

DEVELOPMENT OF TAŞAWWUF IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHISHTIYYAH AND SUHRAWARDĪYYAH ORDER

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ABSTRACT

Almost concurrently with the establishment of Delhi sultanate two most prominent mystic orders Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah were also introduced in India. . During that period India was passing through one of the gloomy phases of its history with the casteism was at its peak. Within a short period of time they built up their organizations and established themselves in specific zones. They traversed the entire country from Multan to Lakhnauti and Panipat to Deogir and established *Khanqahs*, *Jamā‘at Khānahs* and *Zāwiyahs* . That helped them in coming closer to various culture groups of India.

The present paper is the descriptive study of the rise and development of Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah order in India with emphasis on the contribution of major Sufi saints of these orders. The methodology applied will be historical and descriptive.

Keywords: Taşawwuf, Chishtī, Suhrawardī, Khanqah, Shaykh, Khwājah

INTRODUCTION

Taşawwuf (Sufism) reached India when it had entered into the last stage of its development i.e, Organization of the orders. At the advent of Islam in India, Indian society was passing through the darkest phase of its history i.e., dominance of casteism. Eminent Sufis belonging to the prominent Sufi orders like the Chishtiyyah, Suhrawardīyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Qādiriyyah, Shaṭṭāriyyah and many others disseminated Islam and supervised the masses towards *Taşawwuf* in different parts of the sub-continent.¹ In particular the Chishtī and Suhrawardī orders emerged as great centers of preaching, reformation and in guiding the masses. The other orders were also represented and functioned on more or less the same lines.² The extraordinary success of Chishtī order was due to their cordial relations with commoners utilizing the local cultures, idioms, and traditions, living besides the people and addressing their mundane issues. They approached people with a sincere, peaceful, loving, tolerant, sympathetic and caring tone³ and were thus, highly instrumental in “fashioning a multi-faith harmony”⁴ Owing to their considerate contribution to the society, culture and religion and for a convenient and comprehensive apprehension of the emergence and development of Sufism in the sub-continent, a cursory survey of the Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardīyyah order in the Indian subcontinent is provided in the approaching section.

Chishtiyyah Order

The order received its eponym from the word — “*Chisht*”⁵ (named as *Khisht* in Persian) – the name of a town in modern-day Afghanistan⁶, as the founder of this Sufi order Shaykh Abu Ishāq Shāmī (b. 852-d. 940 C.E), had migrated from Syria to *Chisht* and established this order there. Though this order had originated in Afghanistan but it reached to its highest watermark in the sub-continent. It is one of the most prominent and oldest of the Sufi orders

introduced in the sub-continent by Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ḥasan Sijzī Chishtī (b. 1143-d. 1236 C.E) disciple and successor of Khwājah ‘Uthmān Harwanī.⁷

Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Ḥasan Sijzī (also known as Khwājah Ajmerī) was born in Sijistan. Khwājah travelled to many popular places of Muslim world to slake his religious knowledge as well as to seek guidance in the spiritual path (Sulūk). Khwājah Ajmerī obtained Khirqat al-Khilāfah from his *Shaykh* (at Harwan Nishapur), with his dedication and devotion and was appointed as his Khalīfah. Later on, Khwājah Ajmerī travelled through Baghdad, Hamadan, Tabriz, Kharqan, Hisar, Balkh, Ghazna and other places⁸ and interacted various towering religious and spiritual figures of that era like, Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī, Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Shaykh Abū Najīb and his nephew Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, Shaykh Yūsuf Hamadānī, Shaykh Abū Sa‘īd Tabrīzī and many others.⁹ Towards the last phase of his journey, Khwājah reached Delhi, from Lahore and finally to Ajmer, that was a place of great religious and political importance. It turned out to be the main centre of his activities of preaching, guidance and spiritual training and from here, the Chishtī order began expanding to other regions of the subcontinent.¹⁰

Khwājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn with his peaceful and philanthropic approach is attributed to have converted large number of people to Islam. The impact of Khwājah’s personality on the society of medieval India is still reflected at his tomb, which is still visited by people from different sections, cultures and religions of the country.¹¹ For his unconditional services to the poor, love, affection and philanthropy, Khwājah was also known as Gharīb Nawāz, the benefactor of the poor. In spreading the spiritual guidance in the Indian sub-continent Khwājah played an important role and designated many of his disciples to forward his mission, which include Khwājah Burhān al-Dīn, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawrī Suwālī, Wajīh al-Dīn, Mas‘ūd Ghāzī etc. He is attributed with the following Sufi works which include, *Anīs al-Arwāh*, *Dīwān-i Mu‘īn*, *Ganj al-Asrār* and *Aḥādīth al-Ma‘ārīf*. Khwājah stressed on asceticism, service to mankind, expression of love, mercy and kindness to everyone. Regarding the qualities which endear a man to God, “the Shaykh referred to the following attributes, river like generosity, sun like affection and earth like hospitality”¹²

The Khwājah breathed his last at Ajmer in 1236 C.E. and after him his spiritual descendents spread the Chishtīyah order far and wide. Khwājah Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (b. 1173-d.1235 C.E) and Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawrī Suwālī (b. 1192-d.1274 C.E) were most prominent among his spiritual successors.

Shaykh Ḥamīd-al-Dīn Sūfī of Suwal was well versed in Persian and Arabic and received the best religious education of his time and became disciple of Khwājah at Ajmer. Khwājah was so impressed with his penitence and devotion that he bestowed title of Sultān al-Tārikīn on him. He used to stress on asceticism, piety, knowledge and otherworldliness. He is reported to have long debates with his contemporary Suhrawardī saints through letters regarding the accumulation of wealth. He led a self sufficient life by cultivating a small plot of land at Suwal (near Nagawr) and didn’t accept endowments from rulers. He also used to criticize some of his contemporary saints who led a life of affluence and plenty. He was a prolific writer and has many significant works to his credit which include, *Usūl al-Ṭarīqah* which was very famous and widely acknowledged in the Sufi and scholarly circles. His *Malfūzāt* was compiled by his grandson (Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn) titled as *Surūr al-Ṣudūr*. The Shaykh died in 1274 C.E. and was buried at Nagawr. He, undoubtedly, played an important role in developing Nagaur as a prominent centre of Chishtī Order.¹³ He was a man of cordial temperament and wide human sympathies. Nizami on authority of *Fawā'id al Fu'ād* maintains that, his catholicity of views is best illustrated by the fact that he could discern and appreciate spiritual virtues in non-Muslims also”¹⁴

Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī was a native of Aush was another Sufi who played a part in the spread of *Taṣawwuf* in India. He was inclined towards prayer and meditation right from his childhood. After finishing his education he moved to Baghdad where he met Khwājah Ajmerī and joined his discipleship. He reached Delhi several years later after his Shaykh during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish. Sultan received him warmly and requested him to stay near his palace and also offered him the post of *Shaykh al-Islam* which he declined. He was ordered by his Shaykh to stay in Delhi and guide the masses in spirituality and promoting the Chishtiyyah order there. Bakhtiyār Kākī kept himself away from the state but according to Nizami, he did not fail to “extend his moral support to the sultan in the construction of public works and centers of cultural activity”.¹⁵ He enjoyed the pre-eminent position of strengthening the Chishtiyyah order in Delhi. His collection of sayings of his eight predecessors titled as *Hasht Bahisht* (Eight Paradises) as mentioned by Trimmingham, “was most important in giving a distinctive line to the doctrinal outlook of the order”.¹⁶ He died in 1235 C.E.

Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ghaznawī and Khwājah Farīd-al-Dīn Mas‘ūd were the two prominent Khalīfahs of Bakhtiyār Kākī. But Khwājah Farīd-al-Dīn Mas‘ūd was the most prominent figure of Chishtī order during 13th Century. He was also known as *Ganj-i-Shakar* and Bābā Farīd. He was born in a scholarly family of Kahtwal (near Multan). It was in a religious seminary (*Madrasah*) in Multan where he met with Khwājah Bakhtiyār Kākī and he admitted him into his spiritual discipleship. After completing his education from Bakhtiyār Kākī he settled at Hansi and finally moved to Ajodhan or Pakpattan (modern day Punjab, Pakistan). Thus with his arrival and subsequent activities of Bābā Farīd Punjab turned to be the next important centre of Chishtī Order.¹⁷

Bābā Farīd was more concerned with the guidance and reformation of Muslims in the regions of north-west India than to propagate Islam among non-Muslims. His *Jamā‘at Khānah* at Ajodhan was a place where everyone was welcomed irrespective of any differences. It used to remain open till mid night. It not only served lodging and boarding facilities but it also served as centre of learning and discussion where people from diverse cultures and faiths used to gather and discuss different topics. His outlook was purely a reaction of teachings of his predecessors especially Khwājah Ajmerī. His fame spread far and wide and spiritually starved people used to flock to him from distant places. Muhammad Gawthī in his *Gulzar-i Abrār* praised Bābā Farīd as, “All the Shuyūkh of India unanimously admit that no one has excelled Ganj-i-Shakar in his penitence, devotion and spiritual exercises”.

