

A Malay Pantheist Charm.

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According to the Shi'ites Ali, the *baginda* 'Ali of Malay charms, was the repository of Islamic mystical knowledge. And there is a story how a great prince, who had been defeated by a mightier, asked him: "Teach me the charms which the Apostle of God taught you." It is certain that this was a request which the first Malay converts to Islam were always making to the early Indian missionaries. And the charms the missionaries taught them were held to be esoteric, like the *mantra* of the Brahmins and the secrets of Sufism. The Shi'ite heresies and the pantheism, orthodox and heterodox, to be detected in many Malay charms await closer study at any rate by English scholars. "The utterances put into the mouths of the eight or nine principal saints of Java betoken a rash mystic pantheism," says Snouck Hurgronje. "This same heretical mysticism found some opponents and many strong supporters in Acheen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The book of the "Perfect Man," al-Jili's *Insanu'l-Kamil*, was much studied in early days in Java and left its mark on the bizarre contents of numerous native tracts. Allah is the one, indivisible Being, exalted above time and space. Multiplicity is appearance. Only God exists." A full description of al-Jili's book can be read in Nicholson's "Studies in Islamic Mysticism" (Cambridge, 1921) or in Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal's "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" (London, 1908). "Such mysticism" continues Snouck Hurgronje, "is found also in Arabian lands but only in small circles of the initiated, as half secret doctrines of the Sufis, cautiously concealed on account of the hunt of official theologians for heresy and of the suspicious fanaticism of the vulgar. In the East Indies, however, it formed woof and warp not only of learned speculation but of popular belief. Tracts with drawings and tables were used in the endeavour to realize the idea of the Absolute. The four elements, the four winds, the four righteous Khalifs, the four founders of the schools of law, the four sorts of attributes of God in dogma, the four grades of progress in mysticism, the four extremities of the human body and many other sets of four were for popular mysticism revelations of the one indivisible self of man; through the names of Muhammad and Allah, each in Arabic spelt with four letters, were symbolized the One Being. 'Who knows himself, knows his Lord and he who knows his Lord has knowledge of himself,' said these mystics." ("Arabie en Oost-Indie," Leiden, 1907). A *pawang's* charm to call back to memory the medium in Kelantan's *main putëri*, for example, invokes

'Balang Abubakar, 'balang Umar,
 'Balang Uthman, 'balang Ali!
 Jaga sa-kali!
 Angin shari'at, roma dĕngan kulit!
 Angin 'itikad, daging dĕngan darah!
 Angin tarikat, urat dĕngan tulang!
 Angin ma'rifat, nyawa dĕngan bĕneh!
 Angin ĕmpat di-dalam, ĕmpat di-luar,
 Ėmpat di-kanan, ĕmpat di-kiri,
 Ėmpat di-bawah, ĕmpat di-atas,
 Jaga kĕluar

Di-pintu sir, pintu 'itikad, pintu chinta, pintu rasa.

Dr. Gimlette has collected and is printing the full charm in a new edition of his "Malay Poisons." I quote the extract to illustrate the *pawang*'s use of the mystic four.

Snouck Hurgronje's book on "The Achehnese," D. A. Rinkes' "Abdoerraoef van Singkel" (Friesland, 1909), B. J. O. Schrieke's "Het Boek van Bonang" and H. Kraemer's "Een Javaansche primbon uit de zestiende eeuw" (Leiden, 1921) should all be in the hands of the student of Malayan pantheism.

The Malay magician has a strange pedigree: first, animist, then Hindu and lastly, as Sufi mystic, the unconscious inheritor of Gnostic and Neo-Platonic doctrines. Brahminical *mantra*, to which even the Gods are subject, perhaps prepared his mind for the audacities of the Sufi. I will take one instance from Skeat's "Malay Magic" (pp. 587-588):—

"Jibrail, Mikail, Israfil, 'Azrail;
 Ye are four but with me five!
 I sit on the seat of God!
 I lean against the pillar of God's throne."

Is this a misconception or wilful corruption of al-Jili's description of the Perfect Man:—"he furnishes from himself an antitype to everything in existence—his heart stands over against the Pen, his soul over against the Guarded Tablet, his nature over against the elements. He stands over against the angels with his good thoughts." Another of Skeat's *pawang* (p. 581) speaks of "a white learned Shaikh who leans against the pillar of the Throne, who knows the Guarded Tablet, who writes down the Creed," (and, I suppose, of Muhammad in the phrase "the Sovereign Jewel who dwells above the Throne, controlling all the children of Adam.")

