

The Power of Silence

An Original Sangatheka

by

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(Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti)

This paper was classified as a Sangatheka by Murshid SAM.

The papers on this level from Hazrat Inayat Khan were withheld

from him by the Sufi Movement et. al., so he wrote his own.

“An Original Sangatheka” has been added to the title—Ed.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Sangatheka Number 1

My lesson is the power of Silence. This is a very important subject and has many ramifications. When God wished to create the world He did three things: He thought, He spoke and He acted. With God all these three are one, but with man they are apparently different, but the difference is more apparent than real.

When you wish to act you think. And what brings that thought into materialization? It is the breath. The breath carries all from the higher planes to the lower and the breath returns all from the lower planes to the higher. If you speak, you bring a thought down; if you keep silent, you breathe a prayer upward. Therefore there are two kinds of prayers: praise and petition, and praise should be spoken and petition should be silent.

The Sufi training in concentration is one method of bringing things from thought into action; speech is another. When the blessed Prophet, the Holy Spitama Zarathustra (on whom be Peace) told humanity about Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, he proclaimed some of the greatest principles of metaphysics, which knowledge shall be yours when you are ready.

So in the process of Creation, there is a movement downward from Silence to Sound, from Abstract to Concrete, from Inertia to Activity. But in the process of Assimilation, the movement is the opposite direction. You return all to God whether it is thought or exhaled breath or smoke from a sacrificial fire and surrender of self-will. All this, and all that is similar, belongs to Assimilation.

How by thinking someone is great, by saying someone is great, by respecting or acting toward someone as being great, you create greatness. But to make them small again, you do not think smallness. You cannot destroy a large snow-man by making a small snow-man. You have already made the large snow-man. But you can melt that snow-man.

After materializing a thought, you cannot destroy that thought with a contradictory thought. You must remove that thought, you must erase, you must unlearn. And how is this done? It is done by entirely reversing the process, by moving in the opposite direction. So to abolish the thought of greatness, do not remove the greatness, remove the thought and the greatness will disappear of itself. Melt that snow-man and it will not matter, whether that snow-man was large or small, the heat will destroy it.

(So instead of abolishing the Khalifship of Maheboob or the Sheikship of Engle, by abolishing thought of them, by not mentioning them or discussing them they become unimportant. Where are their brains? They have no mentality with which to contact the scientists, the philosophers, the leaders of humanity. What made them important? Thought. Thought made Maheboob important

and when Sheikha Kjershterud found that Maheboob was nobody, only the thought made him appear as somebody, only that thought was important—she was non-plussed. But I instructed you that by abolishing him in thought he became unimportant.)

The nufs is the Zat of limitation. You cannot abolish a Zat by removing Sifat. Zat and Sifat cannot be separated. But the nufs itself can be melted, it is a snow-man which can either be hardened into solidity by the contracting or creative process, or dissolved by the expanding or assimilating process. Assimilation and expansion belong to Shiva and contraction and creation belong to Brahma, while inertia is of Vishnu.

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Sangatheka Number 2

The Power of Silence can be seen in many ways. For example the whole growth in meditation is a growth in the Power of Silence and the practice of concentration brings another growth through the Silence. Besides that there are the breathing practices and every practice has for a purpose the calming, quieting or regulating of certain vibrations.

You want to heal someone and this consists in restoring rhythm and balance. And how do you restore equilibrium? You do this by quieting the thing which has caused disequilibrium. It is through the Power of Silence. A person is sick and every time they repeat “I am sick,” it sustains the condition which you desire to eliminate. By keeping silent about it, by making no remark you not only remove that evil suggestive power, you also calm the mind.

Calming the mind is better than saying “I am well.” Repetition of “I am” enforces the nufs and does not stop the source of disharmony, but by keeping quiet one can fix the thought on other than the self, whether one has reached the stage where he can commune with God or not. Attention to other than the self is helpful.

Therefore it is not alone the cessation from harmful repetitions, it is to suppress the ego. This will bring health and what is more, retain it and sustain it. You want health on all planes. When the soul directs the mind and the body, there is health and when the soul does not direct there is illness. And how does the soul direct? It directs in proportion to its absorption in God, which the Sufis call **baqa**.