Athar Abbas Rizvi in his book stated that, ‘Bābā Farīd was himself a scholar and wrote excellent poetry in Arabic, Persian and the local *Hindawī* dialect. He recited the Quran perfectly, popularized the study of the ‘*Awarifu ‘l-M‘aarif* and lectured on subtle philosophy of the *Lawa‘ih* of Qazi Hamid u’d-Din Nagauri.’¹⁸ Nizami on the authority of *Fawā'id al Fu'ād* mentioned 57 of his sayings as quoted by Amīr Khuwrd, some of which are as:

Do not regard the ignorant as alive.....give a wide berth to an ignorant man who poses as a learned one....Do not utter a truth which resembles a lie...Do not forget death at any place...Do not say anything as mere guess work....Do not boast of having committed a sin....Do not retain a slave who wants to be sold....Whoever fears you fears him....Consider good health a blessing.....Acquire knowledge through humility....If you want ease and comfort, do not be Jealous..Accept affliction as a present....¹⁹

Bābā Farīd breathed his last at Ajodhan in 1265 C.E. after providing the momentum to the Chishtiyyah order “of an organized spiritual movement”.²⁰ Bābā Farīd had left many eminent disciples who later on disseminated its teachings in the distant parts of the country. Among his prominent Khalīfahs, Nizami refers to only seven on the authority of Mir Khuwrd in

Fawā'id al Fu'ād, which are as, “Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Hānswī, Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil, Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, Shaykh ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Ali bin Aḥmad Ṣābir, Shaykh Arif, Maulāna Fakhr u’d din Safa hānī, Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā.”²¹

Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā.”²² and Shaykh ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Ali bin Aḥmad Ṣābir were two prominent successors of Bābā Farīd who actually consolidated and promoted the Chishtiyyah order after him. They founded the Nizāmiyyah and Ṣābiriyyah branches of Chishtiyyah order respectively and established the centers of Chishtiyyah order at Ajmer, Nagawr, Suwal, Mandal and Narnaul in Rajputana,²³ Ajodhan and Hansi in Punjab and later on in Delhi, Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Deccan and some parts of U.P.²⁴ through their spiritual descendents.

Shaykh ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Ali bin Aḥmad Ṣābir, the founder of Ṣābiriyyah branch of Chishtiyyah order was the nephew and prominent disciple of Bābā Farīd. After losing his father at an early age he was brought under the guidance of Bābā Farīd and he guided him in both religious as well as in spiritual sciences and initiated him into the *Chishtiyyah* order. After staying with his Shaykh for twelve years he left for Kalyar, where he died in 1291 C.E. true to the spirit of his Chishtiyyah masters he remained aloof from state and lived an ascetic life and stressed on meditation, reflection, prayers and other spiritual activities. Ṣābiriyyah branch was continued by his chief successor Shams al-Dīn Turk and was popularized by Shaykh Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ḥaq(d.1434 C.E.) at Rudawli later on. After him it was greatly popularized by Abd al-Quddus Ghanghōhī²⁵ (d. 1537 C.E).

Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā (b. 1238-d. 1325 C.E.) strengthened the Chishtiyyah order in Delhi which had been weakened after the death of Bakhtiyār Kākī. He was the most outstanding *Khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd. Born at Badaun in 1238 C.E., Khwājah had attained a profound level of scholarship in religious sciences (*Qur’ān*, *Ḥadīth*, *Fiqh* and *Manṭiq*) under great scholars of his time like Mawlānā ‘Ala al-Dīn Usūlī and Shams al-Dīn Malik. Khwājah before meeting with Bābā Farīd had already developed a heartfelt love and respect for him and after reaching Ajodhan Bābā Farīd enrolled him into his discipline and advised him to continue his religious studies in Delhi, in addition to the spiritual exercises (like fasting, supererogatory prayers, *Awrad* and Pilgrimages). The Chishtiyyah order reached to its highest watermark under Khwājah Nizām and his era, “marked the crystallization of the ideology of the Chishtiyyah order”. He adopted a life of *Faqr* (poverty) and remained away from the state despite being a profound scholar. He never tried to establish relations with the state unlike his contemporary Suhrawardī saints. Khwājah Nizām visited Ajodhan three times during the life time of Bābā Farīd and in the final meeting he received *Khilāfat Nāmah* from Bābā Farīd and instructed him to devout himself to the spreading of the Chishtī mystic principles.

