Expansion and existence of Sufi orders in South Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Global spread of Sufism is an old phenomenon. Sufis for the propagation of Islam traveled through trade routes and migrated with Muslims armies. Migration and resettlement of Sufi saints to the sub-continent has left a significant impact on the Islamic religiosity of the region by pursuing spiritual philosophy and practices based on love to God and human beings. Further, their descendants strengthened these religious, spiritual and moral values of Islam in sub-continent. Sufis entered in South Asia through Sindh, and in early history of Islam interior Sindh and its main cities of that time like Multan and Uch became junction of Sufi immigrants. Several noble families settled in the capital of South Punjab, Multan, and its surroundings that altered the region in the hub of illustrious mystics. These mentors propagated Sufi ideology with local values and spread it among the masses considerably which enhanced the circle of Islamic followers and lovers in the locality. This study focuses the development of Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Sufi orders and their due expansion and existence in South Punjab, Pakistan.

Keywords: Mystics of Islam, Spiritualism, Sufism, Sufi Orders, Sufi Migration

Sufi journeys and their resettlement around the globe for the propagation of Islam has left remarkable impressions. In case of South Punjab of Pakistan we can trace out the advent of foreign Sufis in this region since late tenth century with the arrival of Safiuddin Gazroni (d; 1007) of Uch. He was first foreigner Sufi who came sub-

continent in 980, fourth century of Islamic calendar, and established Sufi 'Khanqah' in this historical city of South Punjab (Shahab, 1993). After that history find out the arrival of Shah Yousaf Gardez (1058-1136) in Multan (Gilani, 2006; (Wasti, 2009), and till 12th century, Multan has become a famous educational city for Islamic studies, and a corridor of Sufi saints for sub-continent; Founder of Chishtiyya order, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (1136-1235) spent a few years here in Multan to learn the local language. Moreover, the most venerated Chishti Sufi master of South Punjab, Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shakar (1175-1265), received his education here (Tareen, 1989; Tareen, 2001).

The Southern part of the province Punjab of Pakistan has a long history of Sufism that commenced with the advent of Islam here from the beginning of the 8th century, and Multan, Pakpattan, Uch, Chishtian, Kot Mithan, Jhang and Sakhi Sarwar are renowned cities for shrines of illustrious Sufis like Bahauddin Zakariya, Shah Rukne-Alam, Makhdum Abd-ur-Rasheed Haqqani, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, Jalaluddin Bukhari, Makhdum Jahanian Jahangasht, Sakhi Sarwar, Sultan Bahu, Nur Muhammad Maharvi, Khwaja Ghulam Farid and many more (Dasti, 1998; Shabana, 2010; Shahab, 1993; Sindhi, 2000; Tareen, 1989). In the history of Sufism several orders like Qadiriyya, Suhrawardiyya, Kubrawiyya, Shazliyya, Riffaiyya, Chishtiyya, etc. developed in the Islamic world during 13th century (Hujwiri, 2010; Trimingham, 1971), and this 13th century is also considered a golden period of Sufism in South Punjab. At that time, two honourable and prolific Sufis of Suhrawardiyya and Chishtiyya orders, Bahauddin Zakariyya (1171-1262) and Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shakar (1175-1265), established their *Khangahs*¹ in Multan and Pakpattan which served Islam almost two centuries (Nizami, 1990; Tareen, 1989). In South Punjab, pioneers of Suhrawardiyya and Chishtiyya orders provided a concrete base to institutionalized Sufism in the region and their convents made South Punjab center of Islamic excellence (Gilani, 2006). While, Qadiri spiritual masters came to Multan in the second half of 15th century when the Suhrawardiyya and Chishtiyya orders were in decline in the region; and notable existence of Nagshbandi Sufi masters in South Punjab

¹ Sufi lodges.

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could find only in the end of twentieth century. Now, a number of shrines of these Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya, and Naqshbandiyya orders exist here in South Punjab (Shehzad, 2009). No doubt, Muslim conqueror Muhammad bin Qasim in 712 opened the way to Sindh and South Punjab for Muslim missionaries, however, Sufis played central role for the propagation of Islam in this region and veneration of people in recent days towards Sufis and their shrines explained us their splendid work (Qadiri, 2000). In forthcoming part, we will discuss all four orders, Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya, and Naqshbandiyya, respectively.