Baqa is the real life, the eternal life, but it can be enjoyed here and now. There is no here or now,

no I or not-I in baqa, but it is Real Existence. You make your being and your vehicles the instruments of God and then you live the Inner Life which is the larger and fuller life. And how is this accomplished? Through the Silence.

Silence is both positive and negative, but the purpose of Silence is to be positive to the world and negative to God. Then one learns from Allah, Who is the true and only Teacher. When the lips are sealed to the world, the senses are open to the super world. Do not give out and you will receive. But be careful where you give and where you receive.

The purpose of spiritual retirement or Khilvat is to enter the Silence, to learn through God in the Silence. It is winding the entire mechanism, the recharging of the spiritual magnetism. Many animals go into a retreat in the winter and that is the purpose of winter. If God had not wished man to go into a retirement, there would have been no seasons, for God is an Everlasting Light, but seasons have their especial purpose.

So restraint of speech, action and thought and contemplation on Allah and His attributes play a most important role in spiritual progress. And then one finds that Silence brings the greatest activities and the greatest blessings, and all that is lost is limitation.

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Sangatheka Number 3

Every time you discharge an electric jar that battery becomes weaker unless it is recharged and every time thought passes into action, the mind becomes weaker unless it is recharged. The laws are the same for both kinds of phenomena. You can discharge a jar or tube near at hand or you can regulate that discharge far away through the radio. So thought can be activated near or far.

It is breath by which thought is brought into physical manifestation. You think, you speak, you act. When you express your thought near at hand, your action is best near at hand, but when you keep silent, that thought can be directed anywhere. This is the secret behind absent healing and telepathy at a distance. So long as you do not express that thought in words, that thought may be discharged anywhere, but once that thought becomes materialized there is a discharge of energy from the mind. It is very much like lightning.

When by concentration you materialize a thought, it means a depletion of mental power, just as a radio sender loses power through constant discharging and must be recharged. Silence alone does

not bring the recharging but Silence preserves a condition. So in the healing treatment you have silences and then you direct the thought to the person wherever that one is, but it cannot be kept up long as you will be depleting your powers. Therefore it is often good to have a short silence after the healing and if not in the form meditation, at least in the form of restraint of speech. Of all the services of the Sufi Movement, the sense of hurry and the desire for speech afterwards mars the healing work more than any other activity.

Now to recharge a body, silence is not enough but breathing exercises are necessary and these are of several kinds. But the whole day's rhythms and activities as well as the year's rhythms and activities help to restore the power and the magnetism of mind. As breath naturally revivifies mind, absolute silence is not necessary more than one period a year except for some especial need, and it may not even be necessary that often, if one has kept in rhythm and harmony throughout the year, but once every three years a mureed who has passed a certain stage of development should try to arrange a period of silence and retirement from activity.

Restraint of speech for the sole purpose of building power is not wise. It is like overcharging a jar which will destroy that jar, for every container has a capacity. This capacity of mind is not increased by silence; the power that is there is preserved but it has a limit. This limit is increased by practices not only of silence and Fikr and breath exercises, but by Fikr and prayer; for these all bring spiritual magnetism into the mind and so increase its capacity.

The real Silence, the real purpose of Silence is to attune the faculties to God. Speech in the name of God is the greatest of virtues, but Silence is God Himself. There is the Universal Sound which the mystics call Saute Surmad which is the bridge from earth to Heaven. When one approaches that bridge he receives of his teacher the help necessary to cross over it. Silence and power are related but God is above even this and it is only to seek God that a way is shown and when one hears God in the Silence, the purpose of one's life becomes manifest.

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Sangatheka Number 4

Christ has said: "Resist not evil" and I should compare this to a condition that when something is thrown at you, you may dodge. If the missile hits you there is action and if you hurl it back there is action and I mean action, Karma. Where there are deeds there is Karma and where there is no deed there is no Karma.

