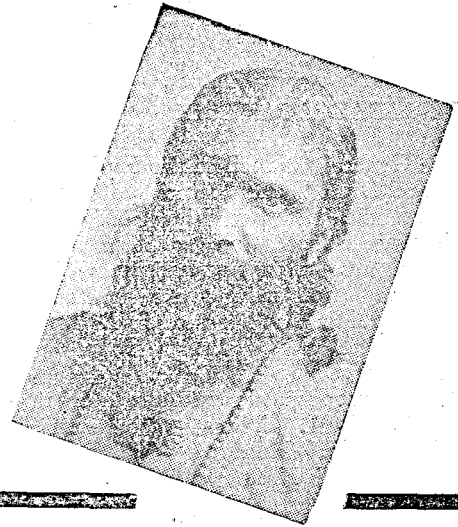


Hazrat Inayatkhan

THE SUFI MUSICIAN OF BARODA

By Vibhukumar S. Desai



IT is unfortunate that a musician, who once flourished in Baroda and who had made his name in the outside world, far and wide, was not even known in his native place, less so in India.

After receiving a letter from the Hague Scholar, Mr. P. Ouwehand, in April 1952, addressed to the Director, Oriental Institute of Baroda, inquiring about Inayatkhan's music and the Records of the religious songs of this highly rewarded genius, who once lived in Baroda and about the works which he wrote about Indian Religions, Philosophy, Psychology and Music, etc., which was directed to the writer of this article, it was felt that there lived in Hague, a great Sufi Musician of India, who was greatly respected and honoured, and was regarded as a Saint and a great Teacher, by the people there. It is in the fitness of things, therefore, that the activities of such a man should also be made known to the music lovers in India, even at this stage, when he is now no more.

This Sufi Musician was Inayatkhan Rehematkhan Pathan by name. He was the son of Prof. Maulabax's daughter, named Khadija Bibi *alias* Inayat Bibi.

Prof. Maulabax was the eminent architect of the Academy of Indian Music at Baroda, working under the princely patronage of His late Highness the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda.

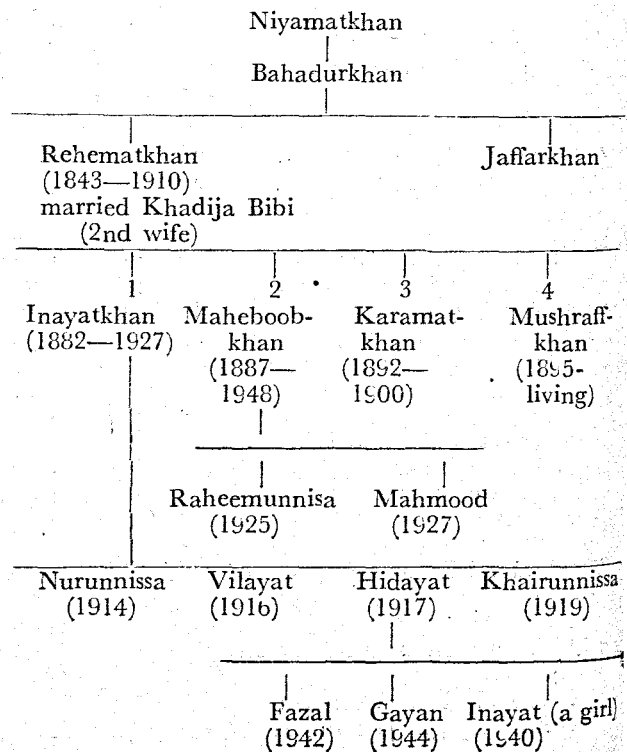
Inayat had two sons and two daughters. He had married an American lady named Ora Ray Baker (Ameena Begum) who expired in May 1949. Nurunnissa, his eldest daughter, was killed in the 2nd World War as a German-Prisoner of War-Camp.

His son Vilayat Khan has married an English lady, and Hidayat Khan a Dutch lady named Leni Flentge the latter having two sons and a daughter. His brother Maheboobkhan and his cousin Alikhan had accompanied Inayatkhan to the West. Maheboobkhan had also married a Dutch lady, Gertrud Cornelia van Goens (Shadmani), and is now no more, but his other colleagues Mushraffkhan, Alikhan and others are still living and staying there, carrying

on the work, started by Inayatkhan. They have now virtually become the citizens of Holland.

