

Ustad Mir Pyaru Myan Maheboob Khan was born at Maula Bekhshi Khana, Baroda, in 1887, the second son of a notable old-school Khandari baani Ustad, (Mashaikh Rahemat Khan Bahadur), of a Mashaikh Khandan of the Yuskin caste. The Ustadi Khandan to which he belongs — the Maula Bekhshi, — had come to particular prominence by the outstanding qualities of his grandfather, whose name it bears: the latter, founder of the Baroda Gayanshala Academy, had worked out a new system of Indian music theory; his composition, technique and theory were based upon the knowledge of, and proficiency in, both Hindostani and Carnatic music, thus making him the most famous Indian musician of his day.

Maheboob Khan, who shewed remarkable musical gifts from early age thus could study the greatest and most classical Indian music from the first. Moreover, the European Music Department thoroughly acquainted him with Western music, too. As his grandfather had based his music upon the mastery of Carnatic and Hindostani music, so Maheboob Khan could, therefore, found his upon an even more-embracing musical knowledge which has been matched not only by profundity and executive skill, but moreover by a wealth of musical inspiration. His conspicuous gifts brought early recognition. He was appointed lecturer, and subsequently professor, at the Gayan Academy and became assistant conductor of the Baroda Court Orchestra, being known at that time as prof. M. R. Pathan, the surname being that of his maternal uncle.

In 1910 he joined his elder brother, the Sufi pir-o-murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan, on his voyage to the Western world. Several of his most beautiful songs are written to the mystical poems of the latter, who himself had received the title of Tan Sen in recognition of his musical ability. Upon the death of Hazrat Inayat Khan in 1927, Shaikh Maheboob Khan, who had already succeeded him as Ustad in 1902 and who was created a Shaikh in 1925, succeeded him as second Shaikh-ul-Mashaikh and Mashaikh¹⁾. His musical activity, — first mainly devoted to teaching and conducting, then, after 1910, marked by both executive and creative musicianship, — has since been concentrated upon the composition of his songs; Hindustani, Carnatic or European in appearance, these essentially bear the imprint of the composer's own genius and the personal style it evolved: the musical and the mystical element, the theme and the poetry, the subtly evocative and the dramatically expressive so integrated as to produce beauty of a rare quality.

¹⁾ The 18th, according to the now adopted, most conservative, computation, — i. e. the generational one, — for the first 14 generations; the majorate must however be assumed always to have been the normal mode of devolution. The recorded tradition, that in each generation of the Khandan there would at least be one Mashaikh, both justifies the generational and suggests the majoratical computation. Further research would almost certainly raise the figure mentioned. Furthermore, it is a noteworthy curiosity to find, in this Khandan, the titular designations usually associated with the two different groups constituting Indian aristocracy joined together: the Moghul "Khan" and the Indian upper-caste "Mashaikh" (Mahasheik) and "Shaikh".



SHAIKH MAHEBOOB KHAN

HINDOSTANI SUFI CHANTS

NAAT



- ✓ Molud
- ✓ Kaseeda
- ✓ Naat
- ✓ Kawwali e Hinda wale
- ✓ Kaseeda Ganga Gumni
- ✓ Gazal i Hafiz (Persian Spring Song)
- ✓ Turki (The Wine Divine)
- ✓ Masnavi
- ✓ Sufi Invocation
- Gazal e Bhairavi: Ishkme Tere (Derwish Song)

NAAT

Text

Merhaba saiyade macci madani ul arabi
 Dil-o-jān bada fidayat che ajab khush lakabi.
 Saiyadi anta habibi wa tabibe kalabi
 Amada sue to Kudasi pai derama talabi.

(Indo-Persian)

HYMN

(song in praise of the Prophet)

Translation

Glory to the Arabian Lord of Mecca and Medina!
 May heart and soul attain the marvellous, most fortunate
 [honour of being dedicated to Thee
 Mylord, thou art the supreme most beloved friend¹ and
 [the comforter of the mind.
 Searching along the traces of subtle yearning, it is to Thee
 [that the saintly pure have arrived.

Notes:

Kudasi — holy, pure, also is the poet's 'takhallus' (cognomen).

Saiyad(i) — (my)lord, when used as a title for the Prophet or his descendants. Otherwise also: Saiyn (Saint), Sid, spanish: Cid (knight, gentleman), Sidi (Sir, c.f. Saiydna 'our lord'; and english: Sidney), Siy, Said (name or mode of address).

¹Or: the Perfection of Friendship.

Pronunciation: kb = ch in 'loch'.

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NAAT.

Andantino.

By MAHEBOOB KHAN.