ananta Gosain, Padma Lochan, Ishan Fakhir and Sudharam Baul.

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