Inayatkhan was born on 5-7-1882, at Baroda, and passed away quietly from this world in 1927, at Delhi, after a short illness. During the short span of his life of 45 years, however, he had made himself conspicuous all over the West, by his magic powers as a Sufi, a Mystic, a Spiritual Musician, and a great Teacher.

Inayatkhan's genealogical tree is given below :



His early life and education

He spent the earlier part of his life at Baroda, under the kind and loving care of his grandfather, Prof. Maulabax.

He was sent to school when quite young, and he took his primary and secondary education in Baroda. Even in school, he liked poetry, music, and religious types of thoughts, and began to compose songs in Hindi, under the guidance of a Hindi tutor, Ratnakara.

He once recited a hymn of Shree Ganesa, in Sanskrit, in the Raga 'Hansadhvani', before the late H. H. the Sayajirao Maharaja of Baroda, who being greatly pleased, rewarded him with a valuable necklace and a scholarship. His Sanskrit teacher, in the Baroda High School, was Shri Kaashikaram V. Mehta, a famous Sanskrit scholar of Gujarat. Inayatkhān knew several languages—English, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Sanskrit. In later life, owing to his stay over the Continent, he obtained complete mastery over the English language as well as other European languages, French, Spanish, etc. He also knew Persian and the Arabic. He was thus very truly a linguist.

He liked the company of elders more, and even at home, he liked to pass his time in the company of his grandfather, Prof. Maulabax, more than in playing a game of cards with young boys.

While at school he was found to be very much fond of elocution, and he had founded a 'Balasabha' even when he was only eleven years old, and took every opportunity to speak on every occasion, there, and, strange to say, he always impressed his audience. Even in the Music Academy, he did the same—and his beautiful sonorous voice, combined with the power of conviction in his speech, attracted many.

As regards his religious temperament, it is clear that he inherited the same from his parents. His father taught him the lesson of telling the truth, of living a pure and simple life, to have faith and trust in God, and to have contentment in life. His father told him 'To forget all the good you do, but to remember all your faults.' (Neki Kar Pani Me dal, Badi Kar Pallu Me bandh.)

Again his thirst for knowledge, his curiosity for the hidden secrets of Nature and his eternal inquiries regarding the mysteries of religion, were very great. He had also a broad outlook on life, tolerance of spirit and sympathy and love for all human beings, without distinction of caste, colour and creed.

Inayatkhān as a Musician

Inayatkhān was born in a family of musicians, and inherited his love of music, as a rich heritage, from Prof. Maulabax, the illustrious founder of the

Academy of Indian Music in Baroda. Inayatkhān received his training in Music in this very Academy and completed the whole prescribed course of five years and always secured the first rank in his examinations and won the prizes. He obtained proficiency both in vocal as well as instrumental music especially Vina, which was his favourite instrument and over which he displayed his unrivalled skill and command. This art he had acquired from Prof. Maulabax, the then great Vina player existing in India.

He also imbibed love of Western Music from his maternal uncle, Prof. Allaiddin Khan Pathan of Baroda, who was a great musical talent. Prof. Allaiddin Khan had complete mastery over both—the Indian and the Western types of Music, and had the honour of acquiring highly coveted degrees in Music—of L. R. A. M. and L.L.C.M. with high distinction from England—where he was sent by the State of Baroda. Inayatkhān had thus the advantage of learning Western Music from him. Inayatkhān was thus well-versed in both the systems of Music.

Again, he could even sing Carnatic Music with equal grace and mastery. He had the capacity to grasp and reproduce any type of music which he heard. He had great powers of ear and voice. In Mysore, he once sang a "Pallavi", peculiar to the people of the South, with such ease, grace and mastery, that the whole assembly marvelled at his talent.

Over and above his mastery over the Science and the Art of Music, he had a beautiful, silvery, ringing and a powerful voice—which attracted even the Westerners, who had little knowledge of Indian Music.

He was also a composer and a singer of great eminence. He composed songs in Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati and English. He was thus a poet-musician, and being of a religious turn of mind, he poured his soul in his poems and sang them with all the divinity and serenity of a saint, which appealed to all alike.

Moreover, he considered Music to be sacred and divine. He did not like music to be degenerated, and he considered only as a source of enjoyment and pleasure. Music has a sacred duty to perform, and it was his earnest desire to raise music from its low status to its highest eminence and glory.