Subsequently he rose to prominence and came to be known as *Sultān al-Mashāyikh* (King of the spiritual masters) and *Maḥbūb-i Ilahī* (*Beloved of the Almighty*).²⁶ He commanded a huge respect and reverence from the masses, the intellectuals and seekers of truth for his humanitarian, philanthropic and altruistic attitude towards fellow human beings in addition to his outstanding scholarship in Islamic learning. He had among his disciples the great scholars and intellectuals of his age like, Amīr Khusraw²⁷, Khwājah Amīr Ḥasan Dahlawī²⁸, Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Baranī²⁹, Mawlānā Fasīḥ al-Dīn and Wajīh al-Dīn. Khwājah Nizām had widened the range of his discipleship and accepted people from different sections of life as his disciples without any discrimination. Baranī highly praised him for admitting all sorts of people (rich, poor, slaves, citizens, illiterate, learned, villagers, warriors) as his disciples and filled them with the life of piety, sincerity, honesty and devotion to God. They refrained from many improper things because they consider themselves to be the disciples of Khwājah Nizām. They showed an inclination towards prayer and religion. Thus, Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn

Awliyā was the most influential and instrumental in consolidating the Chishtiyyah order in the Subcontinent.³⁰ For travelling over the path of spiritual journey the important requirements for him are prolonged consciousness of divine presence, passionate love (for God), patience and resignation to the will of God. Furthermore he also laid down few principles for novice Sufis like solitude, external and internal purification, continuous fasts, disinterest from everything that does not relate to God in anyway, passionate love, respect and devotion for the preceptor and eagerness to leave anything anytime for the sake of God. Baranī by expressing his sincere respect for Khwājah Nizām asserts that God has created Khwājah Nizām “in the same mould as” Junayd al-Baghdādī (d.910 C.E) and Abu Yazīd al-Bistāmī (d. 875 C.E) and “had adorned him with his own love in a way that would be difficult to comprehend by human intellect....”³¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in his *Al-Rihlah* praised him, as a pious, spiritually elevated and influential figure.³² Rizvi maintains that:

The first lesson of *Taṣawwuf* was not related to prayers or organized rituals, but began with the mastery of the maxim: ‘whatever you don’t like to be done to yourself, do not wish it to happen to others; wish for yourself what you wish others;....Altruistic service to others is more meritorious than the performance of obligatory prayers.....Defining renunciation, the Shaykh depicted that it was not wearing a loincloth in a state of asceticism for one should continue to wear clothing and also to eat, but rather as the distribution to the poor of anything surplus.’³³

Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn left this mortal world in 1325 C.E. and was buried at Ghiyāthpūr where his tomb is still visited by large number of crowd with different religious backgrounds. Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn left many eminent disciples who spread the Chishtiyyah teachings widely in the sub continent and established Chishtiyyah centers throughout the country. Among his prominent disciples are Qāḍī Muḥyī al-Dīn Kāshānī, Mawlānā Wajīh al-Dīn Yūsuf, Ḥusām al-Dīn Multānī, Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī, Burhān al-Dīn Gharīb and Shams al-Dīn-Yaḥyā, Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Munawwar, Mawlānā ‘Ala al-Dīn Nīlī, Shaykh Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Uthmān³⁴ and Sayyid Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd bin Yaḥyā (d. 1356 C.E.) was his chief successor and popularly known as *Chirāg-i-Dillī* (Lamp of Delhi).

Sayyid Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd bin Yaḥyā Born at Awadh, he started to receive religious education from very early age from the local scholars. Since his childhood he was attracted towards the practices of *Taṣawwuf*. He moved to Delhi at the age of forty three after achieving excellence in spirituality under local experts, where he initiated into the Chishtiyyah order by Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā, and later on conferred on him the *Khilāfah* in Delhi. Shaykh Naṣīr was inclined towards ascetic life but he continued as the leader of *Chishtiyyah* order in Delhi by following his Shaykh’s commandments and sustained the Chishtī traditions of living a simple life, guiding and serving the humanity. However he was compelled by Muḥammad bin Tughlaq along with other Chishtiyyah Sufis (like Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā and Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī) to serve the state, which was contrary to their traditions but he accepted the duties to prevent any mishap. However while performing his activities he remained unaffected from the politics and displayed the strong spirit of self denial. He followed the schedule of his spiritual practices meticulously while teaching, training, guiding his disciples and attended the problems of general masses.

Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd bin Yaḥyā (b. 1274-d. 1356 C.E) was laid to rest in his prayer room at ‘Chirag- Delhi’ in South Delhi. He had large number of disciples to disseminate the tradition of Chishtiyyah order in India. He sent his nephew *Shaykh al-Islam* Shaykh Sirāj al-Dīn as his successor to Gujrat and Sayyid Muḥammad Husaynī popularly known as *Banda Nawāz Gisū Darāz* (d. 1422 C.E) sent him to Gulbarga (in Deccan) to spread the *Chishtī* teachings. He was a brilliant *Chishtī* Sufi and a prolific writer as well. He has written Arabic

commentaries on Qu'rān and *Mashāriq al Anwār* and also translated some important Sufi compilations like *Al-Risālah* of Qushayrī, *Ādāb al Murīdīn* and the '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*', *Sharḥ Fiqh al-Akbar*, *Risālah-i Istiqāmat al-Sharī'ah* etc.³⁵ He is also announced to have reprehend the philosophy of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* of ibn 'Arabī.

In medieval period the Chishtiyyah order enjoyed the exceptional fame in the sub continent especially in Delhi and its surroundings. Famous personalities like Shaykh jalāl al-Dīn Thaneshwarī, Nizām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Shakūr, Shaykh jan' ullah Lahori, 'Abd Al-Khāliq Lāhorī, Muhammad 'Ārif Chishtī, Muḥammad Šiddīq Šābirī, Abū Sa'īd Sābirī, Muḥibullah Ilāhabādī, Muḥammad Dāwūd, Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī, 'Abd al-Azīz Chishtī Dahlawī, 'Abd al – Ghaī Badā'ūnī, Shaykh Ishāq, 'Uthmān Zindā Pīr, Khwājah Khānu, Nizām al-Dīn Narnawī, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn, Shāh Kalīmullah and his disciples and many others³⁶ represented it during and post sixteenth century

Shaykh Salīm Chishtī (b. 1478-d. 1572 C.E) was one of the most prominent Sufi of sixteenth century who was greatly revered by Mughal emperor Akbar.³⁷ Almost two centuries later after his death the Chishtiyyah order started to dwindle due to the unstable political conditions and devalued the religious scenario of Muslims in India. In the following periods imposters, ignorance and superstition became the dominant appearances at the tombs of Chishtī masters, due to their incompetent successors who failed to sustain the real spirit, essence and purpose of their teachings. However it is to be noted that that Chishtiyyah Sufis with their high principles undoubtedly influenced the aristocratic and noble class of the Indian society as well in addition to the general masses and many exceptional personalities of this order continued its traditions in the post sultanate period as well. They used to spent all their time in the “service of humanity with a singleness of purpose and unity of mind”³⁸ and “there was complete harmony between their conduct and character”, indicates Noor Nabī.³⁹ The Chishtiyyah order in its prime (between 13th-15th Centuries) surpassed all other Sufi fraternities in Delhi and left a memorable impression on the society, history and culture of the sub-continent. The Chishtī Sufi's believed in emotional integration before the control of external behavior. Nizami rightly evaluated the reason of their success and in attaining the all India status in those days when he says that it was due to their understanding of the Indian conditions and the religious attitudes and aspirations of the Indian people.⁴⁰ The distinguishing features of Chishtī order were also the aloofness from the state, *Faqr* (voluntarily poverty), simplicity, selflessness, love and devotion of a disciple towards his master and *Samā'* (audition parties) which made it the most popular and influential Sufi order of the subcontinent.

