

DISCUSSING REFORM AND REVIVALIST ATTEMPTS OF SUFIS

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Abstract:

This paper analyzes about the revivalist thoughts and reforms made by the Sufi masters and their orders who are also known as spiritual mystics of Islam. This work contains an elaborate study of their contributions in various forms to various domains and fields. And how were rational political thoughts used by them to fulfill their intentions.

Key Words: Sufi, Reform, Tariqa, Propagation,

Introduction:

The word Sufism or Tasawwuf may not be found in the early Islamic period but the ideology was the main message of the revelation and the Prophetic tradition where Allah uses the word ¹ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ in the Quran which means to Purify, and the Prophet PBUH has used the word إحسان when he was asked about it he said (You worship Allah as if you see him. If you do not see him, he sees you)² so we can prove that Sufism in Islam has its stand with the time of the rise of Islam in other names yet the idea was the same and the name Sufism was later put on this ideology and it became familiar. The SUFIS are known as Masters of Spirituality or Mysticism in Islam They are people of utmost faith in monotheism they were looked upon as spiritual leaders of the Muslims they are given the utmost gratefulness and respect among the Muslims. At the same time, they also have contributed to many Islamic fields like; philosophy (ILM kalam), Metaphysics, Literature, Political Philosophy and Anti- Colonial activities too. So almost all these contributions and their activities are taken into consideration in this booklet.

¹ Surah AL-Baqara verse 129

² Sahih Bukhari Hadees Number 4777 chapter 65- Belief Faith

Whenever the word SUFI or Sufism is heard, the thought of spirituality and Mysticism knocks our minds. Indeed, that is the Fundamental and Basic stand of A Sufi. It is because they stand for the propagation and preaching and the Purification of Hearts and Minds of Muslims century after century. Even after all these contributions, one thing which is common in any Sufi order is that there is no right path (Tariqa) without completely abiding by the fundamental rules of Islam (Sharia)¹

Tariqa and Muslim Mobility

The Sufi orders that are formed on the fundamentals like (Ishq-e- Elahi) the love for God, and the Purification of the Soul, have a great influence over the personal life, society, nation, and many such stages of human life² Sufi saints like Maulana Jalaludeen RUMI, Sheikh Ahmed Yasavi, Haji Badhashi wali or Bairaani wali. These scholars propagated Islam in Turkic province Haji Badhashi wali was one of the great Sufi saints in the early 10th century the Badhashi Sufi order is the Heterodoxic order in Turkic Islamic Studies while all other Sunni Sufi orders are considered Orthodoxic.³ and Sheikh Ahmed Yasavi the founder of Yasavia order He was also one of the biggest SUFI Saints in Turkic Islamic provinces. Baairan wali and sheik ADABALI Sufi scholars who propagated ISLAM among this Turkic Ethnic community and because of their contribution huge number of people embraced Islam at that time. The Sufi history and Lineage differ from one Sufi saint to another like SHEIKH MUINUDEEN CHISTY, BAHAUDEEN NAQSHABANDI, SHIHABUDEEN SUHRAWARDI, and ZAKARIA MULTAANI. SHEIKH of CHISTY MUINUDEEN

He is from Central Asia and has a Turkic origin likewise zakaria multaani was the student of shihabudeen suhrawardi he is from Iranian Central Asian area and Bahaudeen Naqshabandi the founder of Naqshabandiya silsila. He also is from the Central Asia and then Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani he is from Arabia IRAN and the IRAQI region. Among all the other leaders of silsilas, The Qadiriya silsila has huge followers among the South Asia and South East Asian regions Qadiriya silsila is one of the biggest Sufi silsila in the world. Other than Qadiriya silsila all other silsilas are from the Turkic region where as the Qadiriya silsilas lineage connects with ARABIA. So, these Sufi silsilas made their contribution to propagating Islam in their respective provinces and made the people of IRAN Central Asia and Turkic provinces Embrace Islam. The main intention of all these Sufi cults is to propagate Islam and all the other fields

¹ Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal page 12

² Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal page 16

³ Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal page 18

and domains their contribution served as a tool to propagate Islam in a more convenient manner.

