TWELVE RUBĀ'IS ASCRIBED TO BABA TAHER
IN THE BAKHTIARI DIALECT
FROM THE COLLECTION OF D.L. LORIMER

FEREYDUN VAHMAN
Copenhagen

The great poet, mystic and saint of Iran, Baba Taher, from Hamadan known as 'Uryan (nude, Dervish) is a most popular personality among many Iranian peoples and ethnic groups. Having written his poetry in the vernacular Persian dialect of Hamadan, his quatrains acquired a wide circulation all over Iran being localized, adapted to various dialectical environments and even “nationalized” in certain cases. The Kurds, e.g. claim that Baba Taher was a Kurd; he occupies one of the first places in the alleged list of the Kurdish poets in the literary production of Kurdish nationalistic authors. The Lurs and Bakhtiaris also consider him as their compatriot. Baba Taher became even one of the revered Saints of the Ahl-i haqq sect: he is the Fourth Angel of the Shah-Khoshin era, incarnation of the Deity.

The twelve quatrains presented below were recorded in the first decade of our country by British scholar and intelligence officer D.L. Lorimer among the Bakhtiaris in Southern Iran and still remained unpublished within the linguistic materials of the author kept in the University of Copenhagen. The material was finally typed and revised by the author in 14 December, 1948.

The text - a “bakhtiarized” version of original Hamadani Persian - is written down by a special transcription used by D.L. Lorimer in all his works (see in details: Vahman, Asatiani 1987, pp. 7-12; 1995, pp. 22-24).

D.L. Lorimer supplied the text with a tentative translation and short introductory note, where he wrote: “Verses attributed to Bābā Tahir written in an indeterminate and variable form of dialect are known all over Persia, but there is no certain canon of his work. Nothing certain is known about the man himself, but he is believed to have flourished in the middle of the 11th Century A.D. (vide “The Lament of Bābā Tahir”, by Edward Heron Allen, Quaritch, London, 1902).

Up to the present day the number of verses ascribed to Baba Tahir varies largely. From what he considered the best available sources Heron Allen printed 62 stanzas (dā-baiti). In Karmān in 1917 I obtained a lithographed copy of the “Rubā‘īyat” published by Hajj Shekh Ahmad Shārāzī, tājīr-i- kitāb-furush, Ṭīmchā-i-Hājīb ud-Daulah (Tehrān?) in 1331 A.H. This contains 122 “Rubā‘ī”.

A “Dīwān-i-Bābā Tahir”, edited by Wahid Dastagardi, Ispahānī, was printed in Persia (Tehrān?) in “Ābān Mah 1307” (= 1927 A.D.).

The Editor claims to have obtained a unique copy of the Dīwān (whether in ms. or print he does not say) which far surpasses anything existing in the libraries of the world. From this he prints 297 “dū-baitī” and 4 ghazal. He prints a further 59 “dū-baitī” collected from other sources.

From the heading to these verses it will be seen that the Bakhtīari lay claim to Bābā Tahir as a fellow-tribesman. He is usually spoken of as a native of Hamadān. Some attempt has also been made to give the language of the verses a Bakhtīari flavour. Thus ḥād- is substituted for ḥast-; ōveid for ōmad, ōmad; muna for māra (māra); and na-
In presenting the text we normalized the Lorimer’s transcription according to the system adopted in the Series “West Iranian Dialect materials from the Collection of D.L. Lorimer” (see: Vahman, Asatryan 1987, 1991, 1995), edited the translation and added new notes to the text.

**Gufta-i Baba Tahir, Lur i Baxtiyārī min Mahal i Kohistān**

1. Ayar mastān mastān, az tū mūn,  
   Ayar bē pā-o-dastān, az tū mūn,  
   Ayar Hind, ayar Gabr, ar Musulmūn,  
   Ba har millat ki hēdān, az tū mūn.

2. Xudāwāndā, tu hēdā bulandāt,  
   Tu hēdā bi kimān in dardimandāt  
   Xar o xūr e mune miskīn ba jahandum,  
   Tū naxl e mardumūn az riša kandī

3. Xudāwāndā, tu bīšt, bandā bīdūm,  
   Kamar ba xizmatat basta bīdūm,  
   Tū farmālt, mera māzāl kərdin,  
   Mayar mu lāyaq e xizmat na bīdūm.

4. Az ā rūzī ki muna āfrīdī,  
   Ba yēr az mūsiyat hēdī na-dīdī,  
   Xudāwāndā, ba haq i hašt-o-cērāt,  
   Zē mu biguzer: Sūtur dīdī, na-dīdī.

5. Xudāwāndā, tā zambar āfrīdī,  
   Bihišt o dīzaq o nūr āfrīdī,  
   Bihišt o dīzaq o nūr i ilāhī,  
   Zē čū xūšk āngūr āfrīdī.

6. Bahār ovoyā, ba har lāla gul ibī,  
   Ba har lāla hāzūrūn bulbul ibī;  
   Ba har marzī na-tarum pānahādin,  
   Mawād az mu bater sōdī dīdī bi.

7. Dīlum az dast i xūbūn gījevtī ē,  
   Cēhī sūsē ba ātas, gah berfē,  
   Dīl i āsuq misāl i ē i ter bi.

8. Ze dast i dīdā wo dīl hēdī fāryād,  
   Ki her-cē dīdā bīnad dīl kūnē yād,  
   Bisūzum xanjerē, nīsīs ze pālād  
   Zanum ba dīdā tā dīl gardē āzād.

9. Har ūn bāye ki sar a naxlīs ba dar bi,  
   Mudāmis bāyabun xūmīn-jīyār bi,  
   Bīboiyād kandanās az bēx, az bun,  
   Ayer bāras hama lal o gōher bi.

10. Ayer dastum rasēd ba ārā xī aflāk,  
    Zanum dast o gīrwān-rā kumun āzāk.  
    Bi yak dastum bigirum dūman-rā,  
    Bi dast i diyēr tā sar kumun xāk.

11. Ayer aht kaʃum, aflāk sūsē;  
    Der o dāʃt o beyāwūn pāk isūsē  
    Ayer ahe kaʃum az gāʃ i dil,  
    Ġyaʃ o sang o gil e namnāk sūsē.

12. Ayer dastum rasēd ba ārā xī gardān,  
    Ze o pursum ki “Yo āne?” o “Ŭ čān?”  
    Yakīna idihī sad nīz o namat,  
    Yakīna nūn jō akīda ba xūn.