Suhrawardiyya Order

Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Abū al-Najīb 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abdullah (b. 1097-d.1168 C.E) author of *Kitab Adab al-Muridīn*, has been attributed with the foundations of *Suhrawardiyya* order. This order traces its lineage back to Prophet (ﷺ) through Caliph Ali and this order had received its name from a town Suhraward (a town in Jibal).⁴¹ However this order was elevated and popularized by his nephew Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al Suhrawardī (1144-1234 C.E) author of '*Awārif al-Mā'arīf*', which served as a guiding manual in various Sufi orders in medieval India. He had directed many of his disciples to proceed towards India, (due to the Ghuzz and Mongol destruction of Ajam) which include Maulānā Majd al-Dīn Ḥājī, Shaikh Ḍiyā al-Dīn Rūmī, Shaikh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī, Qāzī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagawī, Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznawī and the most prominent among them was Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā, who became the main proponent of this order in the sub continent.

This order was initially introduced in India by Sayyid Aḥmad commonly known as Sultan Sakhī Sarwar (d.1180-81 C.E.) and Shaykh Nūḥ Bhakharī. But the man who may be called

the pioneer of Suhrawardīyya order in India was Bahā' al-Ḥaq Abū Zakariyyā, commonly known as Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī (1170-1262 C.E.). He was born at *Kot Aror* (Multan) in 1182 C.E. Shaykh Wajīh al-Dīn Muḥammad Gawth, his father was best known for his piety and his mother Bībī Fāṭimāh Rāstī was the daughter of Mawlānā Ḥuṣam al-Dīn Trimidhī, the famous religious scholar. After completing his study of basic courses of Islamic religious sciences and memorizing the holy Qu'rān. Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā left Multan and travelled to great centers of Islamic learning in those days, in order to complete his study of religious sciences. In such quest, at first he travelled to Khurasan and then to Bukhara to learn the religious sciences from great figures of the time like Mawlānā Naṣir al-Dīn Balkhī and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Maḥmūd. After completing his study of religious sciences from Khurasan and Bukhara, he went to *Makkah* for *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage) and from there went to *Madinah* where he learnt *Hadīth* from Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Yamanī, an eminent traditionalist. Having completing his training the Mawlānā bestowed him with the certificate and *Ijazāh* for teaching *Hadīth*. Simultaneously he embarked upon strenuous spiritual practices for the purification of his heart and soul. Then he left for Jerusalem where he visited the graves of Prophets and finally reached Baghdad where he met Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al Suhrawardī, who enrolled him into the Suhrawardīyya order. It is reported that his training only lasted for seventeen days under Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn after that he was appointed by his Shaykh as his successor and bestowed him with *Khirqat al-Khilāfah* (vicegerency) and *Ijāzah* (permission to enroll disciples). Then he was directed by his Shaykh to go to Multan and setup a Suhrawardī *Khānqāh* there for spreading Islam and directing the people on Sufi path.⁴²

After reaching Multan he made meticulous efforts to turn his *Khānqāh* into a considerable and authoritative Suhrawardī centre of instruction and illumination. His *Khānqāh* also served an important center of higher studying, besides being the nucleus of preaching Islam in the region and a seat for discussions. It was from here that the progeny of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī continued the activities of Suhrawardī order and undeniably, it served as the bedrock of this order in the sub continent. Having lived and worked for more than half a century in Multan he developed his *Khānqāh* into a great center of spiritual activity in sub continent. He died in 1262 C.E.

Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā was one of the most distinguished mystic teachers of his age. He held individualistic views on many issues of religion and politics. His mystic ideology was utterly different from his contemporary Chishtī saints. He used to mix consciously with the sultans, participated in political affairs, accepted government posts and accumulated wealth. Nizāmī maintains that he was probably the richest saint of medieval India. He organized the Suhrawardī order on solid principles and captivated to his fold a large number of brilliant disciples. Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī had left a great galaxy of disciples. Despite his disciples, he had seven sons who were designated as his successors in different parts of Sind and Punjab. Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm 'Irāqī (d.1289 C.E), Shaykh Ḥasan Afghān (d.1291 C.E), Shaykh 'Uthmān al Marwandī (d.1177-1274 C.E) were his most prominent disciples.

After him, in Multan he was succeeded by his son Shaykh Ṣadr-al-Dīn carrying the epithet, 'Ārif (the Gnostic). He received his education from famous teachers as nominated by his father for the guidance and teaching of his sons. Besides this he was under the resolute supervision of his father, who guided, developed and trained him in the mystic atmosphere of his *Khānqāh*. He was assiduous towards acquisition of both exoteric as well as esoteric knowledge. He achieved a distinctive command over religious sciences apart from successfully completing the spiritual path to guide the appellants of path and contributed towards the development of Suhrawardīyya order in the region. He is reported to have got a

huge amount of seven lakh Tankas (then currency) in heritage from his father, but he spend all that in charity among needy and poor.