In this paper I translate a charm obtained in an East coast State of the Malay Peninsula: a promise to its possessor forbids me to divulge its home exactly. It was copied by me from a begrimed book probably a century old and transcribed according to the colophon from a still older manuscript:—

"A chapter to explain the charm called the Fortress of the Unity of God, practised by Maklab Setam. Whosoever would practise it should recite the *fatihah* first and give a present to its owner.

"A beginning should be made on Thursday night and the charm should be continued until the night of the following Thursday.

"It should be recited four times a night with a sincere vowing of the heart to unity with Allah and the vision of Him implanted in one's heart, until His Being permeates one and one has faith: 'I am lost in the universal and absolute Essence of God;' and one is lost to self and one's self becomes absolute and universal too:—

"In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. Oh God! grant peace to our lord Muhammad and the household of Muhammad who watcheth over my self and my friends and all my children and all the contents of my house and my property and the possessions of my hands with a sevenfold fortress from the fortress of God Most High; its roof—'There is no God but God,' and my wall 'Muhammad the Apostle of God,' and my key 'the might of God,' which may not be opened for ever save with His permission. Muhammad is like man and unlike man; he is like a chrysolite among stones.

"Now the import of the term 'fortress' is that we know that we come from not-being and to not-being shall return. For there is nothing evidently save the Being of God. And of a surety the Being of God never parts from His absolute essence, which carries out all His will, according to His word: 'His desire is accomplished by Himself and goes forth to no other than Himself save to not-being.'

"The intention of the term self is 'spirit,' one of the attributes of the knowledge of God Most High, which parts not from His essence and it becomes an objectified idea and is called man. Now the spirit is distinct and determined. Always the spirit yearns towards God.

"The intention of 'the house' is the body. The body is the place of the spirit and so the veritable place that reveals the Real God according to the saying of the Prophet, on whom be the peace of God: 'Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.' The house was built of itself and though it will pass away, yet He whose house it is is the Reality who with His absolute essence is eternal.

"The intention of our 'property' is the liver and heart and lungs and gall and all that God Most High has created: according to His word:—'There is no strength in any one save the strength of Allah, lord of all the worlds both as regards things revealed and things hidden.'

"The intention of our 'possessions' is the ten senses, firstly the outward and secondly the inner. The outward are five: the sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, the taste of the tongue, the smelling of the nose and the touch of the hand. The inner also are five: consciousness, faith, insight, perception and judgment.

"The intention of the sevenfold 'fortress' is the creation by God Most High of man with seven attributes: life, knowledge,

power, will, hearing, sight and speech. And seven parts of the body must be bowed to God in prayer: the forehead, the palms of the hands, the knees and the toes of the feet.

“The intention of the ‘key’ is because we have utter trust and union by surrendering ourselves to God Most High, according to His word: ‘Hold yourselves fast to the cord of God which breaks not neither is there concealment of His will from mystical knowledge;’ as said the Prophet on whom be God’s peace:—‘Nothing at all moves save by permission of Allah.’ For we cannot behold aught if the cord break and it cannot break save by the will of God Most High, and there is no other can break it.

“And the intention of the ‘key’ is Muhammad Apostle of God for God is utterly hidden; none other save himself knoweth Him, for He cherisheth His glory. And the Reality of God Most High was revealed to the spirit of Muhammad our Prophet and from that Spirit God Most High created all this universe, and all the attributes of His secret wisdom were revealed: and so it is that Muhammad is called the ‘key,’ because he opened the treasure-house that was hidden, according to His word:—‘I opened that which was closed.’

“And the intention of the protection of God is according to His word: ‘God Most High is with thee wheresoever thou art,’ according to His word: ‘God is nearer to thee than the muscles of thy neck.’

“And the intention of ‘roof’ is the power of God to cover any of His servants with mercy according to His will, so that he be locked away from all enemies and danger in this world and the next, neither shall the lock be opened by genie or man save with the permission of God Most High.”