India does not seem to have known about his greatness, till it was made known by Western Savants, who have given very high opinion about his music and were highly impressed by it. They have called his music to be spiritual and divine, and his Vina playing as most pleasing and attractive. They have stated "Often he used to sing to his first 'Mureeds', with accompaniment of Vina, in the evenings, in his garden. Those were unforgettable

moments and it awakened in us a sincere interest in the deepest side of Indian Music, and what he played and sang for us, even the simplest music, turned into great beauty. It was the soul quality in it which captured us." Opinions of other Westerners are not quoted, but they all agree on one point and declare unequivocally that his music was simply charming and divine.

Now here one point arises as to how he could develop divinity in his music and whether such divinity is possible in music even in these days! To this he himself has given a reply, which deserves to be written in gold and be kept as an ideal for all musicians to follow:—

"He must develop Music in his personality. The true use of music is to be musical in one's thoughts, words and actions."

"True harmony of music comes from the harmony of the soul, and that music alone can be called real which comes from the harmony of the soul, its true source, and when it comes from there, it must appeal to all souls."

The following reply given by him to H. E. the Nizam's question as to how music was so charming and beautiful, is also equally important and deserves to be followed by all musicians:

"Your Highness, as sound is the highest source of manifestation, it is mysterious within itself and whosoever has the knowledge of sound, he indeed, knoweth the secret of the Universe. My music is my thought, and my thought is my emotion; the deeper I dive into the ocean of feeling, the more beautiful are the pearls I bring forth in the form of melodies. Thus my music creates feelings within me even before others feel it. My music is my religion, therefore, worldly success can never be a proper price for it and my sole object in music is to achieve perfection."

The true secret of his divine music, therefore, lay in the qualities of his soul.

Inayatkhān has published some books on Music, while in Baroda, which were:

1. Inayatkhān Harmonium Teacher, Pt. I.
2. Inayatkhān Fiddle Teacher, Pt. I.
3. Inayatkhān Gita Ratnavali.
4. Shree Sayaji Garbavali.

These being only for beginners, and meant to serve as ordinary text-books, do not give us an inkling of his future greatness. It may, however, be stated that in adapting the songs to the *sargams*, he put in vogue the system of notation, invented and introduced for the first time in the field of Indian Music by the famous Prof. Maulabax, and popularised it to a very great extent.

His Work In India

Having obtained complete mastery over the Science and Art of both the Indian and Western Music at an early age of 18, he began his life as a sojourner—a life that perhaps he liked the most—and made an extensive tour of India during the years 1900 to 1910.

Prior to 1900, he had, however, three occasions to go outside Baroda. Once in 1893, when he accompanied his maternal uncle Murtuza Khan to Pattan, other in 1896, when he visited Nepal, and the third at Idar in 1899, with his father.

During the journey to Nepal he had an opportunity to visit Gwalior, where lay Tansen, the greatest musician of all times. He also visited the holy city of Banaras. All these trips impressed him much in a variety of ways. At Idar, he saw a Swami, Hansa-swarup, and at Nepal he met a great Punjabi Sufi, the spiritual guide to the Raja Bhim Shamsheer Bahadur of Nepal. These contacts left indelible impressions on him and inspired him with lofty ideals of life. In Nepal, a mystic had revealed to him the mysticism of sound, and unveiled before him the inner mystery and beauty of Music.

In 1896, Inayatkhān received a severe blow, which almost broke his heart. His grandfather, Prof. Maulabax, expired. He felt as if he had lost everything, and felt solitary and helpless. His father and mother were alive, but his attachment towards Maulabax was greater in as much as a major portion of his life, till that day, had passed under the kind and fostering care of that great old man, of revered fame. Rehmat Khan knew his moods and tendencies. He, therefore, at once rushed down to Baroda, and took him away with him to his native place, the Punjab, in 1897. From that time onward, the father and son kept on paying occasional visits to Baroda and Punjab.

In 1902, a second severe blow was dealt to him, in as much as he lost his dear, revered, a very pious and religious mother. Now he felt very much restless. Hence he decided to divert his mind and took to rambling, but the rambling this time was with a purpose and a definite aim to become an exponent of the divine science and art of music. His real tour of India, therefore, commenced from 1902.

He first went to Madras in 1902, where he was very warmly welcomed by such high personages as the Right Hon. Mr. Ananda Charlu, Khan Bahadur Hadi Pasha and Walji Lalji. He gave a performance here of his beautiful music, which pleased the citizens of Madras so well that they presented him with a grand public address.

