



CONTRIBUTION OF SUFI SAINTS IN PUNJAB AND MAHARASHTRA



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Abstract:

Sufism is a Muslim movement whose followers seek to find divine truth and love through direct encounters with God. Sufism arose from within Islam in the 8th -9th centuries C.E. as an ascetic movement. The Sufi Message is a Message of Unity, of Spiritual Liberty, and of Love, Harmony and Beauty, destined for all humanity. Its purpose is not to draw seekers to a new path, but to awaken them to the path which they are destined to tread. Truth is one; it cannot be otherwise. Therefore the Sufi finds the light and love of the Divine Spirit of Guidance hidden in all names and forms. The movement may have been given (or taken on) the name Sufism because of the coarse wool garments they wore as a mark of their rejection of worldly things; Sufis have

traditionally taken vows of poverty and celibacy. Sufism developed religious practices focusing on strict self-control that enable both psychological and mystical insights as well as a loss of self, with the ultimate goal of mystical union with God. Sufis engage in a variety of ritual practices intended to help them realize union with God, such as distinct forms of ritual prayer, including the recitation God's names, as well as bodily rituals such as those practices by the so-called 'Whirling Dervishes,' a Turkish Sufi order that practices meditation and contemplation of God through spinning.

In this paper the researcher has tried to discuss the role of some Sufi saints, which has made impacts on the society in medieval period.

RESEARCH PAPER

1. Hazrath Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani

Islamic society is essentially dynamic and not static. The work of reform within has all along been undertaken by the saints, and the work of reform without has been performed by the ulemas, the learned people.

Hazrath Sheikh Abdul Qadir RA Jilan, better known as Ghousal Azam, Piran-e-Pir, occupied a unique position. He successfully combined in himself, the roles. He was the outstanding saint and the leading learned man of unquestioned greatness. He was not only the outstanding saint, sage, scholar and a reformer, but also Defender of Faith. he achieved immortality by dint of his strength and nobility of character, modesty, humbleness, pursuit of truth, self-discipline, renunciation, sacrifice, service, faith, hope and belief.

He was born on the 1 st of Ramadan 491 AH in the city of Jalin (Iraq). He was a direct descendent of Hazrat Imam Hasan RA and Hazrath Imam Husain RA, the two distinguished sons of Hazrath Ali RA and Bibi Fathima RA, and maternal grandson of Holy Prophet SAW. He was also related to Hazrath Khwaja Garib Nawaz RA of Ajmer both maternally and paternally, and whome he met twice in his lifetime.

After receiving his early education at home and at a school in Jalin he proceeded to Baghdad in pursuit of knowledge and learning there. After completing his education, he became a teacher in the school of his teacher-Hazrath Qazi Said RA. he proved a very successful teacher and students came from far off to attend his class.

Not long afterward, he entered the mystic order by becoming a disciple of Hazrath Qazi Abu Said Al Mubarak RA. He passed his day's spiritual exercise, rigours and self- discipline. In this condition of absorption he wondered for full twenty five years in Iraq. He was known as "Mehboob-e-Subhani (Beloved of Allah)

After great trials, tribulations, privations, hardships and rigours he obtained fame, following respect, prestige and above all, the crown of immortality.

Throughout his life he exhibited very many supernatural powers. He had to exhibit those powers in order to fulfill his mission in life, which was the propagation of Truth. Society was at its lowest ebb spiritually and he assigned to himself the task of reconstruction, renovation, regeneration and reorientation of society in order to re-establish a new social order based on love, righteousness, truth and justice. he breathed his last at the age of ninety two years on 11 Rabi-Us-Sani 583 AH.

The Qadri Order of the Sufis, now spread throughout the world, owes its very existence to him. The Order Now claims myriads of people in its fold, in different countries and climates, having different names and nomenclatures, belonging to different nations and guided and inspired by, and devoted to the great guide and leader- Ghousal Azam, Piran-e-Pir.

2. Hazrath Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti RA

Hazrath Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti popularly known as “Khwaja Gharib Nawaz” (The Benefactor of the Poor), was the founder of the Chistiya Order of Sufies in India. He is one of the most outstanding figures in the history of Islamic mysticism.

He was born in 536 AH (1141 AC) in Sijistan (Persia) to Parents directly from the Holy Prophet of Islam. He received his early education and training from his father. At an early age he renounced the world and became a devoted mureed (disciple) of Hazrath Khwaja Usman Harooni RA, a great sufi mystic of his time.