Chishtiyya order

The popular Sufi order of sub-continent, Chishtiyya, began from a town of Afghanistan named Chisht and Abu Ishaq Shami (d. 962) was founder of this famous Sufi order whose descendant Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, initiator of Chishtiyya order in sub-continent, came to Hindustan after couple of centuries to the commencement of this movement. No doubt, pioneers of this great Sufi organization belonged to Chisht but this order achieved popularity in subcontinent through Khwaja Moinuddin, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shakar, Allauddin Ali Ahmad Sabir, Nizamuddin Auliya, Sheikh Naseeruddin Charagh, Sheikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi etc. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri was the most famous Sufi saint of this movement who established a noteworthy circle of revered descendants and disciples, and his spiritual personality gathered hundreds of thousands of followers and devotees around him irrespective of religion (Ernst & Lawrence, 2002; Tareen, 1989). Moinuddin Chishti came to Multan from Afghanistan in 1165 where he learned local languages of Hindustan and stayed here up to five years. His descendant Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki also visited Multan during his journey to Ajmer, and Khwaja Farid Ganj Shakar met him here in Multan (Tareen, 1989). This history illustrates the importance of Multan where the pioneers of Chishtiyya order spent time for their education.

The most prominent Sufi shrine of Chishtiyya order in South Punjab is of Baba Fariduddin in Pakpattan (Mubeen, 2013). Hazrat Fariduddin Ganj Shakar established "Khanqah" in Pakpattan, Ajodhan of that time, which produced a number of great Sufis and played an unforgettable role in the history of Islam and Sufism in

sub-continent. Town of Ajodhan was settled in 1095 but this is a historical town since 611 that had different names, and Ibrahim Ghaznavi also captured it in 1079. Majority of the people was Hindu at the time of Baba Farid in which a large number of residents embraced Islam by the preaching, moral conduct and spiritual charismas of this illustrious Sufi saint (Ishaq, 1978; Javed, 2010).

Grandson of Baba Farid, Alauddin Mauj Darya (d. 1334) was last revered descendant of this Khangah (Eaton, 1984). Other famous Sufi of Chishtiyya order in South Punjab was Khwaja Nur Muhammad Maharvi who established Sufi convent in his hometown Mahar, Chishtian, 200 km from Multan (Tareen, 1989). After Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shakar, central leadership of Chishtiyya order transferred to Delhi and death of Hazrat Naseeruddin Charagh also finished creative period of Chishti Sufis, however, Khwaja Noor Muhammad Maharvi strengthened this great order and his 'Khulafa' established 'Khangahs' throughout the Hindustan (Javed, 2010). He played remarkable role for the promotion of Chishtiyya order here in Punjab after Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar. His descendents, Hafiz Jamal of Multan, Khwaja Suleiman of Taunsa and Khwaja Ghulam Farid of Kot Mithan, etc. established 'Khangahs' in several cities of Punjab like Taunsa, Ahmad Pur, Chachran, Jalalpur and Golra. These Sufis revived Chishtiyya order in the region of South Punjab during 18th and 19th centuries after more than four hundred years, due to the decline of Baba Farid's Khangah (Sindhi, 2000).

Hafiz Jamal (1747-1811) established an Islamic school in Multan which became the hub of knowledge and divine blessing (Sindhi, 2000). He had several descendants, although, Khuda Bakhsh Multani and Munshi Ghulam Hussain are famous among them. Moreover, descendent of Khwaja Noor Muhammad Maharv, Khwaja Suleiman Taunsvi was a famous Sufi of Dear Ghazi Khan division and South Punjab who belonged to Nizami branch of Chishtiyya order. He served Islam in critical period for the Muslims of sub-continent when Muslim empire in Hindustan was declining rapidly. Islamic school of this great Sufi theologian had almost two thousands students, and he run it delicately (Sindhi, 2000). Khwaja Suleiman was prolific Sufi intellectual who believed in full obedience of Islamic law and he used to say that "one who wants to become beloved of Allah, should follow 'Shariah' in internal and external matters". His thoughts and

teachings indicate that he had qualities of creative period of Chishti Sufis (Javed, 2010).

Similarly, Khawaja Ghulam Farid (1845-1901), the most famous Sufi poet of Saraiki language belonged to honourable Chishtiyya order. This great man used poetry in the best way to express his stance and thoughts, and for preaching Sufi ideology (Sheikh, 2011). His poetry reveal inner feelings about love, spiritual exposures, political instabilities and social problems. Khwaja Farid was also fond of reading who read a number of treatises of illustrious Sufis like 'Awarif-ul-Maarif, Ahya-ul-Uloom, Kimya-i-Saadet, Fusus-ul-Hikam, Jawahir-e-Jalali, Jamia-ul-Uloom' etc. which enhanced his knowledge and made him distinguish among his contemporary scholars and Sufis. In 1871, he became Sajjada Nasheen of Kot Mithan shrines (Alam, 2007; Tareen, 1989).