Thence he went to Mysore, where Prof. Maulabax was very well and intimately known. Here Inayatkhān

saw the great Mysorean Court-Musicians, Onai Shanna, Shamanna and Subanna. Before an assembly of such distinguished experts, he displayed such admirable command over the Carnatic music, that they were all wonderstruck and began to marvel at the way in which the young musician was rendering their own Carnatic music. He sang a Pallavi, peculiar to the people of the South, with an ease, grace and mastery, not found among the Carnatakees themselves. He was gifted with a sweet, silvery voice and a commanding personality, which made all the difference.

From 1903 to 1908, he stayed in Hyderabad, which turned out to be one of the most important periods in his life. Here he had the good fortune to visit all important personalities, including H. H. the Nizam, H. E. Kishan Prasad Maharaja, the Prime Minister; and all of them were greatly struck and charmed with the harmonious influence of his sublime music. They also noticed that behind the outer garb there lay some hidden secret about the greatness of this young musician and H. H. the Nizam once asked him devoutly to narrate to him the secret of the magical influence of his divine music. The reply quoted elsewhere in this article shows the real secret of his music. The Nizam, being greatly impressed named him the modern 'Tansen', gave him his emerald ring, and a purse, full of gold coins, and treated him very kindly and respectfully.

In Hyderabad, he made many friends and acquaintances, mostly from the nobilities and officials, and all of them were greatly attracted towards him.

One Maulana Hashimi was his great friend and Ustad, and he, being a mystic, saw in him the germs of real greatness, and the real part he was to play in his life to come.

Here he also came in contact with many Parsis of Secunderabad, and Sirdar Dastur Hoshang their high priest, a saintly man, who was greatly impressed by the capacity shown by Inayatkhān for rendering the sacred hymns (*gathas*) of the Parsis into beautiful melodious music very willingly. He also admired the catholicity of his mind.

Here he also happened to meet a great Fakir and a great sage, Maulana Khair-ul-Mubin, who saw in Inayatkhān's eyes the sparkling genius of a mystic. He also met his Murshid a Maulana Sayed Mohamad Aby Hashim Madani, who blessed him saying "Be Thou blessed by the Divine Light and illuminate the beloved ones of Allah," and initiated him into his order. Inayatkhān was thus preparing for the future, for a much greater life of a great musician, and a great Teacher.

During his stay in Hyderabad, he found time to come over to Baroda to see his parents who were noticing the silent changes coming over him.

From Hyderabad, he started on a pilgrimage of India in 1908. First he came to Ajmer, where he met some Dervishes.

In 1908—10 he visited the whole of Southern India, and all important centres there. He visited Madras, Bangalore, Kumbhakonam, Nagapattam, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura, Coimbatore, Malabar, Cochin, Ernakulam, Trichur and Travancore and was always welcomed by the nobilities, Kings, Dewans and other high personages. All of them were greatly charmed by his music and personality and many presented him with medals and addresses.

Then he went to Colombo, Candy in Ceylon, and thence to Burma. Then he came to Calcutta. In Calcutta Babu Laheri—a Sufi in spirit arranged for his lectures at the University Hall of Calcutta under the presidency of Sir Gurudas Bannerji, Rabindranath Tagore and others. In Calcutta, he lived for several years and his lectures and music were greatly appreciated by the people, who gave him the title of "Morning Star of Indian Musical Revival".

In Bengal, he made great acquaintances, friends, and admirers, like Lord Sinha, the Rajah of Rangpore, the Maharaja of Nalore, the Rajah of Lalgola, the Maharaja of Cassimbazar, who all liked his music immensely. Thence he visited Murshidabad, Dacca, Sylhet and saw Maharaja of Dinajpur. He was always very warmly welcomed, wherever he went.

Again, during 1908-9 he got 22 Gramophone records of his music at Calcutta, from a Firm named Victor. Some friends from Holland, especially his followers at Hague, are very keen on having back those records from India even at this stage and give vent to their feelings to the present writer as under:

"It is true as you suppose, many have been deeply impressed by his music and keep of it a wonderful remembrance, etc."

"You may perhaps understand how sorry we are that those who come along now have never heard of Shree Inayatkhān's voice and Vina." These records do not seem to have been preserved and are not forth coming even after a great deal of search, personally undertaken by the writer of this article.