During 20 years of hard training in Islamic mysticism under this great religious master, the young seeker of Truth had the opportunity of meeting Khwaja Abu Ali Ishaq Shami RA (of Chist), the founder of the Chistiya Order, Sheikh Abdul Qader Jilani RA (of Baghdad), the founder of the Qadiriya Order, Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi RA, the founder of the

Suhrawardi Order, Khwaja Auhaduddin Kirmani RA and Khwaja Mahmud Isfani RA- great names in the illustrious galaxy of Muslim Saints.

After having completed his mission in the Middle East, he was divinely inspired from Mecca and Madina to go to Ajmer (India) to preach the gospel of Universal Truth and Brotherhood through Sufism. He made his first stop at Lahore where the great scholar and saint, Shaikh Al-Hajwari RA (Hazrath Data Ganj Baksh) lies buried. After receiving spiritual illumination he went Multan, a rendezvous of saints and scholars from the Middle East. It was from here that he settled in Ajmer at the age of 52 in the teeth of staunch opposition and conducted his sacred mission all over the sub continent for 44 years before passing away in 633 AH (1236AC).

3. Hazrath Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar RA

After the untimely demise of Hazrath Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki RA, the mantle of India's spiritual leadership in the illustrious Order of Sufis fell upon the shoulder of Hazrath Baba Fariduddin RA. He was one of the most brilliant stars of the Chistiya Order of Sufism, In addition to his spiritual attainment, he was also a flowing river of knowledge the quenched the thirst of millions of eager aspirants. His spiritual Knowledge and knowledge of the prophet's Islamic laws were perfect in every respect. He placed great emphasis on the acquiring of knowledge, which he regarded as higher than all kinds of devotions in the name of Allah.

Because of the political upheavals in Delhi, he moved the centre of the Chistiya mission to the peaceful seclusion of Ajodhan which became the fountainhead for divine knowledge and blessings. His Khanqah became a university of Islamic teaching and spiritualism, where thousands of aspirants, scholars and dervishes flocked to receive training and guidance under the patronage of the great saint. it came as no surprise when Emperor Akbar later changed the name of Ajodhan to Pak Patan (he holy town).

Hazrath Baba Fariduddin RA is held esteem for his arduous mujahedas which enabled him to reach the pinnacle of perfection and glory in the realism of Sufism. He enjoys 21 titles of

which Ganj Shakar became the most popular. He also made mureeds in the Qadiriya Silsila of Sufis. he is buried in Pak Patan, Pakistan.

4. Hazrath Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia RA

He was also known as “Sultan-ul-Mashaikh” (distinguished leader of the Sufi Saints of his time in India) and “Mehboob-e Elahi” (Beloved of Allah). He succeeded Hazrath Baba Farididdin RA as the highest spiritual leader in India. In addition to his spiritual attainments and perfection, he was a most distinguished scholar and an administrative genius. His Khanqah in Delhi became the reservoir of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge, religious learning and moral and social training for over 5 years.

He founded Khanqahs all over India, and sent his trained Khulafas who acquitted themselves most brilliantly in their missionary duties especially in imparting lessons in truth and Love. He saw kingdoms of Delhi rising and falling. He never visited the courts of any of the ruling monarchs, neither did he permit them to come near him all his life, thus observing one of the most important principles of Sufism in this respect.

Charity and piety were deeply ingrained in his life because he himself has tasted the bitter pills of poverty and privations in his childhood and youth. He lived and died for the welfare of the poor of India. He is buried in Delhi, India.

Among his mureeds (followers) was one Hazrath Amir Khusro RA- a great Sufi, a wealthy merchant who gave up all, an intellectual giant of many languages, an artist, a prolific author, a genius musician (he invented the Sitar), a versatile composer, and above all a most dutiful and devoted mureed.

5. Hazrath Hafiz Sayad Khwaja Mohamed Ali Shah Khairabadi RA

Hafiz Paak RA (as he was popularly known) is the direct descendant of the Holy Prophet SAW, following the lineage of Hazrath Ghausul Azam RA. he was one of the leading Khulafas of the great illuminary of Punjab (India), Hazrath Khawaja Suleman Tawsawi RA.

He was born in 1192 AH (1778AC). He committed the Holy Quran to memory and enrolled as a student in Khairabad, later proceeding to Shahjahanpur and finally to Delhi.