The succession in Suhrawardī order was based on hereditary basis, contrary to the Chishtīs. Shaykh Ṣadr-al-Dīn Ārif served Suhrawardī order for nearly 23 years but differed from his father in attitude towards some of the basic problems of religion and politics. He disliked wealth and considered it to be the cause of all spiritual hindrances. Nizami maintains that this change in the Suhrawardī attitude was probably due to contemporary criticism.⁴³ Thus this Suhrawardīyya saint is reported to have exhibit an indifferent attitude towards wealth and politics that was opposite to the model of grand Suhrawardīyyah leaders. However the Shaykh was successful in maintaining and sustaining the spiritual ambience and character of instruction, guidance and teaching at his *Khānqāh*. This great leader of Suhrawardīyyah order died on 1286 C.E., his conversations were compiled by his disciple Khwāja Ḍiyā' al-Dīn under the title of *Kunūz-al-Fawā'id*. While at Uchch, a strong Suhrawardī centre was established by Sayyid Jālāl al-Dīn Surkh Bukhārī (b. 1199-d. 1291) a disciple of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī. The history of Suhrawardī order in India mainly revolves round these two branches i.e, Multan Branch and Uchch branch.

Shaykh Ṣadr-al-Dīn Ārif was succeeded by his son, Shaykh Rukn-al-Dīn Abu al-Faṭḥ (b. 1251-d. 1335) to continue the hereditary chain of Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī. He achieved an extraordinary command on Islamic legal, intellectual and spiritual studies under the guardianship of his father as well as his grandfather. In the *Khānqāh* of Shaykh Multānī, his spiritual and personal development obtained full perfection. Nizami maintains that, "he occupies the same position in the history of the Suhrawardī order which Shaykh Nizām al-dīn Awliyā occupies in the history of the Chishtī order".⁴⁴ He is reported to have cordial relations with Nizām al-dīn Awliyā irrespective of having the different approaches towards accumulation of wealth and establish relations with state. To maintain the affable relations with state has been a distinctive feature of Suhrawardīyya order and in this regard he followed the model of his grandfather Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā Multānī. He witnessed the reign of 'Alā al-Dīn Khiljī, Quṭb al-Dn, Ghiyās al-Dīn Tughluq and Muḥammad bin Tughluq and was in favor of maintaining affable relations with rulers. All of them admired him greatly and used to invite him to Delhi and always showered bountiful gifts on him. He also played a role as an arbitrator like his elders in political disputes. Nizami maintains that, "His contact with the government of the day reached its highest watermark during the Tughluq period".⁴⁵ Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq brought his *Khānqāh* under state control by bestowing great favors on him. Thus the primary objective and basic nature of *Khānqāh* which was to guide the masses and train spiritual adepts might have been disturbed due to state intercession. This superfluous State intercession over *Khānqāh* and incompetent successors of Shaykh Rukn-al-Dīn led to the downfall of Suhrawadiyya hospice of Multan.

He breathed his last on 1335 C.E. He played an important role in sustaining and magnifying the scope of the activities and influence of Suhrawardiyyah *Khānqāh* of Multan. It maintained the prestige and opulence both material as well as spiritual. Through his disciples this order reached to distant regions of the country.

CONCLUSION

In the spread and dissemination of Islam to most of the regions of sub-continent, Sufis like their counterparts in Central Asia, played a pivotal role. The Chishtiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah order in particular played an important part in spreading the message of Islam. The founders of these orders, followed by their successors spread in the nook and corner of the sub-continent with emphasis on the teachings of love, compassion, equality, brotherhood, forbearance and empathy. They not only wrote and taught these virtues but

imbibed them fully in their lives that in turn became instrumental in their successful endeavours towards the spread of Islam through the medium of *Taşawwuf*.

Notes and References

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² Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p.36.

³ Mohammad Irfan Shah, *Origin and development of Suhrawardiyya order in India*, (PhD Thesis) (Aligarh: Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, 2021) pg.113. [henceforth, Irfan, *OADSOI*].

⁴ M. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyās* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1972), pp.17

⁵ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, p.113

⁶ K.A. Nizami, *Tārīkh-i Mashāyikh-i Chist* (Karachi: Dār al-Ishā‘at, 2013), Vol.I, pp.189.[Henceforth written as TM].