We can see that territory of Multan always remained blessed due to the presence of Sufis and mostly renowned Sufis or their families came here from other parts of the Muslim world. It is the blessing of Allah Who always sent His best creatures to this land. The fall of Multan by Sikhs put massive destructive impacts on Muslims' educational system that was under the supervision of Sufis or their devotees; and then occupation of Great Britain planted anti-Sufi roots throughout the sub-continent to strengthen her reign following the policy of 'divide and rule' whose impact could also be seen in Multan and its surroundings. In this critical situation, a Sufi scholar Ahmad Saeed Kazmi (d. 1986) came to Multan in 1935 from Amroha, India and strengthens Sufism in the city of saints (Wasti, 2009). In 1944, he established a great Islamic school 'Jamia Anwarul-Uloom' for Sufi lovers (Ahmad, 2008).

Suhrawardiyya order

This renowned Sufi order was founded by Abu Najeeb Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi (d. 1168), who was a Sufi saint of Baghdad. However, this order got fame to the efforts of his nephew and spiritual successor Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi who was the spiritual master of Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan (Sindhi, 2000). Bahauddin Zakariya was a prolific Suhrawardi spiritual master of South Punjab, Pakistan. Ancestors of Hazrat Ghus Bahauddin Zakriya, founder of

Suhrawardiyya order on the soil of South Asia, who belonged to the tribe of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Quraish of Makkah, came in sub-continent with the forces of Mahmood Ghaznavi in early eleventh century and settled in Kot Karor (Wasti, 2009). Zakariya received higher Islamic education from Khurasan and Bukhara (Tareen, 1989), and after completing his education reached Baghdad and got 'Khilafat' from Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi in seventeen days then moved to Multan after getting spiritual blessing where he launched first Suhrawardi 'Khangah' of sub-continent (Sindhi, 2000). He laid the foundation of a peerless Islamic school in Multan and welcomed students irrespective to religion; that served in Islamic education and as well as in contemporary knowledge for 60 years in his supervision and later for up to two hundred years. That was first boarding school and spiritual center of South Punjab whose fame attracted thousands of students and numerous seekers all over the Muslim world. He sent missions to Indonesia, Java, Sumatra, Philippines, China and Khurasan. He taught preachers local languages like Sanskrit, Bengali, Sindhi, Persian, Arabic, Javanese, Burmese, and Marathi to communicate people in better way; and as well as provided training of riding, archery and use of spear and sword to combat hurdles during journeys (Tareen, 1989). Efforts of Bahauddin Zakariyya made Multan city of Islamic excellence (Gilani, 2006).

Bahauddin Zakariya awarded 'Khirqah' to his son Sadaruddin Arif and after him Sadaruddin Arif became Sajjada Nasheen of that great Suhrawardi 'Khanqah' of Multan (Sindhi, 2000; Faridi, 2010). And by his sermons and guidance thousands of people reached to their destination to Allah. He also compiled a small treatise named 'Tasreef Jadwali' for his students (Javed, 2010). After Sadaruddin Arif, his son Shah Rukn-e-Alam continued the mission. Sheikh Ruknuddin Alam became descendent after his father Sheikh Sadaruddin and served great 'Khanqah' of his grandfather up to 52 years. He was born in 1251, 649 Hijri, in Multan and his mother Bibi Rasti known as Bibi Pakdaman, daughter of Amir of Fergana, was also very pious woman. Bahauddin Zakariya chose his name Ruknuddin and his title was Abu al-Fath. Later, Shah Shams Sabzevari added "Wal-Alam" due to the obedience of saint and now he is famous as 'Shah Rukn-e-Alam" (Tareen, 1989; Tareen, 2007).

Other renowned Suhrawardi Sufis of South Punjab were Jalaluddin Surkh Posh Bukhari and Makhdum Jahanian Jahangasht of Uch who were the descendants of Bahauddin Zakariya and his grandson Shah Rukn-e-Alam respectively. Hazrat Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari was one of the leading Sufis of Suhrawardiyya order in sub-continent who established first Suhrawardi 'Khanqah' in Uch known as 'Khanqah-e-Bukhariyya' and introduced inhabitants to this renowned Sufi order. He was born in Bukhara in 1199, 595 Hijri, and his lineage goes to Imam Jafar Sadiq. He had good relations to Bahauddin Zakariya when Hazrat Zakariya was in Bukhara for his education and this devotion forced him to travel towards Multan. This great mystic reached Multan after the death of his wife without considering difficulties of journey with two sons in 1237 (Shahab, 1993).

