



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester

SUBJECT: HISTORY - I

SUBJECT CODE: BAL 102

NAME OF FACULTY: Dr. Sadhna Trivedi

Lecture-38



MEDIEVAL INDIA

Bhakti-Sufi Tradition in relation with the State and Reconfiguration of Identity

The Sufi Movement:

The Sufi movement was a socio-religious movement of fourteenth to sixteenth century. The exponents of this movement were unorthodox Muslim saints who had a deep study of vedantic philosophy and Buddhism of India. They had gone through various religious text of India and had come in contact with great sages and seers of India. They could see the Indian religion from very near and realized its inner values. Accordingly they developed Islamic Philosophy which at last gave birth to the Sufi Movement.

The Sufi movement therefore was the result of the Hindu influence on Islam. This movement influenced both the Muslims and Hindus and thus, provided a common platform for the two. Though the Sufis were devout Muslims, yet they differed from the orthodox Muslims. While the former believed in inner purity, the latter believed in external conduct. The union of the human soul with God through love and devotion was the essence of the teachings of the Sufi Saints. The method of their realizing God was the renunciation of the World and Worldly pleasures. They lived a secluded life.

They were called Sufis as they wore garments of Wool (suf) as their budge of poverty. Thus the name 'Sufi' is derived from the word Suf. They consider love to be the only means of reaching God. Historian Tara Chand says, "Sufism indeed was a religion of intense devotion, love was its passion; poetry, song and dance, its worship and passing away in God its ideal".

The Sufis did not attach importance to namaz, hajj and celibacy. That is why they were misunderstood by orthodox muslims. They regarded Singing and dancing as methods of inducing a state of ecstasy which brought one nearer to realisation of God. There were some leading Sufi saints like Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, Fariuddin Ganj-i-Shakar, Nizam-ud-din Auliya etc.

Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti (1143-1234):

Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti was a great Sufi Saint of India. The Chisti order was established in India by him. He was born in 1143 A.D. in Seistan in Persia. He came to India around 1192 A.D. shortly before the defeat and death of Prithvi Raj Chauhan and settled on at Ajmer. It is said that some of the Hindu families influenced Prithviraj to drive out Muinuddin Chisti from his state.

Accordingly Prithvi Raj sent the chief priest of Ajmer, Rama Deo, with an order to Muinuddin to leave his state. But Rama Deo was so much impressed and fascinated with the personality of Chisti that he became his disciple and remained with him. In this way he attracted everyone who came in contact with him. He had a large number of followers.

By leading a very simple ascetic way of life and spreading the message of love and equality, he had tried to wipe out ill- feelings from the minds of the people of two communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims. Of course no authentic record of his activities is available. He did not write any book but his fame rose with the fame of his successors. However living for a long period of more than ninety years and spreading the message of love and universal brotherhood he breathed his last in 1234 A.D.

Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar (1176-1268):

Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar was another great Sufi Saint of India. He was popularly known as Baba Farid. He was a great disciple of Shaikh Muinuddin Chisti. He spent most of his time in Hansi and Ajodhan (in modern Haryana and the Punjab, respectively). He was deeply respected in Delhi. He was surrounded by a large number of people whenever he visited Delhi.

His outlook was so broad and humane that some of his verses are later found quoted in the Adi-Granth of the Sikhs. He avoided the company of the Sultan and the Amirs. He used to say, "Every darvesh who makes friends with the nobles will end badly". Baba Farid raised the chisti order of the Sufis to the status of an all India organisation by his high mysticism and the religions activities. He breathed his last in 1268 A.D.

Nizam-ud-din Auliya (1235-1325):

Nizam-ud-din Auliya was the most famous of the Chisti Saints. He was the disciple of Baba Farid. He came to Delhi in 1258 and settled in the Village Chiaspur near Delhi. In his life time seven Sultans ruled over Delhi, but he did not go to any of them. When the

Sultan Ala-ud-din Khiliji once expressed his desire to meet him, he said, "I have two doors in my home. If the Sultan would enter through one door I would go out through the other."

Nizam-ud-din's strong personality and mystic ideology made him most popular. He laid much emphasis on love which leads one to the realization of God. He also said that love of God means love of humanity. Thus he spread the message of universal love and brotherhood. He said that those who love God for the sake of human beings and those who love human beings for the sake of God are favorite to God. This is the best way to love and adore God. However, preaching his teachings for a long period he breathed his last in 1325 A.D. After him, the Chishtis did not stay around Delhi; they dispersed and extended their message to the eastern and southern parts of India.

The Growth of Sufism

Who were sufis?

1. In the early centuries of Islam a group of religious-minded people called sufis turned to asceticism and mysticism in protest against the growing materialism of the Caliphate as a religious and political institution.
2. They were critical of the dogmatic definitions and scholastic methods of interpreting the Qur'an and sunna (traditions of the Prophet) adopted by theologians.
3. Instead, they laid emphasis on seeking salvation through intense devotion and love for God by following His commands, and by following the example of the Prophet Muhammad whom they regarded as a perfect human being.
4. The sufis thus sought an interpretation of the Qur'an on the basis of their personal experience.

Khanqahs and silsilas:

1. By the eleventh century Sufism evolved into a well-developed movement with a body of literature on Quranic studies and sufi practices. Institutionally, the sufis began to organise communities around the hospice or **khanqah** (Persian) controlled by a teaching master known as **shaikh** (in Arabic), **pir** or **murshid** (in Persian). He enrolled disciples (**murids**) and appointed a successor (**khalifa**). He established rules for spiritual conduct and interaction between inmates as well as between laypersons and the master.
2. The word **silsila** literally means a chain, signifying a continuous link between master and disciple, stretching as an unbroken spiritual genealogy to the Prophet Muhammad. Sufi silsilas began to crystallise in different parts of the Islamic world around the twelfth century.
3. When the shaikh died, his tomb-shrine (**dargah**, a Persian term meaning court) became the centre of devotion for his followers. This encouraged the practice of pilgrimage or ziyarat to his grave. This was because people believed that in

death saints were united with God, and were thus closer to Him than when living. Thus evolved the cult of the shaikh revered as **wali**.

MCQ

1. What do you mean by khanqah?

- A. Defined as a hospice, lodge, community centre, or dormitory ran by Sufis
- B. Religious place ran by Sufis
- Ç. House of religious Khalifa
- D. House of Islamic Ulema

2. Who among the following Sufi Saint established Chisti Order?

- A. Moinuddin Chishti
- B. Abu Ishaq Shami
- C. Nizamuddin Aulia
- D. Ámir Khusru

3. Who was the founder of Suhwardiyyah order of Sufism?

- A. Akhi Siraj Ainae Hind
- B. Ashraf Jahangir Semnani
- C. Abdul-Wahir Abu Najib
- D. Ahmad Ghazali

4. What is silsilahs of the Sufis?

- A. Religious order
- B. Spiritual genealogy
- C. Chain, link, connection often used in various senses of lineage
- D. All of the above

5. Who among the following Sufi Saint was the disciple of Baba Farid and was responsible for making Delhi an important centre of the Chishti silsilah?

- A. Moinuddin Chishti
- B. Abu Ishaq Shami

C. Nizamuddin Aulia

D. Ámir Khusru



