



Sufism and its orders

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Abstract—Amirkhusarau, about Kashmir in a mesmerizing Farsi language says, *Agar firdaus bar roo-e zameenast, Hameen ast-o hameen ast-o hameen ast* (If there is a paradise on earth, It is this, it is this, it is this). These beautiful lines takes one to the profound absorption of mystic and spiritual ambience of the valley. Kashmir has been a mother to the highly venerated Sufis who till date are the reason for the sustenance of the Sufism in Kashmir. From Lal Ded and sheikh Noor Uddin Wali (R.A) to the present day Sufis, Sufism flows in the blood of every Kashmiri. The paper throws a light on the emergence of Sufism in Kashmir, its orders and its effects.

Keywords— Sufism, Reshism, Islam, transcendence, Kashmir.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the times of conflict, some people call it escapism, some call it transcendence and some call it simplicity. In literal terms it's called Sufism. The word 'Sufism' is believed to be derived from a word 'suf', meaning wool, which denotes the simplicity of life. Sufism is the mystical aspect of Islam. It represents the fundamental manifestation of mystical practice in Islam. Sufism believes in the awareness of self and universe, to know the ultimate truth. Their practice develops the inner intuitive abilities. The Sufism practitioner is known as a Sufi. From the Sufis like bulbul shah to the present day Sufis, their life has been uncomplicated, and plain. They believe in oneness, just like on horizon the sky and the earth meets, to Sufis life is like this horizon where the whole universe becomes one and united. Sufis achieve the mystical experiences by virtue of these qualities. By the help of this philosophy, people from the generations have been able to understand the softer version of Islam which otherwise is believed to be radical with hard and fast rules. This way, people get tempted to the teachings of Islam.

The spread of Islam from the age of Sufis was not because of some forces put on by some fanatic Muslim conqueror but the religion was expanded by the activities of such Sufis, their way of living, their way of treating other people irrespective of the caste they belong to or the religion they embrace.

Sufis share one core belief, but they are divided in the spiritual brotherhood based on their views on the existence of God. Some Sufis are with the view of finding God in everything, that's they believe in the unity of the whole existence also known as wahdat-ul-wujud. The other believe in the philosophy of all creatures having a one faith, and God being the supreme and divine, also known as wahdat-ul-shuhud, that's, we are all witness to God's supremacy.

In Kashmir, presently there are five major orders of Sufis. Those are;

- 1) Naqshbandi: major Sunni spiritual Order of Sufism. Hasrat-E- Ali (R.A), his son-in-law and successors are the ancestors of this order.
- 2) Qaddriya: named after Abd- Al-Qadir Aljeelani. They believe in asceticism, humanitarianism, and devotion to the will of Allah. This order adheres to the fundamentals of Islam.
- 3) Suhrawardiyya: founder of this order is Sufi Diya al-din Abu n- najibas- suhrawardi. This is strictly a Sunni order. It has a great significance in playing a role in the formation of a conservative 'new piety.'
- 4) Kubrawi: also known as 'Firdausi Silsila' this order tracks down its lineage to the prophet Muhammad (SAW). This order is named after Najamuddinkubra. This order is applicable to both Sunnis and Shiites.

5) Reshi: this order is for the spiritual practices linked with religious amity of Sufism. It started with the very great personality, Sheikh Nuruddin Nurani. This order has its origin in Kashmir itself, and that's the reason, why Kashmir is called Reshi Vaer (valley of saints).

II. HISTORY

How Sufism came to Kashmir has a long history. The domination of Brahmans along with the unstable economic orders in Kashmir valley paved a way for Sufism to step in. All they taught was unity, compassion, love, ardor for humanity; the Sufi saints were highly supported by the Kashmiris, for the Sufis were honest in their persuasion and discourse.

The first Sufi saint in Kashmir belonging to suhrawardi order in the 13th century was sayyed Sharfuddin Abdur Rahman, famously known as Bulbul Shah. He was from Turkistan. He arrived Kashmir, during the reign of king suhadeva (1310-1320) and is believed to be the first saint who introduced Islam in Kashmir. He strictly transformed the caste-ridden Kashmiri society. It is believed that a ladakhi prince, Rinchan Shah embraced Islam under the influence of his spiritual master Bulbul Shah and later on built a cloister(khanqah) in his honor and attached to which was a charity kitchen known as Bulbul lankar, for feeding poor and needy people. After bulbul shah there were other Sufis like;

- a) Sayyed Jalal-ud-din of Bukhara
- b) Sayyed Tajuddin
- c) Sayyed Masood
- d) Sayyed Yousuf

It is said that, some among these Sufis were sent by one of the most prominent Sufi missionary, Sayyed Ali Hamadani, who was the establisher of Islam in Kashmir, in order to see the possibility of Sayyeds to live in Kashmir as they were threatened by Timur for his grotesque plans for the family. Sayyed Ali Hamadani or Shah-i-Hamadan was a hafiz Quran (one who memorizes whole of the Quran). He was a Kubrawi saint and entered Kashmir with seven hundred disciples. Shah-i-Hamadan along with influencing people to embrace Islam, introduced the art and craft technique of Central Asia and also helped in improving the irrigation system of the valley. He introduced Karkhanas (factory), which increased employment options in the valley. Shah-i-Hamadan rejected the idea of earning via teaching Islam but he was a skilled needle worker and earned through that only.

Hamadani's teachings brought about a response from the people of Kashmir, in the form of a Kashmiri born Sufi order- Rishism or Rishi order. However, this order has its

roots in Hinduism, where hermits used to renounce the material world and introspect within themselves. In Kashmir, this movement started with Sheikh Nuruddin Nurani (1377-1440) also known as Nund Reshi by the Pandit community. This order differs from the philosophy of the other orders of Sufism. The Rishis do not denounce men belonging to other religions, to them there is an absolute power which is above us all. They shun the worldly possessions and have nothing to do with the ongoing political, social, or economic setups. Baba Dawood khaki describes Reshi as one who is an ascetic and leads his life in a different manner from those of other saints. They believe in divine unity(Wahdat-ul-wujud). Sheikh Nuruddin Nurani was highly influenced by a rebel saint, 'Lal Ded' and called her 'divine manifestation for us.

III. CONCLUSION

Kashmir is the land of Rishis, even now in the hardest of the times when Kashmir is in its darkest hour, it perpetually gives birth to the saints who continue to spread the message of Islam among people of different religions by not pressurizing anyone, but by their deeds and love for divinity. Reshim accepts all religions and is inclined to the spiritual truth. In Kashmir, people have a unique identity that's 'Kashmiriyat'. No ideological or repressive state apparatus can subdue the violence and conflict in Kashmir, it's this love for one absolute power, and ardor for looking within oneself that can bring back peace in Kashmir.

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