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⁸ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg. 114.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 114.

¹⁰ Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mir‘at al-Asrār* (Persian), Ur., tr., Wahid Bakhsh Siyal (Lahore: Sufi Foundation, 1982), Vol. II, pp.33-54; Idarah-i Tasnif-o Talif, *Anwār*, *op.cit.*, pp.147-70; Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg. 114.

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¹¹ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg. 114.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.185.

¹³ Chishtī, *Mir‘at*, *op.cit.*, pp.118-24; Nizami, *TM*, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.203-206; Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.185-87; Ikram, *Āb-i kawthar*, *op.cit.*, pp.201f;

¹⁴ Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.187.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.189.

¹⁶ J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.64

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¹⁸ Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I., p.146.

¹⁹ K.A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar* (Aligarh Muslim University: Department of History, 1955), pp.87-89.

²⁰ Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp. 191

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.192.

²² *Ibid.*, pp.192.

²³ It was a province in medieval India which comprised the modern-day Rajasthan and some areas of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and few adjacent areas of Sind (Pakistan). For details see, Nidhi Sharma, *Transition from feudalism to democracy* (Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 2000).

²⁴ For details see, Nizami, *TM*, *op.cit.*, Vol.I., pp.212-17; Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.191-95; Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 138ff.

²⁵ Author of *Maktūbāt-i Quddūsiyyah*

²⁶ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg.121

²⁷ Yamin al Din popularly known as Amīr Khusraw Dahlawī, was an eminent poet and a renowned disciple of Khwaja nizam al din awliya. He has many literary, poetical and mystical works to his credit. For details see, Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 168-72; Ikram, *Āb-i Kawthar*, *op.cit.*, pp.176-86

²⁸ For details see, Ikram, *Āb-i Kawthar*, *op.cit.*, pp.176f; Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 173-75.

²⁹ The author of *Tārīkh-i Firōz Shāhī*, for details see, Syed Hasan Barani, “Ziauddin Barani” in *Islamic Culture*, Vol.XXII, No.1, January, 1938, pp.76-97.

³⁰ Nizami, *TM*, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.225-29 and *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.195-99; Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delhi, 2009); Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 154-68

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³² M. Hafiz Syed, “Hadrat Nizamuddin Auliya” in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXXIV, no.1, Hyderabad, January, 1960; Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *al-Riḥlah*, Eng., Tr., Mahdi Husain, *The Reḥla of ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (Gujarat: Oriental Institute, 1976), pp.30, 51-54, fn., 1 on p.51

³³ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg. 122; Rizvi, *op.cit.*, pp.165.

³⁴ Irfan, *OADSOI*, *op.cit.*, pg. 123

³⁵ Irfan, *OADSOL*, *op.cit.*, pg.124; Nizami, *TM*, *op.cit.*, pp.261f; Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 250-56; N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Sufis: South Asia* (New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2011), pp. 112-17.

³⁶ For details see, Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.114-89 and Vol. II, pp. 264-318

³⁷ Ikram, *Rūd-i Kawthar* (Delhi: Adabi dunya, n.d), pp. 71f and (Lahore; Idarah-I Thaqafti-I Islamiyyah, 1979); Rizvi, *op.cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 126

³⁸ Irfan, *OADSOL*, *op.cit.*, pg.125

³⁹ Mohammad. Noor. Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India* (Aligarh: The Aligarh Muslim University Press, 1962), pp. 14.

⁴⁰ Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pg. 178

⁴¹ K.A. Nizami, “The Suhrawardī Silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics” in *Medieval Quaterly*, 2, Aligarh, October, 1950, pp.109.

⁴² Dārā Shikōh, *Safinat al-Awliya*, Ur., tr., Muhammad Warith Kamil, (Deoband, UP: Sabri Book Depot, n.d.), pp.140f; ‘Abdul Ḥaq Muḥaddith Dahlawī, *Akhhbār al-Akhyār*, Ur., tr., Sultan Maḥmud and Muḥammad Fāḍil, (Delhi; Adabī Dunyā, 1994), pp. 62ff; Idārah, *op.cit.*, pp.187ff; Trimingham, *op.cit.*, pp.65

⁴³ Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.224

⁴⁴ Nizami, *SARP*, *op.cit.*, pp.225

⁴⁵ K.A. Nizami, “The Suhrawardī Silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics” in *Medieval Quaterly*, 2, Aligarh, October, 1950, pp.127.