Was it some such charm as this that Sultan Ahmad of old Malacca was expecting to learn from the Makhdum, whom he took on his elephant into battle against the Portuguese and who cried clutching the howdah with both hands, “Sultan! This is no place to study the Unity of God. Let us return.” (*Sējaraḥ Mēlayu*. Chapter 34). In chapter 20 of the *Sējaraḥ Mēlayu* we have a reference to a Meccan, Maulana Abu Ishak a mystic (*fahan pada ‘ilmu tasawwuf*) practising austerities, the author of a work the *Dar al-mathlum*, who despatched a pupil Abu Bakar to Malacca to teach the doctrine of Essence and Attributes and Works contained in his book. Sultan Mansur Shah got a Pasai pundit to translate it. All the notabilities of Malacca became pupils of the Meccan and even the Kathi sat at his feet after he had seen the newcomer with a halo of light about him. Then Sultan Mansur Shah offered a present of gold and two female slaves to any Pasai theologian who could solve the problems whether those in heaven and those in hell remain in their respective places for ever. A Pasai pundit replied openly that they did, quoting the authority of the Koran. But the Sultan of Pasai summoned him, hinted that an embassy could not

have come from Malacca in quest of such an obvious answer and suggested giving in private a deeper esoteric meaning communicable, like all Sufi mysteries, only to the elect. The pundit took the hint and won the prize offered by Malacca. His esoteric solution is not recorded but al-Jili has given apposite Sufi answers:—"The powers of endurance of the sufferers in hell continues to grow—God never takes back his gifts and these powers come from God—until there appears in them a Divine power which extinguishes the fire, because no one is doomed to misery after the Divine attributes become manifest in him," or again "You may say, if you like, that Hell-fire remains as it was, but that the torment of the damned is changed to pleasure." (Nicholson, *op. cit.* pp. 136-7).

There is a record of one flagrant example of heterodox pantheism from Perak 30 years ago. Its exponent was sentenced to gaol. The creed he taught found God in man: "There is no God but God. I am God." (*La ilaha illa'llah! Aku Allah! Allah ia aku! Allahu aku! Allah ta'ala itu tiada mēlainkan diri ini Allah.*) The creed, alms, the pilgrimage, the turban, the sixteen pillars of a mosque, the steps of its pulpit, the holding of a staff by the preacher, the kissing of the Black Stone at Mecca were all ascribed to disgusting sexual analogies. Not 44 but 40 members are required for the congregation of a mosque because man and woman together have 40 fingers and toes. Hell is anger and heaven sexual love. The Angel of Death is a man's eyes; the seven furnaces of Hell his knees; the bridge across the Fire his back-bone. One's right eye is Kiramun and one's left Katibin. And so on, a rigmarole of nonsense and an obscene travesty at an immeasurable distance of the Divine Love celebrated by the mystics of Persia.

The Malay Charm.

"Fasal pada mēnyatakan 'ilmu kota tauhid yang di-amalkan oleh Tuan Maklab Setam (مکلب ستم). Dan barang siapa hēndak mēngamalkan dia, maka di-bacha fatihah dahulu, di-hadiahkan kapada yang ėmpunya dia.

Maka di-mulaĭ kapada malam Jumaat hingga sampai kapada malam Jumaat pula; maka di-bacha-nya ėmpat kali pada sa-malam sērtā di-nadzarkan hati kita bērsunggoh-sunggoh kita mēngēsakan kapada Allah sērtā di-shuhudkan masok ka-dalam fuad kita, sa-hingga pēnoh maujud di-dalam diri kita pun di-'itikadkan-lah: 'Aku ghaib di-dalam dzat mutlak dan itlak,' maka fana-lah diri kita sa-kali mēlainkan diri mutlak dan itlak itu jua.