In Hindustan, Jalaluddin joined Bahauddin Zakariya in Multan who bestowed him 'Khirqah'. Historians wrote him one of the best descendents and best friends of illustrious Sufi of Multan. He was one of the "Char Yaar", four friends, Bahauddin Zakariya, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and Jalaluddin Bukhari; who travelled several times together (Boivin, 2012; Tareen, 1989).

Moreover, grandson of Syed Jalaluddin Surkh Posh Bukhari, Syed Jalaluddin Hussain known as Makhdum Jahanian Jahan Gasht was another very renowned Sufi scholar of South Punjab who traveled throughout the Muslim world and received title of 'Jahan Gasht', world traveler. Syed Jalaluddin Hussain, son of Syed Ahmad Kabir, was born in 1308, 707 Hijri, in the revered Sufi family of Uch. His father and grandfather paid full attention towards his education and he learned Quran, Hadith and Fiqh to renowned teachers like Hazrat Jamaluddin Khandan Ro and Allama Sheikh Bahauddin of Uch, Maulana Musa and Maulana Mujaddiddin of Multan in the supervision of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, Sheikh Abdul Yafi of Makkah and Sheikh Abdul Matri of Madina. Sheikh Abdul Muttari donated him treatise of "Aawarif al-Maarif" which was in use of Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi (Shahab, 1993).

Makhdum Jahanian spent a lot of period of his life in tourism that is why he is called 'Makhdum Jahanian Jahan Gasht'. He visited North Hindustan, Bihar, Bengal, Arab, Syria, Egypt, Balkh and Bukhara (Ikram, 1984). There is no competitor among the Sufis of Punjab who traveled like him. He paid visit to Hind, Saudi Arabia, Yemen,

Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Khurasan and Muslims territories of Soviet Union and met to numerous Sufis and scholars for knowledge and divine blessing (Javed, 2010). Similarly, Sheikh Hameeduddin Hakim of Raheem Yar Khan was also Suhrawardi saint and descendant of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, who had 2.2 million disciples and three hundred thousand Hindus embraced Islam by his teachings (Sindhi, 2000). Several descendants and disciples of Zakariya dispersed in Baluchistan and Sindh for the propagation of Islam. Even in recent time, Zakariya is very well-known in Sindh and thousands of devotees from Sindh participate in his death anniversary celebrations.

Qadiriyya order

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad (d. 1166), one of the most illustrious Sufi in the history of Sufism, was the founder of Qadiriyya order. This order is deep rooted in Pakistan, and in South Punjab there are several shrines of famous Qadiri spiritual masters. Most ancient Qadiri Sufi in sub-continent was Sakhi Sarwar (d. 1181) whose shrine is in a town named Sakhi Sarwar (which is attributed to his name) of South Punjab near Dera Ghazi Khan. However, Makhdum Abdur Rasheed (d. 1270) was first Qadiri Sufi of South Punjab who established *Khanqah* in the vicinity of Multan. He was cousin and brother in law of Bahauddin Zakariyya (Sindhi, 2000). Grandson of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Syed Safiuddin Gilani, also arrived in Multan in 1183 during his touristic journey and spent 18 months here (Sindhi, 2000). In 1460, when the spiritual rule of Suhrawardi Sufis in Multan and Uch was fading, first foreigner Qadiri Sufi Syed Muhammad Ghaus Bandagi Gilani came to Multan

months here (Sindhi, 2000). In 1460, when the spiritual rule of Suhrawardi Sufis in Multan and Uch was fading, first foreigner Qadiri Sufi Syed Muhammad Ghaus Bandagi Gilani came to Multan from Halab. This saint established his *Khanqah* in Uch and spread Qadiriyya order in Hindustan. His son Sheikh Abdul Qadir Sani and grandson of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Sani, Syed Hamid Jahan Bakhsh, were also very well-known Sufis of this region (Gilani & Gilani, 2011).