It, therefore, appears that even these Western Savants were greatly devoted to him and that they greatly appreciated his spiritual music.

Having travelled throughout the whole length and breadth of India, he left India, on 13-9-1910 with his brother Maheboobkhan and cousin Alikhan, on an extensive tour of the West.

His Work in the West

He first started for America on 13-9-1910 with his brother Maheboobkhan and cousin Alikhan and stayed there for two years.

Starting work in the West must have been very hard and difficult for him, as he was a complete stranger there, without any means, without any assistance and without any acquaintance, but the Will was there, and the Way followed in all obedience to it. He began his tour by giving concerts of Indian Music and by giving lectures on Indian Philosophy, Mysticism and Sufism, which proved a source both for his attraction and stabilisation in the alien soil and alien atmosphere.

Inayatkhan's first address to the Western World was to the people of America, delivered at Columbia University, at New York, which found a great response. As regards his music, as he himself states, the Western people considered it as "a museum of antiquities, which one would not mind looking at once for curiosity, for pastime, but not like a factory, which produces new goods to answer people's demands and upon which the needs of many people's life depend."

During his two years' stay in America, he went to different places, like Los Angeles, San Francisco and gave lectures and demonstrations in Music, which were greatly appreciated by them. In San Francisco he was welcomed by Swami Trigunatita and Swami Paramananda of the Ramakrishna Order and was presented with a gold medal and an address. He also made acquaintances with great people there.

A young Hindu, Ramaswami, joined him in New York, and acted as a Tabla player to him till 1914. His powerful speech, his powerful personality and his beautiful music went a long way in inspiring a feeling of reverence and respect wherever he went.

In 1912, he went to England, where he saw the Poet Rabindranath Tagore, and Mr. Fox Strange-ways to whom he supplied some information regarding the book he was writing on Indian Music. Thence he went to France, where he gave lectures on Music and Philosophy which were greatly appreciated by the French people.

From France he went to Russia, where he says "the warmth that came from the heart of the people kept us warm in that cold country." Here he made friends with Count Serge Tolstoy, son of the great Tolstoy, who later on became representative of the Musical Section of the Sufi Order. Here he also met many Tartars, Persians, the leader of the Moscow Community Mr. Bey-Beg, the Ambassador of Bokhara and then returned to England, on the outbreak of the first World War of 1914 and remained there till 1920.

During this period he made journeys to different places, as Southampton, Leeds, Sheffield, etc., and gave lectures and demonstrations of his music.

It was in these years that the Sufi Movement was gaining ground on the Western soil. It started publishing books on Sufism, based on notes taken down from the lectures delivered by Inayatkhan at various places and such books are many.

In 1920, he visited France, Switzerland, Lausaune, Vevey and established a Sufi Headquarters at Geneva. Afterwards he settled at Suresnes.

Inayatkhan always admired the sociability and courtesy of the French. In 1921, he visited Holland for the first time. "The people in Holland", he says, "being of democratic spirit are open to ideas appealing to them. Though they are proud stern and self-willed, I saw in them love of spiritual ideals, which must be put plainly before them. Dutch people, I found by nature straightforward, most inclined towards religion, lovers of justice and seekers after truth. They hunger and thirst after knowledge and are hospitable and solid in friendship."

He also visited Belgium, where he gave lectures at Antwerp and Brussels, and then went to Germany.

In 1921, a Summer School was arranged at Katwijk, on a Dutch seashore, near the Hague. The lectures given here by Inayatkhan were, later on, published in a book form "The Inner Life". They bear the remembrance of one of the happiest and most sacred occasions in his life.

In March 1923, he again went to America and at New York he gave a series of lectures on philosophy, and at Boston on metaphysics. He saw Dr. Coomaraswami who was in-charge of the Art Museum. Then he went to Detroit, Chicago, California, Los Angeles and San-Francisco, where he saw Luther Burbank, the famous Horticulturist.

This Second tour of America was a great success, as the people were greatly impressed by his knowledge of philosophy and proficiency in music. He then returned to Europe and went to Suresnes and Geneva where people were awaiting his arrival. Then he visited and gave lectures at Morges, Lausanne, Basel Zurich, Rapperswill, Switzerland, Italy and Belgium.

In 1924 and 1925, he again went over to different places in Europe, as mentioned above, in response to invitations that were pouring in on him. His lectures and music were so greatly admired by the people that they actually thronged round him, acclaiming him as their *Huzarat* and themselves as his *Murads*.