On the specific instructions of his Sheikh he started the process of Peeri Mureedi. Thousands of People pledged ba'it on his hand. He established his Khanqah in Khairabad. It proved to be the cradle of learning which later became famous as the Khairabadi school of thought. He was a very practical man who attracted a number of knowledge –thirsty and spiritual –hungry personalities from the length and breadth of India. he also spent ten years in the Haramsin (Mecca and Msdina)

Hafiz Paak RA referred to as the “shiiibli of the Era” and “Sultan-ul-Mashaikh”. He kept away from kings and affluent arrogant people. He passed away on 19 Zil Qada 1266 AH at the age of 71. One of his most well known Khulafas is Hazrath Habib Ali Shah RA, the Pir-o-Murshid of Hazrath Soofie Saheb RA.

6. Hazrath Khwaja Habib Ali Shah

Hazeath Habib Ali Shah RA was born at Hyderabad, Deccan, India. he was the fourth son of a philanthropic billionaire, Nawab Ahmad Yar Khan Muhyud Dawlah. his birth was the miraculous prediction made by Hazrath Khwaja Hafiz Muhammand Ali Shah RA of Khairabad, India, who made regular spiritual and educational visits to Hyderabad, that a “spiritual” child will be born in the Nawab’s house. Although the wife of the Nawab had passed child-bearing age, a child was born.

When this child grew up he renounced his title and an estate worth several billion rupees and entered the realms of true faqiri. he showed his ameer in later life when he hardly had any material possessions and yet during his trips to the blessed city of Ajmer Shareef he was seen distributing countless rupees to the needy and indigent.

The city of Khairabad was a centre of learning and Khanqah was popular focal point for the training of ulema. He received his spiritual training here under Hazrath Khwaja Hafiz Mohamed Ali Shah RA who was the Shaikh and teacher at the centre. Before long, the Shaikh appointed him as a Kutub of Kokan and instructed him to serve community of the cosmopolitan city Mumbai(Bombay).

He left for Bombay where he established a centre in Dockyard Road, Majgown, which still exists today, perpetuating the legacy of selfless service for which its foundr was famous. Hazrath habib Ali’s entire life speaks of profound spirituality, unblemished service and countless

miracles. His spiritual lineage or Silsila was the Chistia, Qadiria as well as various other orders. He not only made mruued (disciples) but trained them to serve as khulafas (spiritual successors). He sent his renowned khulafas to the different parts of the world with the specific instructions that they provide selfless service to humanity and that they propagate Islam in its pristine, restraining from indulging in futile debates and vain arguments.

Conclusion :

Sufism was a reform movement within Islam which greater stress on free thinking, liberal ideas and toleration. The Sufis believed in the equality of all human beings and brotherhood mankind. The Sufi movement started in Perisa. Some of the Sufi sa also came to India. They began to preach their liberal ideas and to remove the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims and bro them together.

The world renowned Great Sufi Saint of India His Holiness Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia has said that “To hurt a human heart is to hurt the grace of God”. It is a matter of great pride for the entire Muslim world that several great Sufi Saints like Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, Gharib Nawaz of Ajmer, Hazrat Baba Farid Ganje Shakar and Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia were born on the Indian soil which had also produced several other great and famous religious and spiritual personalities who have devoted their whole lives for the welfare of the mankind. They have always preached love, tolerance, peace and justice. Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia was very compassionate and merciful in nature; he treated all people with sympathy. He has said, A Sufi dervish must never curse anybody however great maybe be the persecution which he may suffer. He must always refrain from disclosing the faults of the people, which is a virtue and one of the best devotions to God.

The famous Sufi Saint Hazrat Baba Farid has blessed his disciple Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia and said, May God make you fortunate and bless you. You will be a spacious tree under which the oppressed humanity would take shelter and feel comfort. Whosoever comes to you, shower your blessing and favor upon him. Never refuse to bless and help the needy and the poor, the widow and the orphans, if they come to your door. This is your mission of peace to serve the mankind. With your spiritual light, dispel the darkness of ignorance; dissolve the clouds of discord and war and spread goodwill, peace and harmony among the people.

Sufism was thus a living religion of deep devotion. Its goal was absorption in divine consciousness. All the saints had inculcated the principle of love of humanity was one of the ethical ideas. They propounded a scheme of life within the limits set by the law of Islam which they considered formed the true path to the ultimate goal of attaining nearness to god. They preached inward light as against the dogmatic formalism of the ecclesiastics and the legists, and their exalted idealism brought solace and comfort to many a heart tossed on the sea of uncertainty and doubt.

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