Contribution to Islamic Literature

At the same time these Sufi scholars have played a major role in contributing their prose and poetry to the Islamic literature , The way of approach they had towards writing was unique especially the Sufi saints in South India like the Karnataka, Tamil Nādu and Kerala and Andhra Pradesh many of the Sufi scholars in these areas used the vernacular language as a way of writing in the literature it was in such a way that they were even mistaken for writing Indian myths but they had the differentiation by mentioning the historic era and pieces of evidence which is lacking in the myths. For example in Kerala there is a literary work called Muhyiddin Maala as poetry was written by Qazi of Kozhikode, which in it comprises the History of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani, the south Indian scholars used the vernacular local languages in Islamic literature the sole reason behind such a way of approach to the literature was to teach, to inform the non-Muslims about such SUFI SAINTS and their activities to uphold the propagation of Islam towards other communities by which they will be easily able to understand if it is being taught to them in their own local languages, unlike Ramayana and Mahabharata which were depicted by Hindu scholars which do not have any historical evidence the Sufi scholars depicted real histories of Islamic Sufi saints of those eras and wrote it as in prose and poetry forms of Indian style in which they elaborated the life style, which teachings and preaching of particular Sufi saint pakshi paatu and Badr maala are also such literary works composed by the early South Indian Sufi scholars to let the people know the Islamic history and propagate and preach Islam to the people through the way of writing the Indian mythology. Looking deeply in the contribution of the Sufi scholars in the Islamic literature in a global sphere we see there are numerous Sufi scholars who have played their roles they have basically wrote on spirituality and mysticism like Jalaludeen Rumi.

Philosophical Discourses

Indeed, all the Sufi scholars were the masters of (ilm-ul-kalaam) metaphysics and mysticism. Because of this involvement of them in this field most Sufi scholars indulged themselves in philosophical discourse and metaphysical debates at that time. One such Sufi scholar was ABUL HAKEEM THIRIMIDHI he was known as the first scholar to invent this kind of metaphysical thoughts and philosophical discourse as he was influenced by the Greek philosophy and he has also excelled in the field of writing interpretations to Dream which is known as ilm-ul-ta'abeer so the philosophical discourse and metaphysical discussions have a huge place in SUFI discourses all these excellence of the Sufi scholars in such and such fields

indicates that the Muslim scholars were the pioneers in the discussion of philosophy metaphysics and (ILM-ul-kalam) in the respective time period this also shows the dynamism of Islam or Muslim scholars to engage in these discussions too they were competing for the Greek, Indian and Persian philosophers in these fields. Iman Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali a prominent scholar in philosophy at one stage of his life carried out comprehensive research on Greek Philosophy, its later developments, and contributions made by Ibn Sina and Al- Farabi. He also published his book 'Maqasid al Falsafa' in which he disproved the validity of arguments of Greek Philosophy related to theology. (Jamali, 2021)¹

Islamic Propagation

Apart from their contributions to the respective fields they have initiated a different kind of organization known as Tariqa. These organizations called Tariqa are looked upon by normal people in the perspective that they are a group or mass of Sufis wandering on the face of the earth just to travel from place to place like nomads Where that is not the actual case but these are organizations that have a deep connection with the sheik and mureed they also have different hierarchies in this tariqa system There will be a sheik who is a Sufi master and he has many appointed representatives called Khalifa these khalifahs will preach and propagate and will follow the correct ideas and regulations of their sheik and they will lead the people with these ideas in different parts of the region and these khalifas have their own followers apart from the appointed khalifahs the sheik has many followers called mureed. This kind of cedar-styled organization is called Tariqa. This Tariqa controls Muslim Mobility as sheriff Mardin famous sociologist says he says the Tariqa is one such organization that controls Muslim mobility in their respective places by using the Tariqa Sufi scholars led many communities towards Islam.²

Political Philosophy

By using Tariqa, they have actively engaged in spiritual, social, and political scenario in different span of history. For example, if we take the most prominent tariqa Badhashiya this was emerged during the Osmania khilafa starting from Suleiman sha his son Ertugrul and his son Osman, in this time the Badhashisheik Haji Biraan wali, and Fathima bhaji and SHEIKH Edabali these Sufi leaders were political counselors of the Osmania family they also acted as

¹ Dr. P.S. Syed Masood Jamali. "Imam Ghazzali and His Criticism on Greek Philosophy of Theology". *Al- Bukhari Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Mar. 2022, pp. 80 -86, <http://albukharijournal.in/index.php/abjais/article/view/51>.

² Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal page 15

a paramilitary for the ruling family too They were political spiritual counselors and paramilitary to the family which ruled¹. With the use of the Tariqa, these Sufi saints helped the Osmania family to face political and spiritual situations in their time. After the establishment of leadership under Osman, the Sufi scholars turned to become political and spiritual advisors and teachers to the Osmania family. When we look at the situation in our Indian sub-continent after the establishment of the Delhi sultanate many Sufi sheiks and their ideas and regulations and their way of leadership was patronage by the respective Delhi sultanates at that time because the sultans were aware of the power of the tariqa and Sufi saints and by accepting their guidance and advisory the sultans gained huge popularity among the Muslim masses so the sultans were ready to accept their guidance and at the same time, the Sufi Sheikh utilized the power of the sultans to propagate his ideas and to preach Islam in the respective places this was the major connection between the Sufi sheikhs and the Muslim rulers at that time.

Islah- Reform Within the Community

In This way, many Sufi Scholars used the political power of the Muslim rulers to propagate their ideas and brought reforms and revival among the Muslims. Two types of reforms were made by these Sufi Saints 1. The propagation of Islam i.e., the Dawah to the non-Islamic community 2. The Reform within the community is known as Islah. Because of the endeavors of the Sufis the Muslim community got more purified at that time they used their propagation within the community like Sheikh Jalaluddin Rumi, his teachings and propagations were specifically on the Muslim community to make them good devoted Muslims to the lord Likewise, majority of the Sufi sheiks propagated the reform within their own community, to sum up, a huge revival and social reform in the world by the Muslim people.

Anti-Colonial Activities

Another form of Reform was the Sufi Sheiks were fighting in the name of Islam against the Enemies of Islam these Sufi scholars and their Tariqas helped Muslim dynasties against their enemies and they took it up as a jihad against the enemies of the Osmani families these tariqas helped the family to fight against Mongols and Byzantines and in the modern era of the 19th-century² sheik Shamil of Naqshbandi Tariqa led his army against USSR all around the globe where ever colonialism and imperialism were at the top the Sufi sheiks helped the Muslim dynasties or they themselves were involved in the war between them and the colonist and

¹ Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal Osmani khilafatum Sufi rashtra chinchayum Page 130

² Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal Sufi prasthanavum saamrajyathwa virudha porattangalum. Page 64

imperialists.¹ Shah Waliullah Dehlavi was one of the Sufi scholars who was the first person to manifest his bravery and his wise opinion to mobilize the forces of the entire Indian people against British Colonialism. He expelled them from our dear Indian Soil and formed the government in the hands of its people who deserve its governance. He is a gift from the gifts generated by the Indian sub-continent also Islam was renewed and established by him in the hearts of his followers²)The Role of Muslim Scholars in the Liberation of India(، ٢٠٢٢، صفحة ٦٣.

Conclusion

Hence, we see the huge contribution of many Sufi Scholars in the Islamic reform and revival around the world many Sufi Sheikhs are the major Reason for the spread of Islam through their propagation and advisory, and support to the Muslim dynasties. We get to know that Sufism is not constricting itself to just the purification of oneself but it also contributes to the Islamic community in a larger measure like socio-political and other domains where through it spread of Islam and revival of the right path continues.

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¹ Dr. Saifudeen Kunju Tasawwuf Twariqathukathugalude Charithragyanangal Sufi Prasthanangalum Saamrajyathwa virudha porattangalum page 64

² Dr. A. Abdul Hai Hasani Nadwi & Dr. Nahvi Muhiyadeen Lebbai Al Bukhari Al Azhari. (2022). 3. The Role of Muslim Scholars in the liberation of India. *Al-Bukhari Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 2(1). Retrieved from <http://www.albukharijournal.in/index.php/abjais/article/view/63>