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Three Sufi Orders in Kashmir

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Abstract

The Three Sufi Orders introduced in Kashmir like Suharwardi order, Naqashbandi order and Qadri Order very earlier, but they came to prominence much later, and among the well-known Sufi orders the first to be introduced in Kashmir in early fourteenth century, was the Suharwardi order, and the other two Sufi orders introduced in Seventeenth Century.

Key-Words: The role of Sufi Orders in Kashmir.

Introduction:

Among the well known Sufi orders the first to be introduced in Kashmir, in early fourteenth century, was the Suharwardiya order. It was originally followed by Sheikh Ziya-ud-Din Abul-Najib Suharwardi (d.1167), the author of the Adabu-l-Muridin. It was, however, his nephew and successor, Shaikh Shihab-ud-Din Abu Hafs Umar bin Abdullah (1144-1234), who made the order popular.

One of the lesser known disciples of Shaikh Shihabu-d-Din was Shah Nimetullah Farsi who, in his turn initiated Saiyid Sharaf-ud-Din into Suharwardi order. Saiyid Sharaf-ud-Din was the first to introduce Suharwardi order into Kashmir. He was originally from Turkistan, but as directed by his preceptor, he embarked upon a long journey and travelling through Central Asia and Persia, he arrived in Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva.

Saiyid Sharaf-ud-Din is one of the most celebrated saints of Kashmir, where he is known as Bulbul Shah. As already pointed out, the medieval Muslim scholars of Kashmir ascribe Rinchana's Conversion to Islam to Saiyid Sharaf-ud-Din. It seems that after accepting Islam Rinchana sought guidance from Saiyid who was leading Sufi in the valley at that time. Rinchana was famous by the name of Sultan Sadr-ud-Din after accepting Islam.

With the death of Bulbul Shah the Shuarwardi order appears to have declined in Kashmir. None of the sources record anything about his disciples.

It was during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Aabidin (1420-70) that another Suharwardi saint, of some eminence Saiyid Muhammad Isfahani, arrived in Kashmir.

Saiyid Muhammad was the disciple of Saiyid Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari of Uch, popularly called Makhdum Jahaniyan (1308-84). Nothing is known about the date of his death or about his disciples.

The next Suharwardi saint of some eminence was Saiyid Ahmad Kirmani. He was originally from Kirman and before coming to Kashmir had migrated to India, probably to Uch or Multan, where a large number of Suharwardis lived.

Saiyid Ahmad arrived in Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Nazuk Shah. After his death, Saiyid Ahmad was buried near the tomb of Shaikh Baha-ud-Din, in Srinagar.

Another important Suharwardi saint whose chain of disciples in Kashmir was destined to flourish for a long time, was Saiyid Jamal-ud-Din Bukhari. He was a disciple of Shaikh Haji Abdul Wahab Dehlavi who belonged to the Sufi Chain of Makhdum Jahaniya.

Saiyid Jamal-ud-Din arrived in Kashmir somewhere in the first half of the sixteenth century, and took up residence in the Khanqah of Malik Ahmad Yattu. A large number of people were attracted to him, among them was the celebrated saint of Kashmir sheikh Hamza.

The Saiyid did not stay for a long time in Kashmir, leaving for Delhi after only six months. Through his disciple Shaikh Hamza, however, he left an indelible mark on Sufism in Kashmir, and endowed the Suharwardi order with stability and firmness.

The Silsila, was raised to its pinnacle of popularity by Shaikh Hamza Makhdum, Popularly known in Kashmir as "Mahbub-ul-Alam" (Beloved of the World), who was born in 900/1494, at Tujar, in the district of Baramulla. His father 'Usman Raina' was a patron of learning and helped in the maintenance of the seminary of Sahikh Ismail Kubravi at Srinagar.

Shaikh Hamza obtained his early education at this seminary, where Shaikh Fathullah, the son of Shaikh Ismail personally taught him for one year. He learnt the Quran and its commentary from Maulana Darwesh of the same institution under the direction of Maulana Lutfullah, who was a teacher at the Madrasat-ul-Daru-Shifa, founded by Sultan Hasan Shah, he studied books on fiqa and some works of Saiyid Ali Hamadani.

When Saiyid Jamal-ud-Din Bukhari arrived in Kashmir, Shaikh Hamza became his disciple and received initiation into the Suharwardi order. Saiyid Jamal-ud-Din, before his departure from Kashmir, gave the Shaikh the Silsila-nama and Ijazat- nama, documents authorizing him to enroll disciples into the Suharwardi order.

Shaikh Hamza earned out a path in Sufism different from that of Saiyid Ali Hamdani like the mystics Bayazid Bistami (d.874) and Mansur Hallaj (d.913) , he was transported in a state of mystical ecstasy called sukr.

Following the path of Suharwardi's, Shaikh Hamza strongly disapproved the 'sama' (mystical music); once he was going to say his prayers, and happened to hear 'sama', he thereupon immediately performed his ablutions because he had heard the "forbidden practice".

From the "mulfuzat" it appears that the overall mission of Shaikh Hamza was to build up contemporary Muslim society in Kashmir in accordance with the principles of Islam.