But what applies to deeds applies equally well to speech and thought. Speech means Karma, restraint absence of Karma. Thought means Karma, meditation takes one above Karma. Deliverance means escape from Karma so Silence is the best means of liberation. By Silence I mean restraint from all individual thought, speech and action in which there is present I-ness or what the Hindus call Ahankara.

If someone hurls a bad thought or says something against you or commits a malicious act, ignoring it is the best remedy. In thought you can magnify an insignificant act and in thought you can minimize a tragedy, and it is your thought which is far more important than the act itself. When you dodge that missile, when you resist not evil, the Karma that was directed at you strikes the dome of Heaven and rebounds against the doer. But when you interpose in any way, you not only get some of the effect of Karma, but you stand in the way of God.

It is not only true that “vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,” but any interposition of will mediates against the free transmutation of Divine Will into outer as manifestation. Good it is to say “Not my will but Thy Will be done,” but a million times better to remove the self so that Divine Will can act.

The right of the Sufi to defend or not to defend himself is not at stake, but the true way is to defend God, then God will defend you. When you consider the thoughts of another and the acts of another and the speech of another as unimportant, you wipe them from the face of the Cosmos and they create their own Samsara from their own Karma. Even if a tragedy should seem to befall you, it is not a tragedy unless you consider it so.

In the early stages of the Message some people have acted against you and I call this a blessing. If they and you had remained friendly, the world would have considered the Sufi Movement as a fraudulent organization working under a thinly-veiled spiritual guise. To free the true workers from the domination and duplicity of the false, it was God Himself Who made them enemies one to another. Verily God is the only doer.

So see God behind these deeds, minimize them and when some wicked person attacks you, praise God. There is an ancient saying, “Beware of the Greeks when they bring gifts,” and I say that the only time you will have any fear is when your enemies feign repentance. All their animosity can become as nothing, if you preserve an attitude of mental nescience, but all elevations of the Ahankara give power and strength to the nufs.

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Sangatheka Number 5

There is no end to power when there is Divine Control over deeds. Silence is when God acts and confusion is when man acts. Every activity, even the best of deeds done other than in the name of God creates its Karma and brings retribution or reward. This is the teaching exemplified throughout the Bhagavad-Gita.

The wise in all ages have sought liberation from Karma, from their own deeds. Not liberation from activity, but escape from the bondage of limitation and self-hood. The God-intoxicated soul is of no benefit to himself or the world if he practices asceticism. One does not find trees in the desert for the nightingale to nest and sing his song. The prophets fulfilled their missions only when they moved among men. Of all the prophets, Jonah came the nearest to failure who did not wish to face man but whose desire was to stay in the solitude with God. God is not seen or known until one finds him equally in the solitude and in the crowd.

When one only does what God desires, this is what the Gita calls **inaction** in action, and when one becomes an ascetic for his own salvation, there is action in the seeming inaction. This lesson has a great value to us, for it is in doing the will of God that is the true Silence. When the nufs is silenced, it is real Silence.

The idea of sacrifice known to all the ancients was the surrender of self to God. One did his daily tasks not only to supply needs for this family but to glorify God. That contained the secret of prosperity. Instead of praying to God for rain, thank him of His blessings and benefits. God knows best what is good for us. The blessed Zarathustra (on whom be Peace) taught his people arts and crafts, and how to prosper and at the same time draw them nearer to God in their most commonplace activities.

So saying “Alhamdu Lillah”—that is to give all the praise to God—removes self-praise, but first the Sufi says “Subhan Allah” which might be paraphrased: “All glory belongs to God.” This is the lesson of Silence in Deeds.

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Sangatheka Number 6

Restraint of speech is more important than restraint in deeds for it is through the tongue that the Power of Word is made manifest. And of restraint of speech there are two kinds: negation and self-

surrender. By negation is meant control of the tongue by the will, when the human will of itself keeps it silent. But in self-surrender the human will gives place to the Will of Allah.

There is a natural period for the tongue to be silent. Dusk brings peace and quietude, and the night is for sleep. So naturally during the hours of darkness there is abstinence from speech. This is observed in the Animal Kingdom, especially among beasts, birds and insects. Animals such as cats, frogs and owls, which utter their sounds at night, have always been associated with the powers of darkness, while birds which sing at dawn and during the day have always been regarded as more spiritual. We see this in the religion of the Ancient Egyptians, and it has been preserved in some form in folklore and religion to this day.