In 1925, he again went to America, where he had occasion to see Mr. Ford, who was much impressed by him and said "If you were a business man, you

certainly would have made a success, but I am glad that you are as you are." Sufism was in the meantime gaining greater ground and his teachings were becoming more and more popular. He then returned to Europe, at Summer School and his followers were enthusiastically gathering round him. Sufi Societies were formed in different places like England, Holland, Geneva, America and they were following the path laid down by him. Now he had a desire to come once more to see his native country, India—as he also wanted some rest and a change—so, taking leave of his family-members, Inayatkhān returned to India in 1926, and reached Delhi on the 1st of November, but here also he could not get his much coveted rest, as people streamed to him from all quarters, desiring interviews, lectures, addresses. Hence he had to go to Aligarh College, Delhi University, Lucknow, Ajmere where he satisfied them by his lectures. But he was completely physically tired and could not stand all exertion. He actually succumbed to an attack of pneumonia in Delhi, in 1927 at "Tilak Lodge", a house situated on the bank of the Jamuna where his earthly existence reached its inevitable end. He could not come to Baroda.

Inayatkhān was perhaps the first Indian Musician to go to the West and to demonstrate to the people there the importance and fineries of Indian Classical Music. He did wonderful work, not only in the field of music but also as a great mystic, a spiritualist and a great teacher. His music had made deep impressions there, and his lectures on mysticism attracted many. He thus became their spiritual guide, and highly esteemed teacher in Indian Music and Culture. His lectures, it is strange to note, covered all types of subjects, earthly and unearthly, *viz.*, History, Culture, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Literature, Psychology, Morals, Masters, Saints, Prophets, Sufis, Mysticism, Metaphysics, the Mysticism of Sound, etc., and revealed to them a new Indian World with all its hidden treasures. This means that he himself must have been a man of very high accomplishments, deep culture and a very great spiritualist. These qualities of character and personality endeared him to the people in the West.

To summarise his work in the West, it may be stated that he did four-fold type of work:

1. The spreading of Indian Classical Music with all its niceties and beauties, acknowledged to be of a spiritual nature even by his Western disciples.

2. The spreading of Indian culture, deep and wide, on a Western soil, by means of his profound lectures on various subjects.

3. The bringing into being of unity of the East and the West. He and his family members are the veritable emblems of the unity.

4. The founding and the spreading of Sufi-movement, which even to this day does its work on International basis, with its Headquarters at Geneva. Thus he brought home to them the essential importance of spiritual development, and also gave a method of spiritual studies, which made it possible for those who were searching for spiritual knowledge and the realisation of truth to find a corresponding, systematic training also in the West.

The Sufi-Message of Spiritual liberty is the old eternal message of love, harmony and beauty—which is also found in every religion. It is the insight into the essential unity of all beings, the knowledge that there is but one God, one Truth, one Religion and the various religious forms are but the various manifestations of one essential Truth. To the extent to which humanity will become alive to the insight of this essential unity, to that extent the animosity and inimical differentiations will fall away and applying this principle further in life will we be able to attain peace in the outward life. Peace in fact does not come to us from outside, but it issues forth from the expanded heart of the individual.

This Sufi philosophy attracted many and they became his followers. He has even now groups of sincere followers, whose ideal is universal brotherhood of mankind, irrespective of colour, caste and creed. These groups hold music and art in high esteem, and are still carrying on the work as a trust given to them by him. They still follow a religious ceremony called 'Universal Worship' on every Sunday in several towns of Europe, America, Holland and at the completion of the service, a sermon is given in the spirit of tolerance, appreciation and understanding. In this service passages* from the sacred books of the Hindus, the Buddhist, the Parsis, the Hebrews, the Christian Bible and the Holy Quran—are read. No preference is given to any religion and everybody feels his belief honoured and respected. During the service, candles are kindled in reverent remembrance of the Avatars of all living religions.

It will thus be seen that Hazarat Inayatkhān was a great Spiritual Sufi Musician, a Philosopher, a Teacher, a Savant, who brought honour and fame to his native land. He also possessed all the good qualities of the head and the heart, which endeared him to the people in the West.

Is it not then the duty of the people in India to do something to commemorate his name and the people of Baroda, in particular, to do something substantial to honour this great soul of Baroda?

*From the Journal of the Oriental Institute,
Baroda*

*These services are printed in the book "Gayan".