There is no doubt that because of his magnetic personality, learning and piety he influenced the minds of the great majority of the people including some of the Rishi saints of Kashmir. In fact he made serious efforts to create a bridge between the Rishis and the mainstream of Sufism by purifying some of the Rishi practices which, in his view, ran counter to the spirit of Islam. However, his efforts in this direction began to make a tangible impact towards the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Sheikh Hamza lived for eighty-four years and breathed his last on 24 Safar, 984/ 23May 1576. He was buried on the slopes of Koh-i-Maran in Srinagar, where in his lifetime he used to spend long hours in meditation. His shrine even to this day is an object of veneration and a place of pilgrimage for many Kashmiri Muslims.

Among the disciples of Shaikh Hamza are mentioned Baba Dawud Khaki, Maulana Shams-ud-Din Pal, Khwaja Ishaq Qari, Khwaja Hasan Qari and Baba Haider Tulmuli. Of these the most distinguished was Baba Dawud Khaki. He hailed from the well known Ganai family of Kashmir, and used "Khaki" as his pen name.

The Wird-ul-Muridin is a treatise of 440 verses. In it Baba Dawud glorifies the spiritual achievements and supernatural feats of his preceptor, Shaikh Hamza.

The most important and voluminous of his works is Dastur-ul-Salikin. It is a commentary upon the Wird-ul-Muridin, and gives interesting glimpses into the life and teachings of Shaikh Hamza and author him self.

The Pir, he maintained, is the deputy (naib) and Khalifa of the Prophet.

The Naqashbandi and Qadri Orders:

The two other Sufi orders, besides the Suharwardi and the Kubravi, which were introduced in Kashmir during the period under review were the Naqashbandi and the Qadri orders. Although both these Sufi orders were introduced in the Valley very early but they came to prominence much later, towards the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Naqashbandi Order:

The Naqashbandi order is one of the oldest mystic orders and originally started in the land of Turks beyond the Amu Darya. It was popularized mainly by Khawaja Baha-ud-Din Muhamad Naqshabnad (717-791 / 1317-89).

The Naqashbandi 'Silsala' was introduced in Kashmir by Saiyid Hilal, who arrived there in the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413). The country of Saiyid Hilal's origin is not known, he is said to have been a direct disciple of Khawaja Baha-ud-Din Muhammad Naqshband. He lived a quiet life and died on 14 Rabi-ul-Awal, 861/9 February 1457, at the village of Asham, north of Kashmir, where he had settled down.

Saiyid Amin, a disciple of Saiyid Hilal, either did enroll disciples or left no follower worthy of mention. Thus after his death the Naqshbandi order remained unknown in Kashmir for more than a century. It was revived by Khawaja Khawand Mohamud, who arrived there at the end of sixteenth century. The Khwaja was the son of Khawaja Mir Saiyid Sharif, who claimed descent from Kahwaja Alau-ud-Din Attar, a distinguished disciple of Khawaja Baha-ud-Din Naqashband.

Khawaja Kahawand was initiated in the order by Khwaja Abu Ishaq Safedki, but he claimed to have received inspiration direct from Bahau-ud-Din Naqashband. Before entering Kashmir from Kabul, Khwaja had journeyed to many countries. Khawaja did not stay in Kashmir for long and soon left for Agra. However, in seventeenth century when Khawaja Khawand made several visits to Kashmir, the Naqashbandi order received a great impetus there.

The Qadri order was originally founded by the celebrated saint of Baghdad named Shaikh Abdu-ul-Qadir Jilani (471-561 / 1078-1165) more popularly known as Gaus-ul-Azm (the greatest of the Saints). He was a prolific writer and his works became the main sources of Qadri doctrines and practices. From his writings Shaikh Abdul Qadir appears to have been a "sober preacher" believing in balanced life and self-improvement. He strongly advocated that three things are indispensable for a believer "he should the commandments of Allah; he should abstain from the forbidden things; and he should be pleased with the decrees of providence.

The emphasis on the last one is quiet clear the parting admonition to his son, Shaikh Abdul-Wahhad (d.593/1197)

Shaikh Abdul Qadir attracted a large number of people to his fold who popularized the teachings of their Shaikh in Syria, Egypt and Yamen. Their followers subsequent generations disseminated them to other corners of the world.

The order, according to available information, was first introduced in the second half of the sixteenth century, by Saiyid Nimatullah Shah Qadri. He claimed to be the direct descendant of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani.

Saiyid Nimatullah did not long stay in Kashmir and soon left for India. Among his disciples in Kashmir is mentioned Shaikh Mirak Mir.

Another Qadri saint of eminence, who came to Kashmir in 992/1581 from somewhere in India, was Saiyid Ismail Shami. He too traced his descent from Shaikh Adbul Qadir Jilani. He had received his early education from his father Saiyid Sulaiman, and was initiated into the Qadri order by one Saiyid Muhammad Qasim.

Saiyid Ismail was warmly received in Kashmir by some eminent saints of that country including Baba Dawud Khaki, with whom he developed a close friendship. However, he also did not stay long in Kashmir and returned to India, but during his brief stay there, he firmly laid the foundation of Qadri order, through his disciple Mir Nazuk Shah.

The charge of Mir Nazuk's Khanqah at Khanyar, in Srinagar was taken up by his eldest son, Mir Yusuf. He received his early education and initiation in Qadri order from his father.

Mir Yusuf died at early age in 1027 / 1617. It was left to Mir Muhammad Ali, the third son of Mir Nazuk, to popularize the Qadri order in Kashmir.

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