اللهم صل على سيدنا محمد وعلى آل محمد حوطت علي نفسي ورفتي
وابنافي واهلي ومالي وماملك يدي سبع دور من دور الله تعالى سقفا
لا اله الا الله ودرقها محمد رسول الله وقعلها قدرة الله لا يفتح ابدا
باذن الله محمد بشر لآك البصر بل هو كاليقوت بين الحجر.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'kota' itu, telah kita ketahui asal kita itu daripada 'adam, melainkan kembali kepada 'adam pula kita. Ada pun yang ada nyata-nya itu hanya ujud Allah jua samata-mata-nya. Bahawa akan ujud Allah itu sa-kali-kali tiada berchërai dengan dzat-nya yang mutlak itu bagi dzat-nya; maka ia-itu-lah yang melakukan barang-barang kehëndak-nya seperti firman-nya: **فعال لما يريد**, hërti-nya 'Bërlaku barang kehëndak-nya di-atas diri-nya jua,' tiada berkëhëndak kepada yang lain-nya daripada-nya itu, sa-sunggoh-nya pun kepada 'adam jua. Tamat.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'diri' itu roh nama-nya, suatu sifat daripada Allah ta'ala, tiada berchërai dengan dzat-nya; dan ia-lah jadi suatu hakikat-nya, maka di-namai 'insan.' Ada pun roh itu mufassil lagi mukaiyad. Bahawa sa-nya roh itu berkëhëndak sentiasa kepada Tuhan-nya. Tamat.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'rumah' itu jasad nama-nya. Ada pun jasad itu tempat (**ركنان** ?) roh itu, kerana itu-lah sa-bënar-bënar-nya tempat kënyataan Hakku'llah ta'ala, seperti sabda Nabi salla'llahu 'alaihi wa-sallama: 'Man 'arafa nafsahu fakad 'araf rabbahu,' hërti-nya, 'Barang siapa mêngenal diri-nya, maka bahawa sa-nya mêngenal-lah Tuhan-nya.' Ada pun rumah itu di-jadi sëndiri-nya, sunggoh pun akan fana melainkan ëmpunya rumah-nya Hak yang kekal dengan dzat-nya yang mutiak itu.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'harta' kita itu ia-itu seperti hati dan jantung dan paru-paru dan hëmpëdu dan barang yang di-jadikan Allah ta'ala samata-mata-nya seperti firman-nya: **وما تشاؤون الا ان يشأ الله رب العالمين** hërti-nya, 'Tiada kuasa sa-orang jua melainkan dengan kuasa Allah kepada sakalian 'alam ini daripada dzahir-nya dan batin-nya.' Tamat.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'milek' pada kita itu pancha indëra yang sa-puloh itu, përtama-nya dzahir, këdua-nya batin. Ada pun yang dzahir itu lima përkara: pënglihatan mata, pëñgëranan tëlëng, përasaan lidah, pëñcium dengan hidong, pëñjabat dengan tangan. Ada pun pancha indëra yang batin itu lima përkara pula: sir, 'itikad, chita, rasa dan waham.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada tujuh 'kota' itu, kerana Allah ta'ala mënjadikan kita ini tujuh sifat, maka di-sëmpurnakan insan itu tujuh sifat: sifat hayat, 'ilmu, kudrat, iradat, sama', basar, kalam. Dan wajib sujud kepada Allah ta'ala tujuh anggota: përtama-nya dahi, këdua-nya tapak tangan, dan këtiga-nya lutut, dan këempat-nya kaki dengan përut-nya jari.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'kunchi' itu sëbab-nya sangat-sangat yakin kita dan tauhid kita pada mënyërañkan diri kita kepada Allah ta'ala, seperti firman-nya: **وعتصمو حبل الله**,

hërti-nya, 'Bërpëgang kamu dengan tali Allah yang tiada putus-nya lagi tiada tërindung barang sa-këhëndak-nya itu

daripada ma'rifat-nya,' saperti kata Nabi salla'llahu 'alaihi wa-sallama: 'La takhriku dzarratin illa bi-idzni'llah,' herti-nya, 'Tidak bėrgėrak barang suatu jua pun, mėlainkan dėngan idzin Allah? Kėrana tiada dapat di-pandang dėngan mėmutuskan dan tiada putuskan mėlainkan dėngan kėhėndak Allah sa-mata-mata, maka tiada dapat lain-nya. Tamat.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'anak kunchi' itu Muham-mad Rasulu'llah. Kėrana Allah itu sangat-lah tėrbunyi, tiada siapa mėngėtahu'i-nya akan dia mėlainkan pada diri-nya. Sėbab itu-lah Allah ta'ala mėmėliharakan kėbėsarannya itu, maka Hakku'llah ta'ala pun tajalli kapada roh Nabi kita Muhammad, maka roh itu-lah Allah ta'ala mėnjadikan sakalian 'alam ini; maka dzahir-lah sakalian-nya sifat 'ilmu-nya yang batin itu. Maka sėbab itu-lah di-katakan 'anak kunchi,' kėrna mėmbukakan pėr-bėndaharaan yang tėrbunyi, saperti firman-nya: **كنت كنز مخفيان** herti-nya, 'Ada aku bėrharta yang tėrbunyi-nya.' Tamat.

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada pėlihara Allah saperti firman-nya: **وهو معكم انما كنتم** herti-nya, 'Allah ta'ala itu sėrta kamu barang di-mana kamu,' saperti firman-nya: 'Allah tėrlėbeh hampir daripada urat lėher.'

Shahadan ada pun murad daripada 'atap' itu kuasa Allah atas barang yang di-kėhėndaki-nya pada mėnudong daripada sa-orang hamba dėngan rahmat; maka jadi-lah tėrkunchi daripada sakalian sėtėru-nya dan bala-nya daripada dunia akhirat; maka tiada-lah tėrbuka kapada sakalian jin dan manusia mėlainkan dėngan izin Allah ta'ala. Tamat.





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