Musa Pak Shaheed (d. 1601), noble Qadiri saint of Multan, was the descendant of Syed Muhammad Ghaus Bandagi Gilani as well. In Uch, Hazrat Musa Pak led thousands of people to the path of God and several of them achieved proximity to Allah. He also wrote a book named "Tayseer al-Shagaleen" for his followers and devotees. During this period Musa Pak Shaheed also resided in Multan for a

long time due to the hostile activities of his brother (Gilani, 2011). Wasti, Sindhi and Shahab illustrated that after the problem of custodianship he left Uch and settled in Multan.

Moreover, famous Sufi poet of South Punjab Sultan Bahu (d. 1691) also belonged to Qadiriyya order (Sindhi, 2000). Hazrat Sultan Bahu is one of the great Sufi poets whose poetry makes him alive in the hearts of people and in history. This great poet was also illustrious scholar and wrote several books about the teachings of Sufism but his poetry makes him extraordinary popular in the history (Ali, 2010). In search of spiritual master, Sultan Bahu met to Sufi Shah Habibullah of Qadriyya order who sent him Delhi to his spiritual master Syed Abd-ur-Rehman. Sultan Bahu performed 'Bayah' to Syed Abdur Rehman; his mentor bestowed him 'Khirqah' and sent him back to his motherland (Sindhi, 2000).

Naqshbandiyya order

Bahauddin Naqshband (d. 1389) of Bukhara was the founder of Naqshbandiyya order that reached in sub-continent in the 15th century when Maulana Abdur Rehman of Lahore did *Bay'ah*² to Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar. This order recognizes its spiritual genealogy to the first caliph of Muslims, Abu Bakar Saddiq, rather than other three Sufi orders whose genealogy goes to Ali Al-Murtaza. Khwaja Baqi Billah (d. 1603) and Khwaja Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) were honourable Sufis and real propagator of Naqshbandiyya order whose descendants are found all over the Hindustan (Sindhi, 2000).

Mahmood Mujadadi was considered first Naqshbandi Sufi of Multan and it is said that he was the spiritual successor of Khwaja Ahmad Sirhindi (Gilani, 2006). Moreover, Maulana Hamid Ali Khan (d. 1980) was another famous Sufi of this order. Maulana Hamid Ali Khan was born in 1906 in Rampur, India. After the completion of his education, in 1932, he came to district Rohtak on the order of his spiritual master Hazrat Inayatullah Khan and revived an old Islamic school. However, in 1959, he migrated to Multan with his family and established Islamic school named 'Kheer-ul-Ma'ad' (Wasti, 2009). During independence movement of Pakistan, Hamid Ali Khan played integral role for Muslim community. In critical economic situation

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² "Bay'ah" is an oath to accept a particular mentor as spiritual master for divine knowledge.

and food crisis, he held a conference and established 'Muslim Traders Company' and gathered a lot of foodstuff that helped Muslims during hard times and oppression (Qureshi, 2011). His religious and political achievements are source of inspiration to his followers. He also wrote a book 'Tazkara tul Mashaikh' in which he wrote biographies of Naqshbani Sufis and his spiritual genealogy. His 'Khulafa' established several Islamic schools and 'Khanqahs' in different cities of Pakistan. Similarly, Syed Wali Muhammad Shah alias *Chadar wali Sarkar* (d. 1986) was renowned Naqshbandi Sufis of Multan (Wasti, 2009) whose descendants are present in this region. There are also other several Naqshbandi *Khanqahs* in South Punjab in which *Khanqahs* of Ghulam Hasan Sawag and Abdullah alias *Pir Baro Sharif* are well known.

Conclusion

Travelling always remained a great source of knowledge, divine blessing and revelation for the Sufis. Almost every famous Sufi traveled different countries particularly Muslim world in search of spiritual master, Islamic theologian and divine blessing, and then also traveled to non-Muslim territories for the propagation of Islam and for knowledge too. They also moved with Islamic forces in different parts of the world and mostly their long journeys and mission didn't allow them to go back their homeland. These four Sufi orders are prominent in the Southern part of Punjab whose spiritual masters played a vital role for the propagation of Islam and spread great Islamic values and Sufi practices among the masses. With the passage of time, Sufi practices performed in the lodges of saints and at their shrines emerged as immortal ritual ceremonies (Choudhary, 2010), which are the most familiar part of Sufism in recent days in the circles of devotees and disciples. In the current scenario, there are hundreds of thousands of followers and disciples of Sufi saints throughout the South Punjab who participate in Sufi circles as well as in the festivities of ancient Sufis to pay tribute to their endeavors.

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