Besides the natural quietude of the day, related to the rhythms of the day, there are rhythms in the days of the week, in the positions of the moon, and most important, an annual rhythm because of the sun. Women in menstruation do well to have one hour extra silence at that time and this hour may be selected by themselves, but the practices are given by the spiritual teacher. The moon rhythm has an effect on man as well as woman but it is more subtle in their case. However, its influence can be minimized by the other practices of everyday life and by observing the annual Silence.

It is well for every talib to have a single day of silence in the spring and this may be the Good Friday of the Christians or the anniversary of the Passing of the Blessed Buddha or Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, or some other holy day, which day should be at least 40 days after the sun has reached its most southerly point. Of course if a mureed enters Khilvat during that season, it is very good.

For those living in the southern hemisphere, a day 40 days or more after June 21 is advisable. The 9th day of Ab whereon the Hebrews celebrate the fall of Jerusalem is very good. The Fast of Ramadhan can only be observed in this way when its season falls within the proper periods. Generally speaking these arrangements are made through a Murshid.

The Chisti School of Sufis, observant of these rhythms in time and nature, has selected convenient spiritual exercises, either of song or silence, to be used at the proper time. After the silence, song is natural. It is as natural to man as to the birds in springtime and at dawn and for this reason Sufis have developed their sciences which are both natural and Divine.

Observing these rhythms in nature shows that man's will is largely an illusion. He appears to want and not to want yet he does not know that his apparent desire is the result of natural activities, both within and without himself. Leading a natural life and leading a spiritual life should be identical. Increase in asceticism and even Khilvat is the balance to over-exertion in the outer life.

As the Message spreads over the earth and the inner teachings are understood, all will become balanced and every person, not only the wise, will understand through knowledge of the breath the need for silence during the hour, day, week, month, year and lifetime.

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Sangatheka Number 7

When man becomes unaccustomed to the Voice of the Silence, and when through an artificial life he becomes deprived of those faculties and powers with which Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate, endowed him, it is possible to recover those functions by several methods, but the one way by which all may be recovered together and the natural man restored is through surrender of the limited self-will to God.

The blessed Syed Borhan-ed-din at Tirmidi, who was the successor of Baha-ed-din Weled, the father of our Master Jelal-ud-din Rumi, and the predecessor of that great Pir-o-Murshid, used to say that man's faculties were limited in his journey **to** God, but were unlimited in his journey **in** God. The journey to God the Sufis call **Tarikat**, and the journey in God is called **Hakikat**.

To accomplish this journey the Grand Masters of that period used to spend 40 days in Khilvat, retirement from the world and contemplation on God. They used to say that on the sea-shore there were the marks of foot-prints, but none in the sea. So in the world of limitation there are many sounds, but in the Ocean of Unlimitedness all merge in the one grand **Hu**.

Contemplation on this Universal Sound is of utmost importance provided at the same time one keeps in mind "Nada Brahma"—Sound is God, or "The Word is God"—for this Universal Sound is the word of God about which the Scriptures speak. Attainment of true knowledge comes from this contemplation and this is best achieved in retirement over a period of days. It is from the root **Hu**, that **Haqq**, truth, and **Hakikat** are derived, as is discussed in *The Mysticism of Sound*.

Self-surrender is most necessary and it is most marvelous that all spiritual faculties may be given to man when through self-surrender he attains power in the Silence. Therefore the Sufis teach that what cannot be mastered through force may be gained through surrender.

All spiritual faculties are born in this state which is most important. This condition brings both Silence in words and Silence in thought, but it should be observed that there is strictly speaking no silence other than a selfless consciousness.

The true Silence is to silence the limited. When the limited is silenced the Unlimited speaks. Therefore when the mystic keeps silent he hears something.

