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***Suhrawardī* Sufi Order: Emergence and Development in Kashmir Between 14th to 16th Centuries**

*Mohammad Irfan Shah**

Introduction

The picturesque valley Kashmir, popularly known as *Rēsh Waer* or *Pīr Wāer* or the valley of *Rīshīs*, *Pīrs* (Sufis), witnessed the arrival of Islam via the proliferation of the Muslim Sufis (proselytizers) long before the commencement of Muslim rule in 14th century. The Sufis' propagation of the universal message of Islam and pragmatic observation of its *modus operandi* (way of Qur'aṅ and Sunnah) for the realization of the "Ultimate Truth" and achievement of gnosis (*Ma'arifah*), had an everlasting impact on the ascetic patterns already prevalent in the Hindu-Buddhist environment of Kashmir.¹

The emergence and the subsequent development of Sufism in Kashmir took place as part of the historical process that had been launched in the Perso-Arab world much earlier than its arrival in South Asia. This physically beautiful, mystically fertile and intellectually sound valley witnessed simultaneous commencement of both the phenomena, viz; spread of Islam and the development of *Taṣawwuf* (Sufism), from 14th century (onwards) over a span of few centuries.

During the period from 14th century up to 16th century C.E., major portions of the Kashmiri populace, besides coming into the fold of Islam, also got enriched and supplemented with the spiritual training of the Sufis of different orders. Apart from the indigenous *Rīshī Silsilah* or order, the major Sufi *Salāsil* (pl. of *Silsilah*) or orders that made their gradual appearance in the Valley Kashmir in the 14th Century C.E. and onwards include *Qādirī*, *Suhrawardī*, *Naqashbandī* and *Kubrawī Salāsil* or orders.²

Suhrawardī Sufi Order: Emergence and Development in Kashmir

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