Training in Khilvat and the recognition of the voice of God in the Silence enables the talib to hear the Sound at all times. Daily practices and meditations are not only valuable to continue the state of recognition of Allah but enable the mureed to keep in contact with his Lord, and learn from Him at all times. Then what has been called Silence becomes a veritable Gan-Eden, a paradisiacal garden containing the fruits of every blessedness.

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Sangatheka Number 8

There are two conditions which the Sufis call **Hal** and **Qal**. In Hal man surrenders his being to God and seeks God with all his fervor. In Qal God surrenders, so to speak, to man, seeks to manifest to man. So in **Hal** man journeys to God in God and in **Qal** God journeys to man in man.

Hal is the Voice of the Silence—as it were, a contraction of **Hu-AI**, for Allahu. Qal, which the Hebrews write **Qol**, and which is like the English **Call**, is the call or cry of the Lord. Qal is not only expressed through man but through every aspect of creation. Hal is God in meditation, in sleep, in repose, and Qal is God speaking, calling out, awakening.

Man must pass through Hal to attain Qal. Our Blessed Prophet Mohammed was in Hal when he heard the angels speak, but when he uttered the words of the Qur'an he was in Qal. So the Hal of man is the Qal of God and the Qal of man is the Hal of God. The same is true of Moses when he heard Jehovah in the burning bush. At first the bush was in Qal (the Hal of Allah) but soon Moses became the mouth-piece of the Lord. Therefore he called God: **Ya-Hu-Va**, which is explained in *The Mysticism of Sound*.

The Sufi endeavors to become a clear vessel, an empty cup. In Salat it says: "Thou comest on earth with a Message as a dove from above..." this is the Hal of God, His condition or state, "... and speakest the word that is put into Thy mouth..." this is the Qal, the Divine Voice.

Every training of outer expression and inner meditation on the mystical path is for the purpose of developing the talib into a living instrument upon which Allah, so to speak, plays His music and through whom He sings His Song. When one realizes this, one sees that not only is the journey to God and then in God, but that God Himself it is Who is making this journey.

Self-surrender through restraint of speech need not impose upon a person such a long silence as the Pythagoreans once required. This is discipline directed from without. True self-surrender comes

when the heart overflows with love, and when the Love of Allah is so great that it is the most natural thing there is. Therefore the Sufi seeks perfection in Hal, which is surrender of his will to Allah, but Qal comes through Grace entirely. Hal also comes through Grace with this difference:

Hal is given unto man when Allah deems him worthy of His Grace, but Qal comes to man when Allah uses him as His Wisdom chooseth to enlighten the world. Hal is for saints and contemplatives but Qal is for the Messengers of God of all ranks.

Hal and Qal are not sought for they cannot come through search or effort—Allah is sought. The use of music of **this** world develops Hal as in the Mevlevi, Chisti and vocative schools, and the music of **that** world which the contemplatives hear develops Qal. Blessed is he whom our Lord doth Grace with Hal or with Qal. Surely such a one is a chosen vessel through whom or to whom Allah hath manifested in all his Glory and to Allah be praise and worship forever.

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Sangatheka Number 9

The most important silence for this world is Silence in Thought and this is accomplished through two practices: Fikr and Mushahida (Contemplation). As Zikr is the voice of man which brings Hal in God, and meditation is the Hal in God which brings about the vocative expression, so Fikr is the thought of man directed toward God, and in Mushahida the thought of God becomes expressed through man.

It is Fikr which quietens and directs the vibrations of the mental sphere so the glory of Allah may manifest “as the light filleth the crescent moon” and it is concentration which brings this light—or as it is said in Salat “Let the star of the Divine Light shining in Thy heart be reflected in the hearts of Thy devotees.”

Hal and Qal are associated with music and dancing, while Fikr and Mushahida are most associated with painting, sculptury and philosophy. Poetry stands between these two. A study of these practices reveals why certain arts developed among certain mystics and other arts among other mystics, but only among the Sufis have all arts been continued through the ages.

The average man's thoughts reflected in philosophy do not last, but the sage who has touched Reality, which is Eternal, writes Scriptures. As Mohammed was Master in Hal and Qal, the Qur'an was in rhyme and rhythm, and from it the Sufis get the practice of Zikr for Hal and meditation for

Qal. Moses was master in Fikr and Mushahida and the Berashith is in prose but cadenced. David was more like unto Mohammed but Solomon approached Moses. This explains the peculiarities of Scriptures.

Master Ali followed David and Mohammed and is the Grand Master of all the Vocative Schools of Sufism, while Master Abu Bekr, the Siddiq, followed Moses and Solomon, and is the Grand Master of all the Contemplative Schools of Sufism (such as the Khilvatis and Naqshibandis).

Purification of thought does not mean abstinence from thought any more than cleaning a wall means destroying the wall. Purification means removal of foreign substance, and Tasawwuf or Sufism means the purification or purging of the vehicle so it can be Allah's vehicle, for that was the purpose of its creation. As a clear glass or clear wall can reflect more light, so a purified mind can reflect more thought.

Pure thought exists just as pure matter exists, and our mind selects thought just as our body selects food. Our mind no more creates thought than our body creates the things of this world. The physical sphere is derived in part from the mental sphere, and our body comes from the material of this sphere. There is nothing to indicate that the mental sphere is self-sufficient, and our mind is built of the substance of that sphere. According to the condition of our mind, it selects what it chooses from the mental sphere.

Intuition is automatic when the human will behind thought is surrendered to God. Insight comes naturally when the power of choice is abandoned. This does not mean thought is surrendered, but God does our thinking. Just as God may act through us and speak through us, so He may think through us.

As training in meditation passes through the grades of fana until one seeks God alone, so training in contemplation goes through stages in Tasawwur. In meditation man is quiet and in contemplation man is active, yet in meditation through restraint of thought man seeks Allah and in contemplation Allah through His own self-restraint directs His energy to a focus and manifests to and through man.

So it is God activating in thought in all cases; verily He is the Seer, the Knower, the Doer and the Thinker. Only by obliteration of the self can this be learned, and when it is learned, it is learned that the true self is all that is.

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Sangatheka Number 10

The secret behind restraint is that it is not restraint. Stopping the sand banks enables the river to flow and allowing logs and branches and rocks to block the way, causes a dam. We only can know life in its abundance when we make ourselves into clear channels through which the stream of life may flow.

The Sufis are called **Sahib-i-dil**, men of the heart. What does this mean? It indicates that through love alone can all waste material be removed. Unless one loved, one would not contemplate, one would not refrain from speech, thought or action.

Observe the young maiden as she sits and sighs. Not all the philosophers of the world can explain her moods. How much less are they capable of describing the moods and feelings of the lovers of Allah? To give up all of this world constitutes the Fakir. Merely to throw away wealth and carry the rubbish of vain deeds, silly words and useless thoughts does not constitute fakiriyat. But to give up everything in contemplation of Allah—the Fakir is one in Fikr.

Unless one understands it and understanding it knows it and does it, all these lessons are useless. Talking of stilling the mind is no virtue and an idiot may sit in silence for hours and see not God. True knowledge—**ma'arif**—comes from the awakening of the heart, from the heart overflowing in love. Therefore the veriest similitude of love is a pearl of great price in the Garden of Allah before which the greatest of metaphysics pales into insignificance in value.

O my mureeds, ye who seek Allah and through Him expect understanding, cease from seeking and from understanding. A little child's innocence is nearer those doors. Ye who would be lovers of Allah, know Allah is seeking you. He stands at your door to knock. Raise up ye gates and open, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may enter in.

In that hour of blissful Silence, the music from Heaven and from the Heaven of Heavens may be heard. Call it music, but it is not like the sounds of men; call it Silence, but it is so full of life, so expressive of Love, so radiant in Brightness—call it: Nothing, Nirvana—cease to speak of It, yet know It is all that is.

O my mureeds, know that **La Illaha El Allahu**, naught is but God. Noise it is when man speaks. Silence it is when Allah is heard, but the Music from the fragrant petals, faint beyond faintness, drowns all the sorrows and woes and bitter longings of the hearts in Creation, and the camel-bell heard across the desert-sand is the echo of the morning-star heralding the coming of the Lord of Day.